

ABSTRACT

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In 1762 Rousseau's reputation depended partly on his controversial essays, partly on the success of La Nouvelle Héloïse. This is reflected in early reactions to Emile. The emergence and nature of his reputation as an educationalist can be seen in popular and professional reactions to the main themes of Emile. In physical education, Rousseau's strong naturalistic position contrasts with his predecessors' less decided support of art or nature. In the 1770s popular enthusiasm for Emile prompts the educational theorists to acknowledge Rousseau's influence, and to support both practical reforms and a more decided support of the natural. These changes lose impetus during the 1780s, but Rousseau's reputation in France from 1762 - 1790 is well-established. Rousseau believes that public education is impossible in an unreformed society, and chooses a private education for Emile. Unlike his predecessors, who had been concerned with the formation of social man, Rousseau attempts to combine the formation of natural, or individual man, with that of social man. On the whole, his complex position is not understood, and throughout the pre-Revolutionary period, Emile is interpreted as a treatise of private education, and often criticised as such. However, from 1770 onwards, the theorists incorporate details from Emile in their treatises of public education, and this is very common by the Revolution. Rousseau's insistence on parallel political and educational reform receives no comment. The theme of isolation in Emile may stimulate the popularity of later plans for communal educations in isolated State boarding-schools. Rousseau's psychological theories combine Cartesian and Sensationalist elements, but oppose the extreme Sensationalism of, for example, Helvétius. Helvétius criticises Rousseau in detail, revealing some misunderstanding and misrepresentation. The educational theorists restrict their comments, almost without exception, to the development of the rational faculties, and Rousseau's system of negative education.

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ABSTRACT

In 1762 Rousseau's reputation depended partly on his controversial essays, partly on the success of La Nouvelle Héloïse. This is reflected in early reactions to Emile. The emergence and nature of his reputation as an educationalist can be seen in popular and professional reactions to the main themes of Emile. In physical education, Rousseau's strong naturalistic position contrasts with his predecessors' less decided support of art or nature. In the 1770s popular enthusiasm for Emile prompts the otherwise silent theorists to acknowledge Rousseau's success. Emile seems to encourage both practical reforms and a more decided support of the natural. These changes lose impetus during the 1780s, but Rousseau's reputation as an educationalist is already well-established. Rousseau believes a truly public education is impossible in an unreformed society, and chooses a private education for Emile. Unlike his predecessors, who had been concerned with the formation of social man, Rousseau attempts to combine the formation of natural, or individual man, with that of social man. On the whole, his complex position is not understood, and throughout the pre-Revolutionary period, Emile is interpreted as a treatise of private education, and often criticised as such. However, from 1770 onwards, the theorists incorporate details from Emile in their treatises of public education, and this is very common by the Revolution. Rousseau's insistence on parallel political and educational reform receives no comment. The theme of isolation in Emile may stimulate the popularity of later plans for communal educations in isolated State boarding-schools. Rousseau's psychological theories combine Cartesian and Sensationalist elements, but oppose the extreme Sensationalism of, for example, Helvétius. Helvétius criticises Rousseau in detail, revealing some misunderstanding and misrepresentation. The educational theorists restrict their comments, almost without exception, to the development of the rational faculties, and Rousseau's system of negative education.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

AJJR : Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau.  
Genève, 1905 -,

Bull. Soc. fr. Hist. Med. : Bulletin de la Société  
française d'Histoire de la Médecine.  
Paris, 1902 -,

CG : Correspondance générale, ed. T. Dufour.  
Paris, 1924-34.

RHLF : Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France.  
Paris, 1894 -,

## INTRODUCTION

## I

Rousseau's reputation as an educational theorist is, nowadays, an accepted fact. Judgement of the educational principles of Emile continues to vary, but no-one would deny their impact on later pedagogical thought. Indeed, a phenomenal number of books have been written about the pedagogical theories of Emile and their importance for later writers, about the extraordinary success of Emile abroad, especially in England and Germany; and about its relevance to educational practice today. Most of this work, however, deals with the influence of Emile during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, or, if it is concerned with the eighteenth century, in countries other than France. Surprisingly little work has been done on the initial reception and fortunes of the book in the country in which it was composed. Yet the question of the development of Rousseau's reputation as a pedagogue in France during this period offers interesting material for study.

In the first place, at the time of the publication of Emile, the reading public and critics can in no way





have been prepared for Rousseau as an authority on education. Primarily a controversial figure, the author of a series of works which attacked the basic principles of conventional, cultured society, and, more recently, of a highly successful novel in the English manner, Rousseau was not at all, in the eyes of his public, the educationalist, political theorist or philosopher we think him now. Yet, we know that, by the time of the Revolution, the prestige of Emile was strikingly great. At a popular level, a decree was made by the National Assembly in favour of "l'auteur d'Emile et du Contrat Social"<sup>1</sup>, and Montmorency was renamed Emile, while, at a more serious level, Emile became one of the books most frequently referred to by the educational reformers of the Convention.<sup>2</sup> What had happened during the intervening years? We know that, whereas doctors and educationalists had failed, Emile brought about an unexpected return to maternal breast-feeding,<sup>3</sup> and that children were educated

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1. Oeuvres complètes, ed. Poinçot, 1788-93, t.XIV, p.392, article by G. Brizard.
  2. D. Higgins: Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Jacobins, Ph.D. Sheffield, 1952. His chapter on education, pp.1400-1459, deals with Rousseau's prestige in educational matters under the Jacobins.
  3. Confirmed, for example, by Buffon's well-known reply to the remark: "Vous aviez dit et prouvé avant J.J. Rousseau que les mères doivent nourrir leurs enfans". "Oui, répondit cet illustre naturaliste, nous l'avions tous dit mais Rousseau seul le commande et se fait obéir". Quoted in the Oeuvres complètes de J.J. Rousseau, ed. Petitain, Paris 1839.

"à la Jean-Jacques" or "à l'Emile".<sup>1</sup> But how and when did this come about, and was it merely a popular reaction? What of the opinions of the pedagogues? How did they react to the book, when did they begin to consider it as a serious work on education, and how does their attitude correspond to the evidence of popular enthusiasm for Emile? This development of the reputation of Emile, and, subsequently, of the reputation of Rousseau as an authority on education, has received relatively little attention. The present thesis attempts to make a first step towards filling the gap, by studying various aspects of the reputation of Emile during the years before the Revolution, and the early years of the Revolution, before the much discussed cult of Rousseau under the Jacobins properly emerged.

Firstly, what information about the fortunes of Emile during this period is already available to us? The condemnation of the book by Church and Parliament, and the scandal it provoked, has naturally received considerable attention. Since Viridet<sup>2</sup> first collected

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1. e.g. Mme de Genlis: Works, Paris 1785-1828. Mémoires, Vol.VI, p.11.
  2. M.Viridet: Documents officiels et contemporains sur quelques-unes des condamnations dont l'Emile et le Contrat Social ont été l'objet en 1762. Geneva, 1850.

together some of the official documents concerning the condemnations, a number of writers<sup>1</sup> have contributed additional information and discussion. The scandal was mainly concerned with the religious implications of the Profession de Foi, and particularly with the passages on miracles, and provoked a large number of early refutations, the existence of which is wellknown. Brizard's early analysis,<sup>2</sup> though partial, and by no means complete, gives us, nevertheless, an adequate idea of the generally mediocre quality of these hasty replies. Masson's book on Rousseau's religion gives us some interesting information about the later reactions to the Profession de Foi<sup>3</sup> during the pre-Revolutionary period, and this coincides with the conclusions of Mornet's examination of eighteenth century libraries.<sup>4</sup> According to both these writers, from 1770 onwards, less attention

1. e.g. G. Lanson: "Quelques documents inédits sur la condamnation et la censure de l'Emile et sur la condamnation des Lettres écrites de la Montagne. AJJR, Vol.I, 1905, pp.95-136.  
J.P. Belin: Le mouvement philosophique de 1748 à 1789 (Paris, Belin 1913).  
and, Ibid: Le commerce des livres prohibés à Paris de 1750 à 1789 (Paris, Belin, 1913) etc. etc.
2. G. Brizard: "Des écrits publiés à l'occasion d'Emile". In the Oeuvres complètes, ed. Poinçot, 1788-93, t.XIV, pp.281-371.
3. P.M. Masson: La religion de J.J. Rousseau, Paris, 1916, Part III.
4. D. Mornet: "Les enseignements des bibliothèques privées, (1750-1780)": RHLF, 1910.



began to be paid by the authorities to the dangers of religious books than political ones, and, consequently, condemnation of unorthodox religious ideas became less frequent. This naturally affected the general attitude towards books, like Emile, which had been condemned several years earlier. According to Masson, the scandal surrounding Emile had died down by 1773 when Rey began to put his own name to editions of Emile.<sup>1</sup> His quotation of Diderot's contemptuous remark in the second edition of the Essai sur les règnes de Claude et de Néron, also suggests that Rousseau had many supporters once he was dead, since he at least afforded his readers some kind of religious belief,<sup>2</sup> and Mme. de Genlis' remark of 1787, which maintains that religious people have forgiven Rousseau for his remarks against religion in favour of his frequently paid homage to the gospel strengthens this impression.<sup>3</sup> Mornet's information coincides with Masson's, though he uses it for a different purpose. He reports that, until 1772, none of the catalogues he studied contain the title of Emile, but, that in 1772, the word Emile was entered in the catalogue of the Baron Julien de Saint in a space which had, until then, merely represented the missing title by

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1. Rousseau (J-J): La "Profession de Foi du Vicaire Savoyard" Edition critique ... par P-M. Masson, (Collectanea fribourgensia) Fribourg, Paris, 1914. p.XCII.
  2. P-M. Masson: La religion de J.J. Rousseau, Part III, p.170.
  3. Ibid., p.171.

dots. In 1773, another catalogue notes Emile in full, then one in 1774, two in 1775, three in 1777, and one in 1778.<sup>1</sup> The catalogues in question are inevitably limited to wealthy readers who could afford a library of considerable size, mainly members of the haute bourgeoisie, who had a public reputation to maintain, and were consequently careful not to declare openly that they possessed such a strongly condemned book as Emile.<sup>(a)</sup> As a result, the few copies of Emile which they contain can in no way be expected to give an estimate of its popularity. Nevertheless, the open acquisition of Emile by these readers only after 1771, together with Masson's information about a change in attitude towards the religious ideas of Emile starting with the death of the scandal before 1772 suggests that these may be crucial dates in the development of the reputation of the book, and it will be interesting to see whether, in fact, the general reputation of Emile is intricately connected with the early religious scandal surrounding it.

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1. D. Mornet: op. cit., p.467.

(a) Mornet and others insist on the fact that condemnation of books during the eighteenth century did not mean that they could not be openly in the reader's possession. Mornet emphasises the fact that Emile and Helvétius' De l'Esprit seem to have been particularly compromising for public morality and appear much more rarely in catalogues than other condemned books. (op.cit., p.467). It is therefore extremely difficult to trace their fortunes through a study of catalogues.

As far as Emile as an educational treatise, and distinct from the Profession de Foi, is concerned, there are one or two general studies and a number of articles which deserve investigation. Compayré's chapter on Rousseau's disciples and detractors in France<sup>1</sup> is necessarily limited to only a few examples of each. However, his analysis does give us some interesting information about the development of Rousseau's ideas in the hands of his friend and admirer, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, the comments and criticisms of Mme. d'Epinau, and the similarities to Emile of some of Mme. de Genlis' ideas, despite her objections elsewhere. These, and Compayré's other comments, however, afford isolated examples of reactions to Emile, rather than a coherent picture of its impact on a generation.

A number of writers have devoted short articles to the question of Rousseau's ideas on physical education and the influence of Emile in general. Some insist on the banality of Rousseau's ideas, all confirm the impact of Emile on the women of eighteenth century France. For many of these writers, Emile's impact in the field of physical education is an accepted fact, and they seek only to

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1. G. Compayré: Histoire critique des doctrines de l'éducation en France depuis le seizième siècle. 2 vols. 1879, pp.126-152.

report this, rather than to supply the reader with information with which to substantiate it. Critics in the late nineteenth century seem to have been particularly eager to accept Rousseau's reputation on this point. In a collection of articles entitled Jean-Jacques Rousseau jugé par les Français d'aujourd'hui, Dr. E. Monin declared:

"Rousseau, homme de lettres et philosophe, a eu la gloire de recueillir et de faire vivre, dans des pages immortelles, les idées les meilleures et les plus scientifiques en matière d'hygiène; ces idées seraient peut-être, longtemps, sans lui, restées lettre morte, immobilisées ou monopolisées par quelques docteurs et professeurs en médecine ..." <sup>1</sup>

In the same collection, Gustave Rivet reported:

"L'Emile mit la maternité à la mode. Le livre fit une impression si profonde dans la société que les femmes les plus frivoles prirent la fantaisie de nourrir elles-mêmes leurs enfants ..." <sup>2</sup>

and J. Grand-Carteret went as far as to say:

"Lorsque l'Emile paraît, toutes, mêmes les plus mondaines, les plus vouées aux plaisirs, reviennent à des devoirs trop longtemps méconnus, se mettent à allaiter leurs enfants." <sup>3</sup>

Later writers <sup>4</sup> have also accepted the fact of

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1. Jean-Jacques Rousseau jugé par les Français d'aujourd'hui, Paris, 1890. Dr. E. Monin: "Rousseau hygiéniste", pp.387-8.
  2. Ibid., Gustave Rivet: "Rousseau réformateur", p.451.
  3. Ibid., J. Grand-Carteret: "Défense de Rousseau contre ses calomnieux", p.13.
  4. e.g., J. Roshem: "Rousseau et l'hygiène de la première enfance", Revue politique et littéraire (Revue bleue), July 13th, 1912, pp.53-57.  
G. Variot: "La doctrine de J.J. Rousseau en puériculture et les opinions des médecins de son temps." Bull.Soc.fr. Hist.Med., Paris, 1926, Vol.XX, pp.339-349.



Rousseau's influence without attempting to trace its growth and development. Much of their information seems to have been based on one or two testimonies of a very general nature by Rousseau's contemporaries<sup>ar</sup>. For example, the remark by Buffon already quoted,<sup>1</sup> or Désessartz's remark of 1798:<sup>2</sup>

"Quoiqu'il soit à-peu-près prouvé que le philosophe Genevois n'a rien dit de lui-même dans les préceptes qu'il donne sur l'éducation des enfans en bas-âge, cependant nous ne pouvons lui refuser une place parmi les écrivains qui ont traité cet important objet; puisque c'est véritablement lui qui a inspiré aux femmes la résolution d'allaiter leurs enfans ..."<sup>2</sup>

None of these studies give us very exact information about the extent of Rousseau's reputation or about the emergence and subsequent development of the return to maternal breast-feeding.

Mornet's article<sup>3</sup> is also too general to give us much information about the fortunes of Emile. He deals briefly with the remarkable post-Rousseau vogue of nature and simplicity, which, he maintains, was responsible, on a theoretical plane, for works like De Beaurieu's

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1. p.7, Note 3.
  2. Désessartz: Traité de l'éducation corporelle des enfans en bas-âge, Paris, An VIII, p.458.
  3. D. Mornet: "L'influence de J.J. Rousseau au dix-huitième siècle", AJJR, Vol.8, pp.33-65, 1912.
  4. Mornet, op.cit., p.47.
  5. Ibid., pp.47-48.
  6. R. Tash: L'Influence de l'Émile de Rousseau jusqu'à la Révolution, Doctorat de l'Université de Paris, 1951.

Elève de la Nature,<sup>1</sup> in which the pupil is educated on a desert island; and, on a practical plane, for attempts to educate children in the isolation of their natural surroundings.<sup>2</sup> Mornet assesses the impact of Emile as a popularisation of what had been, until then, minority discussions.<sup>3</sup>

The most detailed work to date on the subject of Emile in pre-Revolutionary France is a thesis by Dr. Ruth Tash on the influence of Rousseau's pedagogical principles on educational theories in France before the Revolution.<sup>4</sup> Dr. Tash excludes the Profession de Foi and Sophie's education, and restricts her comments almost exclusively to pedagogical writers. She distinguishes three stages in Rousseau's influence during the period: one from 1762-1770, which she describes as a period of silence or criticism; a second from 1770-1781, which is a period of discussion; and a third of approbation and a little criticism from 1781-1789. Unfortunately, although she deals with some interesting material, Dr. Tash fails to link up the various issues in Emile with the main discussions of the eighteenth century, of which they form

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1. Gaspard Guillard de Beaurieu: L'Elève de la Nature, La Haye et Paris, 1763. This book is discussed on pp. 159-165 & 245-250.
  2. Mornet, op.cit., p.47.
  3. Ibid., pp.47-48.
  4. R. Tash: L'Influence de l'Emile de Rousseau jusqu'à la Révolution, Doctorat de l'Université de Paris, 1951.

an <sup>integral</sup> intricate part. Consequently, the conclusions she draws are based on a confusion of information concerning everything from maternal breast-feeding or the use of rattles, to the development of the child's reason and his inability to comprehend religion, without any clear distinction between the relative popularity of these various ideas, or an attempt to assess the actual nature of Rousseau's reputation. Moreover, she deals specifically with influence which is always difficult to assess.

It has, therefore, seemed more useful for the purpose of the present thesis to follow in Dr. Tash's footsteps only to a certain extent and study reactions to Emile in detail, but to then depart from her method by examining these reactions within the limits of a few carefully delineated sections. The three most important aspects of education, the physical, social and psychological have been chosen for this purpose. It is realised that, although the thesis calls itself the reputation of Emile from 1762 to 1790, it does in fact only represent the first steps in assessing this reputation. Other sections dealing, for example, with the questions of syllabus, and women's education, would need to be added to provide a fairer estimate of the reputation of the book during this period. The amount of material available

attributed to him, and the real Rousseau as found in his own works. pp.400-2.

for each of these sections has caused the reduction of the present study to the three main sections already mentioned. It is hoped that a fuller study will prove possible at a later date.

It has also been felt that the question of influence should be abandoned for the present study. It is always only too easy to imagine that one can detect influence where there is, in fact, no reliable evidence for it. Writers' comments and reactions do not necessarily imply influence, and it has been decided instead to follow Daniel Mornet's recommendation;<sup>1</sup> and attempt a historical analysis of the fortunes of Emile. A detailed collection of contemporary comments on Emile, and close examination of the degree to which the authors understand and appreciate Rousseau's ideas, should give a more certain image of the reputation, and hence, influence of the book, than an attempt to compare the ideas of Emile with later pedagogical theories. Moreover this should help us to trace in part the development of the legendary Rousseau and the ideas attributed to him, which Schinz and others have long pointed out.<sup>2</sup>

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1. D. Mornet: "Les enseignements des bibliothèques privées (1750-1780)", pp.449-50.
  2. A. Schinz: Etat présent des travaux sur J.J. Rousseau, 1941. Schinz discusses the growing tendency to distinguish between the legendary Rousseau and the ideas attributed to him, and the real Rousseau as found in his own works. pp.400-2.



on educational issues. It seems more likely that attention was at first focussed on non-educational issues, simply Rousseau's reputation at the time of the publication of Emile, and the initial reception of Emile in France

Dr. Tash's information about a preliminary period of silence or criticism on the part of the pedagogical reformers prior to 1770 seems to coincide quite well with Mornet and Masson's information about the relaxation of religious censure after 1770 and its consequences for Emile. Indeed, Dr. Tash attributes this silence and disapprobation to the fact that Emile was a condemned book,<sup>1</sup> and explains that the subsequent interest shown in it results from the fact that the condemnation began to be forgotten from 1770 onwards. Whether the period between 1762 and 1770 is, in fact, best described as a period of silence and criticism when extended beyond the reactions of the pedagogues alone, will have to be examined in the main body of the thesis. But, in as far as the reported silence on the part of the pedagogues is concerned, it is probable that this might occur for more than one reason. This may be in part, as Dr. Tash suggests, because Emile was a condemned book, although criticism and comment in other fields suggests that there may have been some particular reason for silence

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1. R. Tash, op.cit., p.56.

(a) This is usually what was meant by the term 'paradox'. See, for example, Bachaumont's comment on p.20.

on educational issues. It seems more likely that attention was at first focussed on non-educational issues, simply because Rousseau's reputation as a serious thinker was as yet unmade. In the Rousseau's early literary reputation seems to have depended largely on his capacity as a polemical writer. The early discourses stirred up considerable controversy, and were the subject of numerous energetic refutations to which Rousseau usually replied. This was true of whatever subject he chose to discuss, whether on the situation of social man, the rôle of the arts and sciences, music, the theatre or morality. His talent for defending opinions directly opposed to the accepted point of view,<sup>(a)</sup> together with his outspoken attacks on established convention, contributed to create an image of Rousseau as an eminently controversial figure. This was coupled with admiration for his literary powers, which were often described as dangerously eloquent persuasion.

All this seems to have led to a growing conviction that Rousseau was basically insincere, calculating his attacks to attract maximum attention, both to himself and to his writing.<sup>1</sup> It must be remembered, however, that this

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1. cf. Samuel S.B. Taylor's similar assessment of Rousseau's early reputation in "Rousseau's contemporary reputation in France", published in Studies on Voltaire and the eighteenth century, edited Theodore Besterman, Geneva 1963, Vol. XXVIII, pp.1545-1574.

(a) This is usually what was meant by the term 'paradoxe'. See, for example, Bachaumont's comment on p.20.

reputation was limited to a small circle, that of literary Paris, which had enthusiastically entered into a bout of literary jousting over the first Discourse, and had been profoundly shocked by Rousseau's attacks on French music. In the Diderot circle he had earned himself the nickname of Diogenes. As far as the general public was concerned Rousseau's reputation was very slight until the publication of the Nouvelle Héloïse.

However, the reputation of Rousseau, the controversialist, was to accompany Emile to a certain extent in its early career, and may help to explain that, while refutations of Emile were numerous, serious consideration of his ideas developed more slowly.

Bachaumont's commentaries help us to understand the attitude with which the reading public awaited the appearance of Emile:

"Cet ouvrage, annoncé et attendu, pique autant la curiosité du public que l'auteur unit à beaucoup d'esprit le talent rare d'écrire avec autant de graces que d'énergie. On lui reproche de soutenir des paradoxes; c'est en partie à l'art séduisant qu'il y emploie, qu'il doit peut-être sa grande célébrité; il ne s'est fait connaître avec distinction que depuis qu'il a pris cette voie."<sup>1</sup>

On the 26th May he announces that Emile fulfils all

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1. Bachaumont: Mémoires secrets pour servir à l'histoire de la République des Lettres, Londres, 1784, Vol. I, pp.84-85.

expectations: *do not forget, however, that the reputation of*

Rousseau "Le livre de Rousseau, lu à present de beaucoup de monde, fait tres-grand bruit. Il est singulier, comme tout ce qui sort de la plume de ce philosophe, écrit fortement et pensé de même ...."<sup>1</sup>

On the 30th June he assesses the contents of Emile. Firstly, it is totally impracticable:

"Tout le monde convient que ce traité d'éducation est d'une exécution impossible, et l'auteur n'en disconvient pas lui-même. Pourquoi donc faire un livre, sous prétexte d'être utile, lorsque l'on sait qu'il ne servira de rien?"<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, any good ideas it may contain, particularly those on physical education, are the height of banality:

"Les seules choses judicieuses qui y soient, sont en grande partie des remarques faites généralement, tirées des différents livres écrits sur cette matiere, et sur-tout de celui de Locke".<sup>3</sup>

Thirdly, the author is self-contradictory:

"Il déclame beaucoup contre la médecine, et fait le médecin à chaque instant".<sup>4</sup>

His charm and his probable success depend entirely on his literary talent, and his energetic cynicism:

"C'est donc par son talent rare qu'il a le secret d'enchaîner son lecteur et de l'empêcher de voir le vuide de ce livre. Son éloquence mâle, rapide et brulante, porte de l'intérêt dans les plus grandes minuties. D'ailleurs, l'amertume sublime qui découle continuellement de sa plume, ne peut que lui concilier le plus grand nombre de lecteurs."<sup>5</sup>

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1. Bachaumont: op. cit., p.87.
  2. Ibid., p.97.
  3. Idem. p.98 at the Neuchâtel library.
  4. Ibid., p.98.
  5. Idem.



We must not forget, however, that the reputation of Rousseau the controversialist, the literary showman, had just undergone a major change, and reached a much wider audience, with the publication of La Nouvelle Héloïse.

Mornet has traced the public's reactions to this novel:<sup>1</sup>

hostility of the literary world, who decried its:

"plan mal ordonné ... développement pénible et trop lent ... caractères hors de nature ... personnages dissertateurs et par là-même ennuyeux ... morale singulière, paradoxale pédantesque ... goûts des contradictoires;"<sup>2</sup>

counterbalanced by the enthusiastic reception of the reading public: letters to Rousseau and his publishers, financial success, reports of popularity throughout the provinces, seventy-two editions between 1761 and 1800, frenzied enthusiasm. Mornet reports that the Correspondance littéraire maintained that women spent whole nights reading and crying over it:

"on écrit pour crier à Rousseau une émotion qui bouillonne et qui déborde. A chaque page 'l'âme se fond'. On s'enivre d'une douce sensibilité. On a le coeur serré 'pendant plus de huit jours'. On ferme sa porte à clef pour sentir 'son âme s'émouvoir, son coeur palpiter, son esprit tomber dans une douce rêverie'. C'est un 'ravissement', 'un feu qui dévore', des larmes, des soupirs, des douleurs".<sup>3</sup>

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1. D. Mornet: La Nouvelle Héloïse, pp.237-263.
  2. Quoted by Mornet, op.cit., p.245 from Aublet de Maubuy: Histoire des troubles et des démêlés littéraires.
  3. Mornet: op.cit., p.249, with quotations from the Ms. No.7902 at the Neuchâtel library.

This new enthusiasm for the Nouvelle Héloïse was to project itself to some extent on the reception of Emile. There is no doubt that some of the reading public of the day saw it as a continuation of La Nouvelle Héloïse, witness Bachaumont's comments on Sophie's education:

"le quatrième volume présente une Sophie, qui donne lieu à une dissertation sur la manière d'éduquer les filles. Il faut avouer que celle-ci est un chef d'oeuvre d'autant plus séduisant qu'il ne paraît point hors de nature. On est attendri jusqu'aux larmes, dans ce morceau de détails les plus intéressants. Aussi Emile en devient-il amoureux. L'impitoyable gouverneur ne le laisse point à sa passion: il l'arrache; il veut qu'il cherche avant le domicile où il voudra s'établir".<sup>1</sup>

Emile, then, was probably first read partly for its supposedly strange and contradictory ideas, partly for the author's power to move the reader, and not at all as a serious discussion of educational principles:

"On le lit, et on le lira sans doute avec avidité, parce que l'homme aime mieux le singulier que l'utile. Il faut avouer aussi que l'auteur possède au suprême degré la partie du sentiment. Eh! que ne pardonne-t-on pas à qui sait mouvoir".<sup>2</sup>

Bachaumont continues to note, during the following months, the political repercussions provoked by Emile, and to mention some of the refutations as they appear. On the 21st July he strongly condemns the trivial

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1. Bachaumont: op.cit., p.99.

2. Ibid., p.100.

objections of an anonymous Réfutation du nouvel ouvrage de Jean-Jacques Rousseau, intitulé Emile.<sup>1</sup> On the 28th September he notes a banal, but satisfactory criticism, the Lettre à M.D\*\*\* sur le livre intitulé Emile, which he criticises mainly on the grounds that, whereas Rousseau spurns authority and power with "trop d'amertume et d'indépendance", his critic can be charged with "servitude et ... adulation".<sup>2</sup> He continues to show considerable interest in the later repercussions of Christophe de Beaumont's Mandement and the Lettres de la Montagne. His accounts, however, merely record these events as being of interest, but are not accompanied by any indication of the general interest occasioned by Emile.

His notes also give us one or two interesting and amusing pieces of information about reactions to Emile. He reports that the Dauphin, on being informed of its condemnation, replied:

"C'est fort bien fait, ...: ce livre attaque la religion, il trouble la société, l'ordre des citoyens; il ne peut servir qu'à rendre l'homme malheureux: c'est fort bien fait ..."

It is interesting to note that he believed ~~that~~ <sup>the</sup> Contrat Social to be infinitely less dangerous:

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1. Bachaumont: op.cit., p.108. According to Brizard, (op.cit., p.287), this was later attributed to the Abbé Pérau.
  2. Ibid., p.129. Attributed to the Père Griffet, Brizard, op.cit., p.294.

"Quant à celui-là (le Contrat Social) ... c'est différent, ... il n'attaque que l'autorité des souverains; c'est une chose à discuter. Il y auroit beaucoup à dire; c'est plus susceptible de controverse".<sup>1</sup>

In June 1763, Bachaumont announces a new play, Manco, in which "l'homme sauvage est perpétuellement en opposition avec l'homme civil. C'est le système de Rousseau mis en action".<sup>2</sup> He reports that this play, which he subsequently condemned for its bad quality, is an adaptation in verse of all the ideas on monarchy, freedom and human rights scattered throughout the Discours sur l'Inégalité, Emile, and the Contrat Social. Its success seems to have been entirely dependent on one line:

"un seul malheureux vers, applaudi d'abord pour son ridicule, ensuite exalté par les sots, a relevé ce drame écrasé, en a fait la fortune; "Voilà l'homme civil, et voilà l'homme sauvage", dit un sauvage qui vient d'arracher un poignard qu'un grand prêtre levoit contre le fils du roi. Tel a été le ressort qui a remonté cette pièce détestable".<sup>3</sup> (a)

On the 29th December Bachaumont publishes an

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Dictionnaire de Musique then takes precedence over Emile.

1. Bachaumont: op.cit., pp.114-115.

2. Ibid., p.230.

3. Ibid., p.232.

(a) This apparent enthusiasm for the opposition of natural and social man seems to be a manifestation of the popularity of the themes of nature and simplicity, which, as Mornet pointed out, was in evidence both before and after Rousseau. Mornet: "L'influence de J.J. Rousseau au XVIIIe. siècle", pp.46-47.

3. Bachaumont: op.cit., Vol.III, p.164.



enthusiastic poem, in the form of an epitaph,<sup>1</sup> which, though it refers to Rousseau's works in general rather than to Emile in particular, nevertheless illustrates very well the sympathy for his works and personality which, it has been suggested,<sup>2</sup> was prompted by his stoical acceptance of his persecutions:

"Rousseau prenant toujours la nature pour maître,  
Fut de l'humanité l'apôtre et le martyr;  
Les mortels qu'il vouloit forcer à se connoître;  
S'étoient trop avilis pour ne pas l'en punir.  
Pauvre, errant, fugitif et proscrit sur la terre  
Sa vie à ses écrits sert de commentaire  
La fiere vérité dans ses hardis tableaux,  
Sut en depit des grands montrer ce que nous sommes.  
Il devoit de nos jours trouver des échafauds;  
Il aura des autels quand il naîtra des hommes!"

Throughout 1764 and 1765 Bachaumont continues to show interest in refutations of Emile and Rousseau's movements, and this continues into 1766 and 1767. On the 11th June 1767 he reports that Rousseau had been well received, though clandestinely, by his partisans in Amiens.<sup>3</sup> Rousseau's correspondence and the publishing of his Dictionnaire de Musique then takes precedence over Emile, until even reports about his whereabouts disappear entirely during 1769. On the 1st July 1770, however, Bachaumont reports with some surprise that the "auteur d'Emile' has

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1. Bachaumont: op.cit., pp.318-319.
  2. By Samuel S.B. Taylor: op.cit., p.1566.
  3. Bachaumont: op.cit., Vol.III, p.192.

been seen in public at the Régence in Paris, and that a considerable crowd had collected to see him.<sup>1</sup> Bachaumont's surprise indicates that the official condemnation of his books had not been relaxed by mid-1770. It is also interesting to note that it is Emile which he attaches automatically to Rousseau's name.

Another interesting reaction to Emile is to be found in the Journal des Sçavans.<sup>2</sup> The author of the preliminary announcement of Rousseau's new work repeats the kind of criticisms already found in Bachaumont. The reader must expect to find in it "cette touche mâle et nerveuse qui caractérise son style," and must be prepared for the author's "paradoxical" statements. To Rousseau's:

"Je ne vois pas comme les autres hommes; il y a long-tems qu'on me l'a reproché"

his critic replies:

"Nous sommes fâchés de trouver dans ce nouvel ouvrage de quoi justifier les reproches qu'on a toujours faits à M. Rousseau sur son goût décidé pour le Paradoxe".<sup>3</sup>

The real analysis of Emile was only to appear in November and December when the general atmosphere of censure surrounding it could only be expected to produce adverse

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1. Bachaumont: op.cit., Vol.V, p.134.
  2. Journal des Sçavans, combiné avec les Mémoires de Trévoux, Amsterdam, Juin 1762, Tome LXXI. The analysis of Emile is in the Mémoires de Trévoux.
  3. Journal des Sçavans, Tome LXVIII, p.251.

Emile ou de l'éducation, Paris 1762. Quoted by W. Brizard, op.cit., p.287.

criticism. However, despite its extreme introductory comments, the article contains a number of interesting remarks, some of which will be studied in the main body of the thesis.

The article begins with an exaggerated report of this monstrosity, Emile:

"Nous appercûmes bien au premier coup d'oeil le germe de quelques paradoxes, et nous fîmes part dès-lors de nos soupçons: mais nous n'eussions pas imaginé que ce Traité chimérique d'éducation dût être aussi repréhensible".<sup>1</sup>

The first scenes of "cette Comédie cynique" (i.e. the earlier writings) had been ridiculous, but who could have expected the "dénouement affreux qui les couronne". The reader is warned once again about Rousseau's dangerously eloquent style:

"On ne trouvera pas ici (i.e. in this analysis) cette multitude de phrases sémillantes, qui ne prouvent que la fécondité de son génie, et sa funeste facilité de s'énoncer; parce qu'il ne faut pas juger de la beauté ou de la difformité des objets par le masque qui les couvre".<sup>2</sup>

Similar remarks appeared in the refutations of the Profession de Foi. The author of the Réfutation du nouvel ouvrage de J.J. Rousseau described Rousseau as:

"Cet homme, déjà si connu dans la république des lettres par ses paradoxes aussi bizarres que singuliers,"<sup>3</sup>

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1. Journal des Sçavans, Tome LXXI, No.13, Nov.1762, p.217.
  2. Ibid., p.218.
  3. Réfutation du nouvel ouvrage de J.J. Rousseau, intitulé Emile ou de l'éducation, Paris 1762. Quoted by G. Brizard, op.cit., p.287.

and went on to warn his readers against the dangers of his style:

"On doit cependant convenir que cet ouvrage est d'autant plus dangereux, que, sous les agrémens d'un style riche et fleuri, qui attire et qui éblouit, l'auteur insinue dans le coeur de son élève le poison le plus funeste; que cet appât et ces amorces sont séduisants pour un siècle qui a un goût plus décidé pour la beauté et l'arrangement des mots, que pour la solidité des raisonnemens".<sup>1</sup>

Another work, the Analyse des principes de J.J. Rousseau, though it attacked Rousseau's person and ideas, nevertheless acknowledges his superior powers of style and argument:

"J'ai lu vos oeuvres; j'ai admiré votre éloquence; la subtilité de vos argumens m'a dévoilé les ressources de votre génie".<sup>2</sup>

Bergier, in his Déisme réfuté par lui-même assigned Rousseau the already familiar title of Diogenes:

"Depuis environ vingt siècles que la place de Diogene étoit vacante, vous vous êtes présenté pour lui succéder: qui eût osé vous disputer ce privilege?".<sup>3</sup>

and went on to declare that Rousseau had wrongly estimated his talents:

"Né avec l'imagination la plus brillante, si vous vous fussiez borné à des sujets de littérature et d'agrément, vous auriez eu le plus éclatant succès: mais l'ambition de dogmatiser vous a malheureusement saisi ..."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Réfutation du nouvel ouvrage de J.J. Rousseau, p.289.
  2. Analyse des principes de J.J. Rousseau, (attributed to Puget de St.Pierre). Quoted by G.Brizard, op.cit.,p.325.
  3. Bergier: Le Déisme réfuté par lui-même, Paris 1766. Quoted by G.Brizard, op.cit., p.343.
  4. Ibid., p.366.



A rather different comment appeared in the Lettre à M.D\*\*\* sur le livre intitulé Emile. Instead of warning the reader against Rousseau's powerful style, the author criticised both this and Rousseau's general lack of method, maintaining that an enlightened public would scorn his works, and that he would become a forgotten author. The lack of success with which he threatens Rousseau's ideas on education, and his obvious belief that they will not be taken seriously, is interesting to note:

"On pourroit lui pardonner d'avoir formé dans son imagination un plan d'éducation chimérique et impraticable, qui ne sera suivi de personne; .... Il ne sera que plus ridicule quand il proposera sérieusement d'obliger Emile de courir à pieds nus ... lorsqu'il entreprendra de lui apprendre l'astronomie sans sphere, la géographie sans cartes ... on rira de ses chimeres ..."<sup>1</sup>

The main danger of his work is, then, not his ideas on education, but his attack on the State and religion, and, according to the author of the Lettre à M.D\*\*\*, it is this double attack which has prompted so many readers to rise against him. He expresses his fear of the possible dangers of the insinuation of Rousseau's ideas much more explicitly than the other writers of refutations. The book must be suppressed and censured:

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1. Lettre à M.D\*\*\* sur le livre intitulé Emile ou de l'éducation par J.J. Rousseau, Paris 1762. Quoted by G. Brizard, op.cit., p.295.

"car si les détestables principes et les dangereux paradoxes dont il est rempli venoient à séduire et à enivrer la multitude en se communiquant par une espece de contagion, il seroit à craindre qu'ils ne causassent des révolutions aussi funestes aux états republicains qu'aux états monarchiques".<sup>1</sup>

Rousseau himself commented on the early reactions to Emile. His remark in the Confessions is well-known:

"La publication de ce livre ne se fit point avec cet éclat d'applaudissement qui suivoit celle de tous mes écrits. Jamais ouvrage n'eut de si grands éloges particuliers, ni si peu d'approbation publique. Ce que m'en dirent, ce que m'en écrivirent les gens les plus capables d'en juger me confirma que c'étoit là le meilleur de mes écrits, ainsi que le plus important. Mais tout cela fut dit avec les précautions les plus bizarres, comme s'il eut importé de garder le secret du bien que l'on en pensoit".<sup>2</sup>

Of the letters he mentions, Clairaut's and La Condamine's refer only to the Profession de Foi, the reading of which leaves Clairaut "touché comme son jeune Ami ..."<sup>3</sup> and excites La Condamine's approval:

"Que je me sais bon gré de penser avec vous que la voix de la conscience, sorte d'instinct irrésistible, est un guide plus sûr qu'une raison orgueilleuse dont nous sentons à chaque moment les bornes!"<sup>4</sup>

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1. Lettre à M.D\*\*\* ....., pp.299-300.
  2. Oeuvres complètes, Pléiade edition, 1959 ... Vol.I, Les Confessions, Bk.11, p.573.
  3. C.G. Vol.VII, p.240, No.1370. Clairaut to Rousseau, 24 May 1762.
  4. Ibid., p.239, No.1369. La Condamine to Rousseau, 24 May 1762.

D'Alembert maintained that, despite present difficulties, Rousseau's work would finally receive the acclamation it deserved:

"... Votre dernier ouvrage, si plein de vérités neuves et grandes, de vertus, de sentiment et d'éloquence, met le comble à votre réputation en mettant le comble à votre malheur, et vous pouvez l'appeler l'enfant de votre douleur et de votre gloire. Les honnetes gens (.....) auront une voix plus forte que celle de l'hypocrisie; et du fanatisme; et le suffrage de ces amis respectables vous fera goûter d'avance celui de la postérité qui prononcera votre nom avec respect et ne saura pas même celui de vos méprisables ennemis".<sup>1</sup> (a)

Mme. de Créqui insisted on the impracticable nature of Rousseau's system of education, classing Emile as a novel rather than an educational treatise:

"J'ai lu votre Roman de l'Education. Je l'appelle ainsi parce qu'il me paraît impossible de réaliser votre méthode; mais il y a beaucoup à apprendre, à méditer et à profiter".<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *ibid*  
1. *ŒG.* p.295, No.1411. D'Alembert to Rousseau, 15 June 1762.

2. <sup>16</sup> *ŒG.* p.265, No.1388. Mme. de Créqui to Rousseau, 2 June 1762.

(a) De la Pouplinière also pointed out the lack of immediate success to which Emile was destined, and the eventual hope of the acclamation it deserved:

"Il faut, je crois, que la révolution naturelle des choses nous fassent reporter dans notre premier état de barbarie alors, on vous écoutera, on sentira l'utilité de vos leçons, et votre livre deviendra l'instruction générale pour les pères et les mères".

<sup>17</sup> *ŒG.* p.278, No.1396. De la Pouplinière to Rousseau, 6 June 1762.

Her amusing reactions to the book are very reminiscent of the effects of La Nouvelle Héloïse reported by Mornet. They are not so emotional, but nevertheless suggest the impact of a novel rather than a serious work on education:

"Il (votre roman) m'a donné des maux de nerfs insupportables; c'est le meilleur signe du monde pour votre ouvrage: lorsque mes lectures ne me font pas crisper le nez, c'est une preuve que tout est froid, mais lorsque je ne puis remuer ni pieds ni pattes, que mes yeux clignent et surtout que le bout de mon nez tire, alors c'est une preuve de style supérieur ..."<sup>1</sup>

Her remarks about Emile and Sophie also reveal an obvious interest in them as living characters rather than simple examples to illustrate the author's points:

"J'ai eu un instant la cruauté de désirer la mort d'Emile pour voir Sophie élever ses garçons, mais je déteste mon premier mouvement et je ne désire que leur prospérité".<sup>2</sup>

The impact of some of Rousseau's ideas on a woman reader is also obvious from one of her earlier letters in which she admits that Emile might prompt her to feel some regrets:

"Je n'ai pas nourri mon fils et je l'ai emmaillotté".<sup>3</sup>

Voltaire's reactions to Emile should not be overlooked. His unfavourable comments, together with Diderot's antipathy, probably caused a considerable amount of opposition to Emile,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. GG. No.1388, p.265.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.266

<sup>3</sup> <sup>1762</sup> GG. No.1372, p.243. Mme. de Créqui to Rousseau, 25 May 1762.



not only in the literary circle in which he moved, but also among his partisans in the reading public. The estrangement between Rousseau and the philosophes naturally provoked bitter comments from his former friend. In two letters to Etienne Damilaville he refers to Emile as "un fatras d'une sottise nourrice en quatre tomes",<sup>1</sup> and "le fade roman d'Emile".<sup>2</sup> He was obviously interested in the second part of the Profession de Foi, for he published it in his Recueil nécessaire of 1766, with one or two minor alterations (which, however, as Raymond Naves<sup>3</sup> has pointed out, slightly altered its emphasis in a direction more congenial to the opinions of its editor). However, at the time of the publication of Emile, Voltaire was at pains to point out the banality of this particular section. To the Duchess of Saxe Gotha, he writes:

"On débite sourdement plusieurs ouvrages dans le goût de ces cinquante pages (contre la religion chrétienne). On les attribue tantôt à La Mettrie tantôt au philosophe de Sans Souci. Mais il est certain qu'il y en a un d'un curé de Champagne auprès de Rocroi, qui est plus approfondi que le troisième tome d'Emile".<sup>4</sup>

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1. Voltaire's Correspondance: edited by Theodore Besterman. Vol. XLIX, Geneva 1959, p.28). No.9707. Voltaire to Etienne Damilaville, 14 June 1762.
  2. *Ibid.*, p.45, No.9726. Voltaire to Etienne Damilaville, 25 June 1762.
  3. R. Naves: "Voltaire éditeur de Rousseau". RHLF, April, 1937, pp. 245-247
  4. Voltaire's Correspondance: Vol. XLIX, p.160, No.9817. Voltaire to Louise Dorothea of Meiningen, Duchess of Saxe Gotha, 2 Aug. 1762.

One of Voltaire's correspondents, de Cideville, also strongly criticised Emile, and attacked Rousseau's person at the same time. In his letter of the 30th June he admits that there is "de la force dans le stile", but the system of education is a "chimère" and contains "des Eternités et des longueurs insoutenables".<sup>1</sup> As for the author:

"il faut être singulier quand on ne peut estre illustre, il faut avoir l'air de mépriser les femmes et de haïr les hommes, sic itur ad astra".<sup>2</sup>

These various comments together contain all the elements of criticism which our knowledge of Rousseau's early reputation would lead us to expect. On the one hand we find antagonism and censure. Rousseau's opinions are strange and contrary to the normal line of attack; his ideas on religion are particularly dangerous, and must be combatted; his style is extremely powerful, and, consequently, a dangerous weapon of persuasion. As for the system of education it is useless, and will obtain little success. The good ideas it has are all commonplace opinions.

On the other hand, we find approval from a much smaller group, mainly friends, and assurance of future

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1. Voltaire's Correspondance: Vol.XLIX, p.63, No.9740, Le Cornier de Cideville to Voltaire, 30 June 1762.  
2. Ibid., p.64.

success; a certain amount of interest and sympathy for the persecuted writer and his works; enthusiasm for the romanesque quality of the book, and particularly for the figure of Sophie. We also find the first sign of a woman's reaction to the passages on child-care.

Rousseau's style is the most important factor for both sides. Various critics<sup>1</sup> have suggested that this is, indeed, the key to Rousseau's success: that his ideas, though completely unoriginal, were so enhanced by his superior literary talent, that he succeeded where others had failed. Whether or not this is true should become apparent from our detailed study of reactions to Emile. It will also be interesting to see the extent to which these early comments accompany Emile in its pre-Revolutionary career, and their importance in the formation of its reputation.

Physical education appeared in 1760, and who, in 1798, himself supported Cajot's accusation. Such questions have, for the most part, been effectively disproved, and modern scholarship has moved on to the more impartial study

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1. Cajot (Dom Joseph) O.S.B.: Les Plagiate de M. J. J. Rousseau de Genève sur l'éducation. La Haye-Paris, Durand, 1766.

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1. e.g. R. Tash: op.cit., pp.103-4.  
 Dr. E. Monin: op.cit., p.387.  
 G. Variot: op.cit., p.349.

## CHAPTER I

ART and NATURE in PHYSICAL EDUCATIONA. Physical education before 1762, and Rousseau's position  
in relation to this<sup>(a)</sup>

The alleged lack of originality of Rousseau's ideas on the care and education of the young child has, for a long time, occupied critics and scholars, and has, at times, affected his reputation in this field. Shortly after the publication of Émile, a Benedictine monk, Dom Cajot, brought out his now well-known attack on Rousseau, in which he accused him of plagiarism throughout Émile.<sup>1</sup> Such an accusation has naturally led to much study and discussion, particularly in the case of alleged copying from an eighteenth century doctor, Jean-Charles Désessartz, whose book on physical education appeared in 1760, and who, in 1798, himself supported Cajot's accusation. Such questions have, for the most part, been effectively disproved, and modern scholarship has moved on to the more impartial study

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1. Cajot (Dom Joseph) O.S.B.: Les Plagiats de M.J.J.Rousseau de Genève sur l'éducation. La Haye- Paris, Durand, 1766.

(a) In order to put Rousseau's ideas on physical education into perspective it has been thought necessary to first examine earlier ideas on this subject, and then discuss Rousseau's position in relation to these. Consequently, it should be easier to understand the implications of some of the later comments on this aspect of Émile.



of the possible sources of Rousseau's ideas. Villey, for example, in his book: L'influence de Montaigne sur les idées pédagogiques de Locke et de Rousseau, published in 1911, decided that, as far as physical education is concerned, Rousseau is completely indebted to Montaigne and Locke:

"le programme d'éducation physique de Montaigne complété par Locke, passe entièrement dans l'Emile".<sup>1</sup>

This has since been strongly combatted. Dr. Peter Jimack in his thesis: La genèse et la rédaction de l'Emile de J.J. Rousseau,<sup>2</sup> discusses the possible influence of Montaigne and Locke on Rousseau's ideas, and concludes that any influence which can be attributed to them is the result of much earlier reading on Rousseau's part, and had become an *integral* intricate part of his own thought by the time of the composition of Emile.<sup>3</sup>

This and other more detailed research into Rousseau's sources has shown a distinct move away from the idea of direct borrowing or inspiration on Rousseau's part, to an examination of the profusion of works on child care prior

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1. Quoted by R. Tash: op.cit., p.20.
  2. Ph.D. Southampton, 1956. Subsequently published in Studies on Voltaire and the eighteenth century, Vol.13, Geneva, 1960.
  3. Jimack, op.cit., p.290.

2. R. Vannier: Montaigne dans la pensée de Rousseau, Paris 1960.

to the composition of Emile,<sup>1</sup> and a feeling of the general banality of Rousseau's ideas. Dr. Ruth Tash, for example, in her thesis written some thirteen years ago, states categorically that every reform asked for by Rousseau (i.e. with regard to physical education) had already been advocated before the composition of Emile. Again, Dr. Roger Mercier in his recent thesis: L'enfant dans la société du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle<sup>2</sup> traces in detail the general current of eighteenth century thought on child education, and concludes, that, as far as detail is concerned, Rousseau's criticisms in Emile offer nothing new. To support their point of view, Jimack, Mercier and Tash indicate both Rousseau's actual quotations from and references to writers such as Locke, Plutarch, Boerhaave, Buffon, etc., and the frequency of such ideas in the eighteenth century, especially during the period

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1. e.g. 1708 De la Motte (G.M.): Dissertation sur l'obligation aux meres de nourrir leurs enfans.
  - 1722 Crousaz (J-P. de): Traité de l'éducation des enfants.
  - 1741 Andry (N): L'Art de prévenir et de corriger dans les enfants les difformités du corps.
  - 1751 Bonneval: Réflexions sur le premier âge de l'homme.
  - 1753 Le Camus (Antoine): Médecine de l'Esprit.
  - 1754 Brouzet (N.): Essai sur l'éducation médicinale des enfants.
  - 1756 Vandermonde (Charles-Augustin): Essai sur la maniere de perfectionner l'espece humaine, and many others.
  2. R. Mercier: L'enfant dans la société du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, Paris 1960.

1750 - 1760.<sup>1</sup> Mercier supports this point with a quotation from Gilibert, who, in his Dissertation sur la dépopulation (1770), speaks of "un état de fermentation universelle" on the subject of physical education around that period.<sup>2</sup>

It seems unlikely, then, that any impact caused by Emile was the result of the extreme novelty of Rousseau's ideas. If we want to discover the nature of this impact, we must look in a different direction. When assessing his position in relation to other writers on the same subject, we must attempt to ascertain, not so much those things which link Rousseau to his predecessors and contemporaries, as those which distinguish him from them. Perhaps the most fruitful line to pursue is to study the development of ideological differences which arise amongst the reformers, and which result in two distinct trends. In this, Roger Mercier has prepared the way for us.

He traces the emergence and development of ideas on child care from Plutarch, through Favorinus of Arles, Erasmus, Laurent Joubert, the Czech reformer Komensky, etc. etc. The one outstanding characteristic of all these thinkers is their insistence on natural methods in child

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1. See Jimack, op.cit., pp.259-375.

2. See Tash, op.cit., pp.16-29.

2. Quoted by Mercier: op.cit., p.184.

education, and particularly their advocacy<sup>cy</sup> of maternal breast-feeding. They see the failure to breast-feed one's own child as a violation of the laws of Nature, which has provided natural food for each child in the form of the mother's milk. It is not until the seventeenth century, and presumably coincidental with a dawning belief that man can interfere in the natural order, that Mercier finds any opposition to this generally naturalistic philosophy. However, a seventeenth century doctor, Gallego de la Serna, faced by what he considers to be the unsuitability of the modern socialite for feeding her own child, recommends that the child be fed, either by another woman, who would be more suitable both physically and morally, or by goat's milk, which he sees as an effective substitute for human milk.<sup>1</sup> Van Helmut, a well-known Dutch 17th century doctor, is the next thinker, singled out by Mercier, to oppose nature on this score. It is clear from the number of references to him by later writers that he had a considerable effect on the theories of physical education of the eighteenth century.<sup>2</sup> His opposition to nature is much more clearly stated than that of De la Serna, and may be

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1. Quoted by Mercier, op.cit., p.19.
  2. See, for example, Le Camus, op.cit., Vol.II, p.411: Brouzet, Education medicinale, Paris 1754, pp.170-171.



considered as a more consciously adopted philosophical attitude. His argument is that much that is "unnatural" is already well-established. Why then should maternal breast-feeding be alone an inviolable law of Nature?

"on prétend que Dieu a fait le lait pour la nourriture des enfants. Mais s'abstient-on de manger du pain et de boire du vin sous prétexte que Dieu n'a fait que les grains et les grappes".<sup>1</sup>

Here, then, we have evidence of two developing, divergent opinions; the first traditional and naturalistic, the second, revolutionary and artificial. The division becomes more pronounced during the eighteenth century. Amongst those doctors who recognise the need for change in infant education, resulting from a wide-spread belief in the depraved condition into which human nature has fallen, some base their means of reform on the exercise of man's natural and primitive duties (e.g. breast-feeding) and generally natural methods (i.e. as found among the animals or more primitive peoples), while others prefer purely artificial means, achieved by an advance in human knowledge, which enables man to invent more suitable methods than those provided originally by Nature. (a)

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1. Quoted by Mercier, op.cit., p.19.

(a) This is linked with a widespread belief of the eighteenth century in the superiority of rational man, and the subsequent possibility of reform through the spread of knowledge, together with a growing belief that man can and should interfere in the natural order.

On one side we find names like Buffon, Brouzet, Bocquillot, on the other, Vandermonde, de Chamousset,<sup>(a)</sup> Moreau de Saint-Elier. Before attempting to assess Rousseau's position, it would be interesting to examine a little more thoroughly the differences between two or three of these writers.

It is important to remember that we shall, for the most part, be dealing with doctors, who were, at this time, becoming more interested in the practical and physical side of child education than in the moral issues involved. Most of them, however, still tended to attach their recommendations to some basic philosophical system; hence, the division between the supporters of Nature and those of Art. Although their dawning "scientific" spirit prompts some of them to occasionally modify their position in the light of observation and experiment, they tend to swing back time and again to their basic philosophical attitude. On the other hand, some of them are, not

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(a) De Chamousset should be mentioned here, as he gives us a practical illustration of the eighteenth century campaign for artificial feeding, whereas most of the writers discussed are interested in theoretical ideas. De Chamousset was responsible for the setting-up of a sort of crèche just beyond the boundaries of Paris to which orphans were taken and fed on cow's milk, in the way he had seen it done by an old Burgundy peasant. Unfortunately his experiment caused a scandal, because some of the children died and, perhaps more than anything else, caused an outcry against the innovators of artificial feeding. See Mercier, op.cit., p.149.

unexpectedly, the victims of a conservative tradition which prevents them from changing some of their ideas to fit their basic philosophy. As a result of either or both of these reasons, the division between the two sides becomes from time to time considerably obscured. Nevertheless, it is still possible for us to appreciate the basic ideological differences of the authors chosen for examination, if we consider their works as a whole, and <sup>do</sup> not content ourselves with studying merely a few details, which might lead to ambiguity and confusion. (a)

One of the most well-known authors on child-care around 1760 was Brouzet, sometime physician to Louis XV, member of the Académie des Sciences and doctor at Fontainebleau. It seems probable that Rousseau read his work, L'éducation médicinale, which was published in 1754, and in which he discusses the main problems of physical education, especially maternal breast-feeding and the use of swaddling-bands.<sup>1</sup>

Brouzet's attitude is basically naturalistic. He believes that childbirth is, and should be, the work of

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1. Jimack, op.cit., p.366.

(a) Mercier seems to have done this occasionally, e.g. he places Brouzet wrongly amongst the supporters of the artificial on the strength of one passage of the Education médicinale, p.146.  
 2.  
 3.  
 4. Mercier, op.cit., p.79.

nature.<sup>1</sup> He decides that, rather than run the risks of suffocation and physical deformity, it would be better to abandon the use of the traditional swaddling bands and let the child enjoy his natural freedom.<sup>2</sup> He reveals a preference for maternal breast-feeding, provided the mother is strong, healthy and vigorous.<sup>3</sup> But, his practical mind (he reveals his interest in observation and experimentation in the Preface) prevents him from blindly following nature throughout. With Brouzet, experience is a basic principle, and is closely linked to his conception of Nature. He is only prepared to follow Nature in as far as experience and observation support its claims. Consequently he realises that Nature alone is not always sufficient, and at times can, and should, be helped by man. In the case of difficult childbirth, he believes that human art should be allowed to take over, while, in the case of abortion, it can sometimes prevent a natural one, or, if necessary, procure an unnatural one. This is not Art superseding Nature, but merely:

"l'Art guidé par la Nature",<sup>4</sup>

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1. Brouzet: Education médicinale, Paris 1754. pp.37-61.
  2. Brouzet, op.cit., pp.100-102.
  3. Ibid. pp.181-182.
  4. Ibid. pp.xxxix-xl.



and a perfectly legitimate intervention on the part of human intelligence and skill. Moreover, his proscription of swaddling bands is by no means a decided stand for Nature. He first condones their use (they are after all part of a well-established tradition), with the one stipulation that they should not be too tight. He finally discards them as a result of practical considerations rather than from any philosophical idealism. His attitude is:

"Il seroit donc plus simple et plus avantageux de renoncer à l'usage de l'emmailotement, puisqu'il est accompagné de risques, qu'il est aisé d'éviter, et qu'il n'y a aucune utilité d'encourir".<sup>1</sup>

His advocacy of maternal breast-feeding is also subject to limitations. On the one hand Brouzet sides with many of his contemporaries in condemning the dangers of breast-feeding in the eighteenth century, the society of which is so corrupt that mothers can only pass on bad qualities with their milk,<sup>(a)</sup> while, on the other, he withdraws from the obvious alternative of artificial feeding on the grounds that sufficient experimentation

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1. Brouzet, op.cit., p.102.

(a) The idea that characteristics were passed from the mother to the child by means of the mother's milk was extremely common in the eighteenth century. See Mercier, op.cit., pp.82-87.

has not yet been carried out along these lines. His ultimate approval of maternal breast-feeding is, then, a last resource resulting from his unwillingness to propagate insufficiently proved artificial methods, rather than from any ideological conviction. His confidence in experience is linked with a certain amount of faith in rational man's superiority over Nature:

"l'expérience et l'industrie des hommes a plus d'une fois utilement corrigé les prétendues règles de la Nature",<sup>1</sup>

but, the ultimate fallibility<sup>^</sup> of human intelligence and skill seems to outweigh any fallibility on the side of Nature, and }  
Brouzet's only conclusion can be in support of Nature.

And so he attempts to provide his work with a coherent basic philosophy. To do this, he works acceptable human skill and interference in the natural order into a basically naturalistic philosophy by defining art as a natural gift. His attitude is well summed-up by the following passage:

"L'industrie des hommes, la faculté de réformer par le secours de l'Art est aussi un présent de la Nature; et user de cette faculté ou prendre de ses ouvrages bruts et informes, n'est-ce pas toujours obéir à ses lois? Ce n'est pas que nous ne puissions tirer des instructions utiles de l'exemple des animaux qui étant dépourvus d'intelligence, ne font pas comme nous de nouvelles lois, mais suivent constamment celles de la Nature. Aussi nous

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1. Brouzet, op.cit., p.146.

en sommes-nous appuyés et nous nous en appuyerons-nous encore, mais toujours après un mur examen fondé sur des observations solides, sans nous frapper de la fausse idée de suivre scrupuleusement les indications de la Nature, et sans nous laisser séduire par l'appas flatteur pour notre vanité, de la réformer".<sup>1</sup>

Brouzet's philosophy is, then, predominantly naturalistic, both at its base and in detail, though it does leave some room for human art and progress.

Much more important than Brouzet in the history of eighteenth century thought, and of a more certain influence on Rousseau's own ideas, is Buffon, supporter of Nature, and author of the voluminous Histoire Naturelle, in part of which he too discusses the main problems of infant education, including the questions of maternal breast-feeding and the use of swaddling-bands. We know that Rousseau had his copy of Buffon open beside him as he composed Emile.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, not only Rousseau, but also Brouzet, Vandermonde, Le Camus, etc., quote Buffon at every opportunity.<sup>3</sup>

As is fitting for a naturalist, Buffon champions Nature throughout his work. In Volume II, for example,

1. Brouzet, op.cit., pp.146-147.
2. See Jimack, op.cit., p.344.
3. e.g. Brouzet, op.cit., pp.83-4, 103, 176 ....  
Vandermonde, Essai sur la maniere de perfectionner la race humaine: pp.109, 101-150, Bk.II, p.101.

of his Histoire Naturelle he states quite simply that:

"La Nature est plus belle que l'Art".<sup>1</sup>

It is not surprising, then, to find him strongly supporting

maternal breast-feeding:

"Si les meres", he says, "nourrissoient leurs enfans, il y a apparence qu'ils en seroient plus forts et plus vigoureux".<sup>2</sup>

Buffon's reasons for supporting Nature in this case are those of the scientist rather than those of the philosopher. They are based on the idea that the mother's milk, provided by Nature for her particular child, must be more suitable for that child than the milk of another woman.<sup>(a)</sup> In addition, he sees the resulting advantages as a physical rather than a moral issue.

Buffon also advocates a general proscription of swaddling bands, once again basing his point of view on observation rather than on any kind of naturalistic idealism. He is convinced of the physical superiority of the children of more primitive peoples who have never known the constraint of swaddling clothes.<sup>3</sup> His general

1. Buffon: Histoire naturelle, Paris, 1749. Vol.II, p.37.

2. Ibid., p.474.

3. Ibid., pp.457-8.

(a) This is the theory of analogy widely held in the eighteenth century. i.e. the physical composition of the child is identical to that of the mother.

1. Ibid., p.470.

2. Ibid., p.463.

3. Ibid., Vol.III, p.312.



educational system is based on the idea that the best education is that which is fitted to the child's natural capacities:

"la meilleure de toutes les éducations est celle qui est la plus ordinaire, celle par laquelle on ne force pas la Nature, celle qui est le moins sévère, celle qui est le plus proportionnée, je ne dis pas aux forces, mais à la foiblesse de l'enfant".<sup>1</sup>

This does not mean to say, however, that Buffon completely disregards the possibilities of human art. On several occasions he notes its usefulness: art can be used during the cutting of teeth to relieve natural pain,<sup>2</sup> wine might be used to cure worms,<sup>3</sup> while goat's milk might be effectively used to supplement human milk after the first few months of feeding.<sup>4</sup> At one point he even condemns the errors to which Nature can and does expose us with regard to the working of the senses,<sup>5</sup> and concludes that here art can and must help original Nature:

"L'excellence des sens vient de la nature, mais l'art et l'habitude peuvent leur donner aussi un plus grand degré de perfection; il ne faut pas pour cela que les exercer souvent et longtemps sur les memes objets".<sup>5</sup>

The latter is, of course, merely a case of using natural means of perfecting original Nature, and we shall find a

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1. Buffon, op.cit., Vol.II, p.477.
  2. Ibid., p.466.
  3. Ibid., p.470.
  4. Ibid., p.463.
  5. Ibid., Vol.III, p.312.

similar conception with Rousseau. As for the other examples, if Buffon appears sometimes undecided in his support of Nature, it is usually because observation has taught him that, in certain cases, Nature can be effectively helped by man.

Sometimes, however, Buffon's support of Art is the result of a philosophical attitude. He feels that man is further from an instinctively natural state than are other animals, but that he has been given a reflective faculty which enables him to consider Nature and supplement her works wherever necessary, creating ultimately "une Nature nouvelle".<sup>1</sup> But, the underlying theme of his work is the superiority of Nature and natural methods over art. There is a "natural order" which must be followed, and which is the only way by which man can obtain true happiness:

"tout ce que nous voulons au delà de ce que la Nature peut nous donner, est peine et ... rien n'est plaisir que ce qu'elle nous offre"<sup>2</sup>

Such general considerations do, of course, belong more to the field of philosophical hypothesis than scientific observation, but, as we have seen, as far as physical education is concerned, Buffon relies much more on arguments based on scientific observation than on philosophical idealism.

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1. Buffon, op.cit., Vol.XII, pp.xii-xiii.

2. Ibid., Vol.IV, pp.44-45.

Vandermonde, a surgeon trained in the schools of the University of Paris, though interested in the same questions; maternal breast-feeding, swaddling-bands etc., holds very different basic tenets <sup>from</sup> to both Brouzet and Buffon. The title of his book: Essai sur la manière de perfectionner l'espèce humaine, implies that human art can itself improve on Nature and form an ideal or perfect human-being. *physically superior and more perfect or*

His stand-point is, however, not entirely clear cut. Like Brouzet and Buffon with regard to naturalism, Vandermonde does not advocate merely artificial means of reform, but tends to sway between Nature and Art. The first section of his book gives the impression that he believes, in a manner somewhat similar to that of Buffon, that man has lost his primitive naturalness, and, as a result, must employ art as a means of regaining original Nature. It soon becomes obvious, however, that Vandermonde's conception of Nature is basically different <sup>from</sup> to that of Brouzet and Buffon. Whereas they are dealing with an environmental, physical nature of which man is an integral part, Vandermonde is interested in the Platonic conception of an ideal Nature. For him, the Nature to be attained is:

"non pas comme elle se présente le plus souvent; mais comme elle doit être".<sup>1</sup>

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1. Vandermonde: op.cit., p.23. The underlining is mine.

Vandermonde's basic idea is, then, not that original nature is right and good, (as Brouzet and Buffon believe), but that there exists an ideal of human perfection (Nature) which can be attained through Art. This idea leads him to elaborate schemes of breeding based on a technique similar to that used with cattle, sheep, dogs etc. This would presumably lead to the formation of physically superior and more perfect or "natural" human-beings. Human intelligence is to be the guide throughout but for Vandermonde it is not, as it was for Brouzet, merely a gift from Nature; it is rather, the quality which renders man superior to Nature. As a result, Nature exists merely in order to be useful to man. He concedes that Nature can undoubtedly deal successfully with some matters, but art, the result of human intelligence, is, throughout, Nature's vital auxiliary.

Let us look at his attitude towards childbirth, for example. Birth, he says, is usually the work of Nature, and an operation in which human Art may even be dangerous, but, in difficult cases, it passes entirely into the hands of Art, which often succeeds where Nature would inevitably fail. This is one of the triumphs of Art.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Vandermonde: op.cit., pp.429-431.



There are moments when Vandermonde seems a little confused about his definition of Nature, and takes up the cause of environmental, physical Nature as conceived by Brouzet and Buffon. His proscription of swaddling bands is one example of this:

"Meres barbares!" he complains, "pourquoi rendre vos enfans malheureux ... Imitons les sauvages qui sont en cette partie moins blâmables que nous ... Ils se contentent de couvrir leurs enfans, sans les emmailloter. Cependant on voit rarement chez eux des boiteux et des bossus. Ils s'éloignent moins de la nature, et en cela ils sont plus parfaits que nous".<sup>1</sup>

This is, however, merely employing natural methods when they appear more satisfactory than artificial ones for perfecting the human race. The basic idea of man's ability to direct Nature and Vandermonde's definition of Nature as "original perfection" remain the same.

Again, on the question of infant feeding Vandermonde appears as the supporter of Nature. He first argues that, as the child's mother can provide her offspring with all he needs in the way of food, breast-feeding is advisable, particularly as, in addition, it leads to a tender bond of affection between mother and child. However, he no sooner reaches this point than he realises that his argument is no longer valid. Like many of his

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1. Vandermonde, op.cit., p.88.

3. Ibid., pp.106-107.

4. Ibid., p.3.

5. Ibid., p.124.

contemporaries, he sees that human nature is now so depraved that there can no longer be any tender bond. All the mother does now is pass on bad qualities to her child. And so, Vandermonde abolishes corrupted nature and resorts to art:

"On ne peut mieux faire que d'avoir recours au lait des bêtes domestiques".<sup>1</sup>

If this is not sufficient, an approved "bouillie", invented by Vandermonde, could be used; i.e. "mie de pain bien cuit et du lait", with perhaps yolk of egg, or a "bouillon" made from the flesh of old animals which have been boiled and roasted.<sup>2</sup> This, according to Vandermonde is the only sure way of achieving the regeneration and the perfection of the human race.<sup>3</sup>

Throughout his book, we are faced by the idea of our responsibility and power to improve on Nature:

"Faisons pour nos enfans ce que l'on a fait pour nous. Faisons plus, rendons-les parfaits; rectifions leurs esprits. Corrigeons leurs difformités, et faisons germer dans leurs tendres parties la force et la santé".<sup>4</sup>

i.e. we can change nature both physically:

"Les parens ne peuvent mieux faire que d'aider la nature, en diminuant son fardeau. Ils doivent accoutumer leurs enfans à marcher dans le plus bas âge, les forcer à le faire en les permettant des récompenses ...."<sup>5</sup>

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1. Vandermonde, op.cit., p.88.
  2. Ibid., p.103.
  3. Ibid., pp.106-107.
  4. Ibid., p.3.
  5. Ibid., p.124.

and morally:

"Il ne faut pas attendre, pour combattre les passions, qu'elles soient assez fortes pour résister aux efforts de la raison et de l'éducation".<sup>1</sup>

The latter is a matter of consistently destroying the supposedly pernicious "natural" characteristics, and artificially creating good ones.

Briefly, Vandermonde's philosophy is a constant opposition to all that is natural (i.e. as created by Nature and untouched by man). This results from his fundamental belief that true Nature is not present and real, but has to be recreated, and can only be done so through Art, which is the product of human intelligence. Natural methods of physical education may sometimes be successful (childbirth and freedom of limbs), but, for the most part, artificial or anti-natural methods (feeding, physical and moral exercise) are more successful. Natural methods are only employed when they effectively improve human nature. This, of course, differs basically from the ideas of Brouzet and Buffon. The former attempts to reconcile art with nature, of which it is merely a product ("un présent de la Nature"), while the latter is convinced of the ultimate superiority of nature to art ("la Nature

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1. Vandermonde, op.cit., p.172.



est plus belle que l'Art"). Both see the natural order as something which has been lost, the inspiration of which, however, is to be remained close to, although it may be modified in the light of natural human intelligence.

These, then, are the two trends. How can we best describe Rousseau's position in relation to them?

His basic educational theory is, we might say, an attempt at synthesis.<sup>(a)</sup> From the start he is aware of the existing opposition between art and nature, and tries to resolve the problem involved right from the beginning.<sup>1</sup> Education, as he sees it, is most definitely an art. Since man has lost his original place in the order of the universe, or Natural Order, education is the only means by which this can be regained, and will thus depend on the skill of human intelligence. But to regain Nature, Rousseau is not prepared to employ artificial means, only natural ones, in the sense of Brouzet and Buffon. Thus, we find throughout Emile, admonitions similar to:

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1. Emile, Garnier, 1904, pp.3-7.

(a) The idea of synthesis was present at an early date in Rousseau's thought. In the Confessions he says:

"Je commençois par quelque livre de philosophie, comme la Logique de Port-royal, l'Essai de Locke, Mallebranche, Leibnitz, Descartes, etc. Je m'apperçus bientôt que tous ces auteurs étoient entre eux en contradiction presque perpétuelle, et je formai le chimérique projet de les accorder, ....." Pléiade edition, p.237.

He gave this up as beyond his powers at the time of his studies at Les Charmettes.



"Observez la nature, et suivez la route qu'elle vous trace".<sup>1</sup>

The section of Emile which deals with child-care and physical education is an outstanding exposition of a naturalistic philosophy. In it Rousseau discards, for example, the long-established and so far unattacked tradition of adding wine to the water in which the newborn child is washed. His arguments, though dressed in scientific garb are, basically, entirely philosophical:

"Comme la nature ne produit rien de fermenté, il n'est pas à croire que l'usage d'une liqueur artificielle importe à la vie de ses créatures".<sup>2</sup>

This kind of ideological reasoning occurs time and again in Emile. For example, Rousseau advocates maternal breastfeeding, or, at worst, human milk other than that of the mother, on moral rather than physical grounds:

"Mais que les mères daignent nourrir leurs enfants, les moeurs vont se réformer d'elles-mêmes, les sentiments de la nature se réveiller dans tous les coeurs".<sup>3</sup>

He recommends a purely vegetarian diet, maintaining that, since children rarely enjoy eating meat, it cannot be man's natural food;<sup>4</sup> another philosophical conviction disguised in scanty scientific garb. He proscribes

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1. Emile, p.15.

2. Ibid. p.32. simple, p.46. Practical advice - ivory etc.

3. Ibid. p.14. r games: moral advice - gold, precious

4. Ibid. p.161. s of unnecessary luxury.

7. Ibid., pp.137-138.

doctors and advocates the superiority of natural means of recovery, on the grounds that they help men face death courageously, and suffer less ultimately.<sup>1</sup> He proscribes swaddling-bands,<sup>2</sup> and the use of elaborate rattles.<sup>3</sup> He recommends loose, simple clothes,<sup>4</sup> and a mere piece of wood for a teething-ring.<sup>5</sup> On all these points his arguments are as much of a moral as a physical order.<sup>6</sup>

All this is, however, counterbalanced by another theme running through the book, that of art helping nature. The best examples to illustrate this are the passage on the prevention of habit-forming, and the training of the senses. Here we see art working through purely natural channels; e.g. the child must learn to judge through the exercise of his senses. This can be done either by means of his own accidental experience, or through exercises carefully contrived by the child's tutor; e.g. Rousseau's idea of nocturnal games to improve the sense of touch.<sup>7</sup>

Clearly then, what Rousseau does object to is not art directing nature, but art alone, or anything which is

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1. Emile, pp.24-26.
  2. Ibid., p.46.
  3. Ibid., p.46.
  4. Ibid., p.123.
  5. Ibid., p.46.
  6. See, for example, p.46. Practical advice - ivory etc. too hard for gums: moral advice - gold, precious stones, signs of unnecessary luxury.
  7. Ibid., pp.137-138.

obviously anti-natural. He condemns the use of ready-made instruments, geometrical or otherwise, because he believes they only serve to dull the senses, and, as a result, the judgements derived from the senses. The child must invent and manufacture (with the help of his tutor) all he needs in the way of instruments. Then:

"quand nous mettons à fabriquer ces machines l'adresse qui nous en tenait lieu, quand nous employons à les faire la sagacité qu'il fallait pour nous en passer, nous gagnons sans rien perdre, nous ajoutons l'art à la nature, et nous devenons plus ingénieux sans devenir moins adroit".<sup>1</sup>

When defining Rousseau's position in the current of eighteenth century thought on physical education, we must, then, place him alongside Brouzet and Buffon rather than Vandermonde, despite the underlying attempt at synthesis of his educational theory as a whole. For, as far as detail is concerned, his philosophy is, as we have seen, entirely naturalistic. Unlike Vandermonde he refuses to support artificial methods of any kind in infant education. It is interesting to note when reading Brouzet, Vandermonde, Rousseau etc. the degree of consistency with which Rousseau supports Nature. He is much more constant in his opinions than even Buffon. Whereas the others lack

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1. Emile: p.191.

ideological conviction, and fail to link up their examples with a basic, coherent philosophy, Rousseau reveals himself as a confirmed moralist. All his scientific arguments merely disguise a profound philosophical conviction. It is this which causes Rousseau to stand out amongst the others, and which makes his work so much more exciting than theirs. Here is a man who is not afraid to hold on to his belief and follow it through to the point of exaggeration.

It is this which probably caused a stir at the publication of Emile rather than any question of the novelty of the ideas expressed. Consequently, our task is not to examine any and every work on child education posterior to Emile in an attempt to find similar ideas, but simply those which either make direct references to Emile, or which are obviously influenced by, or show a reaction to, an extreme naturalistic philosophy.

For clarity's sake, the information we have concerning Rousseau's reputation in the field of physical education during the period 1762 to 1790 will first be examined in connection with the practical issues of the campaign, i.e., swaddling-bands, maternal breast-feeding, cold baths, etc., and will then be discussed in connection with the development of the ideological concepts related to these.



B. Reactions to Rousseau's ideas on physical education

One of the first repercussions concerning Rousseau's ideas on physical education as expressed in Emile, is to be found in Cajot's collection of alleged plagiarisms. Four years after the publication of Emile, Cajot drew attention to the marked similarity of Rousseau's ideas with those of his predecessors, both ancient and modern. One of his most controversial parallels compared Rousseau's ideas on the physical education of the young child with those of Doctor Jean-Charles Désessartz, whose book on this subject had appeared in 1760.<sup>1</sup> Cajot's accusation of plagiarism on Rousseau's part, centres around the supposed similarity of Rousseau's and Désessartz's condemnation of swaddling-bands. To "prove" that Rousseau is nothing but a mere "Copiste",<sup>2</sup> Cajot quotes two lengthy passages, one from each author, in which it is undoubtedly easy to find similar arguments, although these are phrased in strikingly different language. For instance, both authors insist on the danger of swaddling-bands to the body's circulation.

Désessartz maintains:

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1. Désessartz (J.-Ch.): Traité de l'éducation corporelle des enfans en bas âge, Paris, 1760.
  2. Cajot, op.cit., p.62.

3. Buffon, Histoire naturelle,  
4. Vandermondet, op.cit., p. 24.

It is "Les vaisseaux qui se distribuent à la peau et aux muscles, retenus par cette forte compression, ne peuvent recevoir qu'une tres-petite quantité de sang, et ce qu'ils en reçoivent ne coule que difficilement ..."1

Rousseau argues:

"L'inaction, la contrainte où l'on retient les membres d'un enfant, ne peuvent que gêner la circulation du sang, des humeurs, empêcher l'enfant de se fortifier, de croître et altérer sa constitution .... Quand l'enfant est bien lié, on le jette dans un coin, sans s'embarasser de ses cris .... Tous ceux qu'on a trouvés dans cette situation avoient le visage violet; la poitrine fortement comprimée ne laissant pas circuler le sang, il remontoit à la tête ...."2

Rousseau's somewhat non-medical description, culminating in the vivid detail of the swathed child turning purple in its bands, can hardly be seriously described as mere copying from Désessartz's strictly medical analysis.

Again, the idea that those who do not use swaddling-bands are rarely (Rousseau actually says never) deformed, is not merely common to both Rousseau and Désessartz; their arguments might well be paralleled with Buffon's arguments on the physical superiority of savages,<sup>3</sup> or Vandermonde's passage:

"Imitons les sauvages qui sont en cette partie moins blâmables que nous ... Ils se contentent de couvrir leurs enfans, sans les emmailloter. Cependant, on voit rarement chez eux des bossus".<sup>4</sup>

1. Quoted by Cajot, p.59.

2. Cajot, p.62. *Emile*, pp.10 & 11.

3. Buffon, *Histoire naturelle*, Vol.II, pp.457-458.

4. Vandermonde: *op.cit.*, pp.28-29.

It is obvious from our earlier discussion that most of the topics and arguments common to Désessartz and Rousseau on the subject of swaddling-bands, maternal breast-feeding, etc., were already sufficiently well discussed by 1760 to discourage any search for direct copying on the part of a particular author. These ideas must be seen as part of a general movement, in which the same ideas, variously expressed, were often repeated. However striking the similarities which they contain may be, these do not conclusively suggest plagiarism.

However, the controversy concerning Désessartz has proved singularly persistent. After long years of silence, and after the death of both Rousseau and his alleged witness, Alexis Piron, Désessartz renewed the attack widening the accusation of plagiarism to include most of Rousseau's remarks on the early physical education of the young child:

"En 1762, J.J. Rousseau publia son Emile. Sa plume enchanteresse a disséminé dans le premier volume les mêmes principes sur l'allaitement maternel, sur le coucher, l'habillement, la nourriture, le sevrage des enfans, sur le choix d'une nourrice étrangere etc., que j'ai développés par ordre et avec méthode dans mon Traité;"

the only exceptions being:

- (a) This is Désessartz's interpretation of Rousseau's ideas in 1798. It is important to note that Rousseau did not recommend cold water for the new-born child. For the gradual attribution of this idea to Rousseau, see pp. 80-81, 84, 29-43, 100.

"L'usage de l'eau froide pour le nettoyage des enfans nouveausnés, pour les baigner, celui de les laisser presque tout nuds ...<sup>1</sup> (a)

Piron, The accusation, however, did not remain a simple matter of easily debateable parallel ideas. Désessartz added an air of authenticity by implicating Alexis Piron, who, according to Désessartz, knowing that Rousseau intended to start his treatise from the moment Emile left the wet nurse's hands, encouraged him to start from birth, filling in any gaps in his own knowledge of the subject from Désessartz's book, a copy of which Piron is supposed to have supplied.<sup>2</sup>

The whole question has been much discussed. In 1908, M. Ad. d'Espine published an article in the Bulletin de l'Académie de Médecine, in which he claimed that Rousseau only met Alexis Piron for the first time in 1771.<sup>3</sup> He based his information on J. Duseaulx, who published his De mes rapports avec J.J. Rousseau et de notre correspondance in 1798 (An VII), i.e. slightly before Désessartz's accusation, which was published

1. Désessartz: op.cit., An VIII edition, Avertissement, p.viii.

2. Désessartz: Ibid., p.ix.

3. Vol.LIX, p.608.

(a) This is Désessartz's interpretation of Rousseau's ideas in 1798. It is important to note that Rousseau did not recommend cold water for the new-born child. For the gradual attribution of this idea to Rousseau, see pp.80-81, 86, 89-93, 100.



An VIII (1798-9). Duseaulx relates how, on Piron's fête day, he invited Rousseau to meet Piron, and reports that Piron, who had extremely bad eye-sight, on hearing voices, asked eagerly: "Qui donc est-là? Est-ce Jean-Jacques?" On Rousseau's reply to the affirmative, he seized his hand and, pressing it to his breast, recited the Nunc Dimittis. As Dr. d'Espine points out, this has all the appearance of a first meeting, although this does not exclude the possibility that Rousseau had previously corresponded with Piron. So far, however, we have no evidence of this either in the way of contemporary testimony or correspondence.

Dr. d'Espine, however, offered a further point, which deals with the dates of the composition of Emile.<sup>1</sup> Various aspects of this have since been discussed more fully by Léopold Favre,<sup>2</sup> Masson,<sup>3</sup> Ravier,<sup>4</sup> and, more recently, by Peter D. Jimack, whose analysis takes the arguments of his predecessors into consideration.<sup>5</sup> With Favre, Jimack claims that the Favre manuscript (designated by F) shows every sign of being a first complete draft of

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1. D'Espine: op.cit., pp.608-610.

2. In the AJJR, 1912.

3. Masson: op.cit.

4. Ravier: L'éducation de l'homme nouveau, 1941.

5. Jimack: op.cit., pp.15-43.

Emile.<sup>1</sup> His evidence that the creation of an imaginary pupil only occurs half-way through F., and that the name Emile has been subsequently inserted in the earlier part of the text, together with the fact that a rough plan of the treatise, found in the margin towards the beginning of F., and presumably as Rousseau envisaged it near the beginning of the composition of F., in no way corresponds to the finished manuscript, seems to prove fairly conclusively that F. is indeed the original complete draft of Emile. Dr. Jimack maintains that he can safely date this manuscript between late 1758 or early 1759 and November or December 1759,<sup>2</sup> i.e. well before the publication of Désessartz's book. Although some of the details on physical education are missing from F., (notably the discussion on milk and the passage against doctors) Dr. Jimack points out that in it Rousseau certainly deals with the child right from birth, and not, as Désessartz's accusation claims, from the time the child leaves his wet-nurse. In addition, Dr. Jimack claims that he can also date the later manuscript, which he denotes as B., and which, taken together with F., gives us more or less

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1. Jimack: op.cit., p.16.

2. Ibid., p.43.

the final text, prior to January 1760,<sup>1</sup> in which case, very few points could even be considered as being possibly inspired by a reading of Désessartz. (a) (b)

Unless conclusive, contradictory evidence were to be found, we can only conclude that Cajot and Désessartz's combined accusation is a mere fabrication. As far as Cajot is concerned, it can be dismissed along with his countless other accusations; as far as Désessartz is concerned, it can only be interpreted as the work of jealousy. Probably embittered by the lack of success of his own work:

"mon livre, . . . ., seroit donc resté inconnu, sans le compte qu'en avoit rendu l'auteur du journal de Trévoux, sans l'estime que témoignent en faire quelques savans, entre les mains desquels il étoit tombé,"<sup>2</sup>

and the apparent success of Rousseau's similar arguments,

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1. Jimack, op.cit., p.43.

2. Désessartz: An VIII edition, p.vii.

(a) Dr. Jimack does, in fact, discuss two possible points of comparison. See op.cit., p.364.

(b) It has also been suggested that Rousseau asked his publisher to send him a copy of Désessartz's book in October 1761 (letter of 19 Oct. 1761 to Duchesne, CG1147). In this letter Rousseau refers to "un nouveau livre sur l'éducation médicinale des enfants" which he would like to read. If, in fact, this is Désessartz's book, we can certainly say that Rousseau did not know his work until after the completion of all three existing manuscripts of Emile. See Jimack, op.cit., Note p.363, and the dating of the manuscripts pp.15-43.

he was encouraged to support in the Preface of his 1798 edition an accusation which had already been conveniently levelled on his behalf. By 1798 he had nothing to lose, the accused and the witness were both dead.<sup>(a)</sup>

Another writer whose name was involved in an accusation of plagiarism concerning Emile was Jacques Balexserd<sup>(b)</sup>, whose book on the education of the young child, published in the same year as Emile, is said by Désessartz in his bibliography to have achieved considerable success. This time Rousseau was the accuser not the accused.

In his Confessions<sup>1</sup> he complains:

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1. Confessions, Pléiade edition, p.575.

(a) It is interesting to see that, despite his accusation, Désessartz openly acknowledged Rousseau's success with regard to maternal breast-feeding. See quotation p.14.

(b) Balexserd and Désessartz are not one and the same person as Dr. Tash imagines. op.cit., p.5.

Jacques Balexserd, a Genevan doctor, was born in 1726 and died in 1774. He is known for two works:

(1) His Dissertation sur l'éducation physique des enfants (1762).

(2) A Dissertation sur les causes principales de la mort d'un aussi grand nombre d'enfants ..... which obtained a prize at the Academy of Mantua in 1773.

Jean-Charles Désessartz, a French doctor, was born in 1729 and died only in 1811 - His works are:

(1) Traité de l'éducation corporelle des enfants ... (1760).

(2) Mémoire sur le croup. (1807).

(3) Recueil de Discours, Mémoires et Observations de médecine clinique. (1811).

(4) An edition of Jean-Frédéric Carthenser's Matière Médicale. (1769).



"Peu de jours avant ou après la publication de mon livre; car je ne me rappelle pas bien exactement le tems, parut un autre ouvrage sur le même sujet tiré mot à mot de mon premier volume, hors quelques platitudes dont on avoit entremêlé cet extrait. Ce livre portoit le nom d'un Genevois appellé Balexserd, et il étoit dit dans le titre qu'il avoit remporté le prix à l'Academie de Harlem".

He maintains that both the Academy and the prize had been invented to lend an air of authenticity to a work which was, otherwise, mere plagiarism. He even goes so far as to see a whole plot behind it, whereby either his manuscript had been secretly handed over to Balexserd, or the story of the prize invented, in order to ruin the success of Emile. The accusation obviously has its roots in Rousseau's propensity to see himself surrounded by plots and enemies, all intent on destroying, or in some way, harming his Emile.<sup>(a)</sup>

Records<sup>(b)</sup> show that, in 1761, the Société

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- (a) cf. Bernard Gagnebin's opinion in the Pléiade edition of the Confessions, p.1556, Note 3.
- (b) The Verhandelingen nitgegeeven door de Hollandsche Maatschappye der Wetenschappen, te Haarlem, Vol.III, Pt.I, Haarlem 1763 reports: (pp.x-xi),  
 "De Vraag in het Jaar 1761, voor de eerstemaal opgegeeven om beantwoord te worden voor den eersten Maart van het Jaar 1762, (was is het beste bestier, het geen men moet houden entrent het ligehaam der Kinderen, zoo met obzicht tot hunne kleeding, voedsel oeffening als anders, van hunne geboorte af geduurende hunne kindsheid, om ze lang en gezond te doen leeven?) is geoordeeld best beantwoord te zyn door den Schryver onder der Zinspreuke No. 35. Sartam et tectam ab omnique

Hollandaise des Sciences (or the Haarlem Academy) did in fact hold a competition on the subject: "Quelle est la meilleure direction à suivre dans l'habillement, la nourriture, et les exercices des enfans depuis le moment où ils naissent jusqu'à leur adolescence, pour qu'ils vivent longtemps et en Santé", and that, in May 1762, the prize was awarded to Jacques Balexsert (or Ballexserd), a Genevan doctor in practice in Paris. His essay was published in Paris later that year under the title: Dissertation sur l'éducation physique des enfans depuis leur naissance jusqu'a l'âge de la puberté. The same arguments apply to both the controversy concerning Désessartz and that concerning Balexserd. Although Balexserd's work contains marked similarities to Rousseau's ideas on child care, it would be difficult to point to a definite example of plagiarism, and we must see their ideas in the context of a general movement of thought

However, if the physical educationalists ignore

Enile, this is not so true of the non-specialists. The

(b) (Continued)

1. molestia et incommodo servate prolem inde sanitas, robur et longaevitas; waarvan by het openen van het billet bleek, dat de Aucteur was Jacques Ballexserd, Citoyen de Geneve, demeurant à Paris place Dauphine; denwelken derhalven de prys der Goude Medaille is gegeven".

(b) cf. Mercier's insistence on this lack of success, op.cit., pp.156-159.

developing rapidly during the 1750's and early sixties.<sup>(a)</sup>

Despite this profusion of theoretical works on physical education, there is a striking lack of practical effects before 1760. None of the writers claim success. Their general attitude is one of criticism of the abuses of the century in which they live, and pessimism as to the likely impact of their campaign.<sup>(b)</sup>

In the years immediately following the publication of Emile, books on physical education continue in the same vein, criticising abuse, recommending reforms, expecting success only in the distant future. Rousseau's more dynamic approach to the subject appears either to pass unnoticed or to be deliberately ignored by the educational theorists. This may well be, as has already been suggested in the Introduction,<sup>1</sup> partly because Emile was a condemned book, and partly because Rousseau's reputation as an authority on education was as yet unmade.

However, if the physical educationalists ignore Emile, this is not so true of the non-specialists. The

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1. See pp. 18-19.

(a) Bernard Gagnebin (Confessions, p.1556) mentions the accusation and interprets it as a mere phantasma of Rousseau's imagination.

(b) cf. Mercier's insistence on this lack of success, op.cit., pp.158-159.

author of the article on Emile in the Journal des Sçavans makes two or three comments on Rousseau's ideas in this field. He agrees with him on the subject of swaddling bands, but disagrees about exposing children to the inclemencies of the seasons, regardless of their constitution.<sup>1</sup> He also supports Rousseau's passage on maternal breast-feeding, but criticises his approach to the subject:

"Ce que l'on sçait encore, et que vous avez très-bien prouvé, c'est que la mere est la nourrice naturelle de son enfant ..... Mais n'auriez-vous pas eu raison, quand vous vous seriez abstenu de répandre sur la vérité des torrens de bile ..."<sup>2</sup>

In his Anti-Emile of 1763 Formey also mentions one or two points on physical education. He supports the old practice of remodelling the child's head, which Rousseau had strongly condemned,<sup>3</sup> arguing that if the head suffers during birth and the original shape is damaged, all the midwife does is restore the original shape.<sup>4</sup> He is, no doubt, implying by this that there is no question of the midwife arbitrarily remodelling the child's head in order to suit the whims of fashion, which is the point Rousseau

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1. Journal des Sçavans, Tome LXXI, p.237.
  2. Ibid., pp.237-8.
  3. Emile, p.9.
  4. Formey, Anti-Emile, 1763, p.27.





de tems à blâmer un abus qu'on ne peut arrêter, cherchons, en approfondissant chaque partie de la question proposée, des secours contre les accidens, qui naissent d'un abus si général".<sup>1</sup>

A topic which gains in importance during the period after Emile, to such an extent that it can subsequently be placed alongside the highly discussed problems of maternal breast-feeding and swaddling-bands, is the question of cold baths, already recommended by Buffon, and supported by Rousseau, though with limitations. In 1761, another Swiss doctor, Tissot, had recommended, not, as Rousseau does, that the child should be gradually introduced to cold baths, but that it should be plunged into cold water only a few days after birth, and without any preliminary preparations.<sup>2</sup> He recommends this particularly for delicate children, on the grounds that it will strengthen them. The first edition of his book, published in Lausanne in 1761, was apparently so successful that in 1764 he brought out a second edition, this time published in Lyons, and containing additions to the section on child-care. In it he claims that the value of the cold bath has already been proved by practical examples:

"J'ai le plaisir de voir, que depuis que j'ai cherché à l'introduire ici (i.e. in Switzerland), que plusieurs meres, les plus tendres et les plus raisonnables, l'ont employé avec le plus grand succès".<sup>3</sup>

1. David: op.cit., p.28.

2. Tissot: Avis au peuple sur sa santé, Lyon 1764, p.465.

3. Ibid., op.cit., p.466.

He makes no reference to Rousseau's ideas on this subject.<sup>(a)</sup>

Another supporter of cold baths is Madame Anel Lerebours. In her Avis aux meres qui veulent nourrir (1767) she advises:

"Dans la belle saison, il faut laver tout le corps des enfans avec de l'eau froide: cette pratique leur fortifie les joues et les reins".<sup>1</sup>

In winter she considers it sufficient to wash the thighs alone in cold water. She acknowledges no sources for this idea, though her references to Tissot on other subjects suggest that she may be following him.

Lerebours also adds her voice to those who advocate maternal breast-feeding, though with one important difference: she now points out that this is already practised:

1. Lerebours, op.cit., p.68.

(a) Although Tissot makes no reference to Rousseau in the later editions of the Avis au peuple, he certainly knew Emile. Several letters exist between Rousseau and Tissot, in one of which Tissot mentions their similar insistence on the importance of observation for achieving success in medicine and their differences elsewhere:

"Vous verrés, Monsieur, dans l'Avis au Peuple p.520, que nous pensons presque de même sur cette science; si nous differons sur quelques articles, cest que j'ai tort sur quelques uns, et il ne peut point y avoir de regles generales sur quelques autres, nous avons fait nos regles particulieres pour des cas differents".

AJJR, Vol.VII, 1911, p.21.



"Je vois, avec plaisir, que la plupart des meres désirent de pouvoir nourrir leurs enfans; et ne les livrent à des étrangères que par un funeste effet de l'usage et des préjugés, que plusieurs, malgré les oppositions sans nombre qu'elles ont à combattre savent braver toutes les difficultés et méritent par là le titre de vraies meres ...<sup>1</sup>

It is impossible to tell, however, whether this minority group had always existed, whether it is the beginnings of social change, or whether Lerebours merely thinks this a more subtle form of persuasion to declare that the first steps, i.e., the most difficult for the prejudiced reader, have already been taken. Later evidence suggests, however, that this is probably the beginnings of social change.

On the subject of maternal breast-feeding, and the disadvantages of the wet-nurse, she refers her readers to Tissot, Locke, Montaigne "et plusieurs autres Ecrivains célèbres",<sup>2</sup> whom she fails to mention individually. She includes two long quotations on the subject from Bermingham and Favorinus. There is no reference to Rousseau.

She also joins the old campaign against swaddling-bands, which she maintains are already disappearing:

"Je ne m'étendrai pas sur les inconvénients qui résultent de l'usage des bandes, parce que je vois qu'on en a reconnu les mauvais effets".<sup>3</sup> (a)

1. Lerebours, op.cit., p.xv.

2. Ibid., p.55.

3. Ibid., pp.60-61.

(a) Mercier also insists on the disappearance of swaddling-bands around this period, p.159.



She does not attribute this reform to any particular one doctor or writer. face of opposition.

The first writer on physical education to make a direct reference to Rousseau on this subject seems to be the Abbé Coyer. In 1770, he brought out a book entitled Plan d'Education Publique in which he deals with the question of education, both physical, intellectual and moral, from birth until adolescence. He complains that, despite numerous educational projects (he quotes Montaigne in France; Locke and Milton in England), nothing has been done. In the field of physical education he recommends Rousseau's ideas<sup>(a)</sup> on physical freedom for the young child, linking his name with that of the already well-established Locke. He singles them out as authorities from amongst the crowd of other writers on the same topic:

"Tout ce que dit l'Instituteur d'Emile avec l'Observateur Locke et tant d'autres, sur la liberté où on doit laisser le nouveau-né, sans maillot, sans bandages, sans ligature, sans gêne, sans compression, avec toute la facilité de se mouvoir, ... tout cela est d'une vérité palpable".<sup>1</sup>

He makes no attempt to justify Rousseau as an authority on physical education, which suggests that he is already

1. Coyer: op.cit., p.2.

(a) The fact that he refers to him merely as the "Instituteur d'Emile" suggests that the book is already well-known by 1770.

accepted by the reading public. Coyer's tone is not one of defence in the face of opposition.

On the subject of maternal breast-feeding Coyer merely adds his voice to the general outcry:

"Meres qui n'êtes point Meres, puisque vous refusez à vos enfans le lait que la nature vous donna pour les nourrir ..."<sup>1</sup>

emphasising both the general lack of success of the campaign, and the unlikelihood of it ever achieving success:

"Enchaînés par la coutume, exhortées inutilement par de beaux et de bons esprits qui préfèrent des ouvrages utiles à des compositions de pur agrément; elles n'ont rien fait, elles n'en feront rien".<sup>2</sup>

His proposed solution is the foundation of national schools, which should be compulsory from the age of four, and which would counterbalance the bad education received at home.

On the subject of cold baths he accepts Tissot's suggestion and quotes from him at length.

Since his subject takes him further than the doctors solely occupied with child care, he discusses the need for a good physical education for school-children. He heartily adopts and approves Rousseau's recommendations for children's games, and includes a long quotation on this topic from Emile.<sup>3</sup> Here again he seems to be the first

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1. Coyer, op.cit., p.2.

2. Ibid., p.5.

3. Ibid., pp.64-66.

writer to openly support Rousseau on the question of physical exercise through suitable games.

In 1771 Fourcroy de Guillerville published a collection of letters on physical education which were, in fact, written during 1770.<sup>1</sup> He includes a Lettre d'un anonyme au Sieur Godart, sur l'éducation physique des Enfans, in which the author recommends, as Rousseau had done, the gradual introduction of the child to cold baths. In his reply, Fourcroy attributes this idea to the "célèbre J.J. Rousseau".<sup>2</sup> Although he maintains that he supports many of Rousseau's ideas, he nevertheless disagrees with his method concerning cold baths, and even goes so far as to ridicule it:

"il avoit une forte distraction quand il a écrit cela: car il savoit que le propre de l'eau tiède est de ramollir et de relâcher les fibres, ainsi que le corps de la peau ... On ne peut même s'empêcher de rire, quand on voit cet homme extraordinaire vous conseiller de laver votre enfant un thermomètre à la main, comme si le degré précis de cette eau faisoit quelque chose à sa conservation".<sup>3</sup>

Fourcroy also gives us evidence, (and this is the first of its kind), that the idea of the cold bath right from birth was being widely attributed to Rousseau. He

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1. Fourcroy de Guillerville: Lettres sur l'éducation physique des enfans. Amiens, 1771.
  2. Ibid., p.18.
  3. Ibid., p.19.

himself had tried cold baths on his new-born sons, and, despite his conscious deviation from Rousseau's method, was commonly believed to be bringing up his children "à la Jean-Jacques":

"Il n'est cependant presque personne qui ne me dise que les miens sont élevés à la Jean-Jacques, tant il est vrai qu'on juge le plus souvent sur l'étiquette du sac".<sup>1</sup>

This is the first evidence we have of the transformation of Rousseau's ideas on physical education through popular interpretation and the co-existing, correct interpretation of an educational theorist.

In 1772 another writer, Leroy, draws attention to the need for reform in European dress, although he states that this has already been recognised up to a point.<sup>2</sup>

An interesting criticism on his part is that such reform as there is is entirely restricted to boys:

"Nous appercevons depuis quelques tems la nécessité de nous occuper de l'enfance; mais la réforme ne s'étend que sur la moitié de l'espèce, et l'autre plus belle moitié du genre humain reste victime encore de nos barbares usages".<sup>3</sup>

He does not attribute this to the fact that prejudice was undoubtedly stronger on the question of women's beauty than on that of men. (In 1767 Anel Lerebours had come to a

1. Fourcroy de Guillerville: op.cit., p.19.

2. Leroy: Recherches sur les habillemens des femmes et des enfans. Paris, 1772, p.9.

3. Idem.



compromise on the subject of whale-bone corsets for women for this very reason.)<sup>1</sup> Although he attributes the growing disappearance of the whale-bone corset to Rousseau's influence, Leroy at the same time directly reproaches him for having concentrated attention in this respect on boys' education at the expense of girls':

"Pourquoi l'ingénieux Auteur d'Emile, n'a-t-il pas plus insisté sur l'éducation physique nécessaire au beau sexe? Que n'ai-je cette énergie d'expression qui le caractérise; car la vérité ne triomphe que lorsqu'une bouche éloquente l'annonce".<sup>2</sup>

It is easy to understand that, despite the fact that Rousseau strongly attacks the use of corsets for women,<sup>3</sup> the general distinctions he draws between Sophie's education and that of Emile may well have led, along with other factors, to the kind of one-sided reform which Leroy describes. At all events, this may well have contributed to the preservation of certain strongly-rooted prejudices. Leroy's remark suggests that at least one section of the public had interpreted Sophie's education as the antithesis of Emile's, and had overlooked Rousseau's short passages on the disadvantages of corsets and the advantages of a good physical education for girls.

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1. Avis aux meres, pp.82-83.

2. Ibid., p.200.

3. Emile, pp.441-442.

Leroy indicates elsewhere that Rousseau<sup>(a)</sup> had succeeded in convincing the public of "quelques vérités utiles". Despite his acknowledgement of Rousseau's success, he is quick to censure his criticism of the medical faculty, which, Leroy maintains, had Rousseau's ideas before Rousseau:

"J'ai vu avec regret ce grand homme payer à la nature un tribut de foiblesse en raillant la Médecine, dont chaque partie l'occupe tour à tour: ce n'est cependant qu'à de légères connoissances de cette science qu'il doit le petit nombre de vérités qui sont sorties de sa plume. Ce n'est pas la première fois que les gens de lettres ont passé pour les Auteurs des opinions qu'ils avoient puisé chez les Médecins ..."<sup>1</sup>

This is the first evidence we have of Rousseau's growing prestige on a question concerning physical education, and his popularity at the expense of doctors writing on the same subject. This, together with Coyer's and Fourcroy's correspondent's recommendations of Rousseau's ideas, suggests that the impact of Emile, restricted to the issues of physical education, was first made on the general public, and only later spread to the theorists, who found themselves ultimately obliged to

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1. Leroy, op.cit., pp.10-11.

(a) He says: "Un Philosophe moderne est parvenu sous les auspices d'un conte ingénieux ...", but the reference is obviously to Rousseau "l'ingénieur auteur d'Emile", Leroy, op.cit., pp.10 & 200.

acknowledge his success. It is interesting to note that Leroy still insists that Rousseau's success depends on his literary style rather than on the strength of his ideas.

Leroy too provides us with evidence of the misrepresentation of Rousseau's ideas. Already in 1772 he announces that people had attempted to bring up their children after what they thought were the principles of Emile, and discloses some misunderstanding on their part: (a)

"J'ai vu ici des enfans qu'on élevoit, disoit-on, à la Jean-Jacques, ils portoient des habits serrés par une ceinture mal placée, et conséquemment dangereuse. Leur tête nue, et dépouillée de cheveux, m'inspiroit, malgré moi, l'idée de l'esclavage et du deshonneur".<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to see where this use of the belt comes from. Rousseau merely says:

"Ce qu'il y a de mieux à faire est de les laisser en jaquette aussi longtemps qu'il est possible, puis de donner un vêtement fort large, et de ne se point piquer de marquer leur taille, ce qui ne sert qu'à la déformer".<sup>2</sup>

As for the head, he recommends that the child should go

1. Leroy, op.cit., p.122.

2. Emile, p.123.

(a) Daniel Mornet also notes an anonymous Ecole de la vertu of 1772 which complains of "l'abus que font les parents des principes de l'éducation de J.J. Rousseau". "L'influence de J.J. Rousseau au XVIIIe. siècle". p.48.

bare-headed, but nowhere suggests that the head should be shaved: (a)

"Peu ou point de coiffure en toute saison ... Comme donc il importe que les os de la tête deviennent plus durs, plus compactes, moins fragiles et moins poreux, pour mieux armer le cerveau non seulement contre les blessures, mais contre les rhumes, les fluxions, et toutes les impressions de l'air, accoutumez vos enfants à demeurer été et hiver, jour et nuit, toujours tête nue. Que si, pour la propreté, vous leur voulez donner une coiffure durant la nuit, que ce soit un bonnet mince à claire-voie, et semblable au réseau dans lequel les Basques enveloppent leur cheveux".<sup>1</sup>

It is possible that misinterpretation of his ideas and the attribution of other writers' ideas to him especially that of the cold bath from birth, in part caused Rousseau to stress the non-practical intentions of Emile, and insist that it was merely a philosophical exercise. The fact that his ideas could have dangerous results, especially in the hands of extremists, may well have been one of the reasons why he subsequently ridiculed

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1. Emile: pp.124-5.

(a) "depouillée" may simply mean that the hair was clipped short. However, Leroy says elsewhere: "Les uns ont conseillé de laisser découverte celle (i.e. la tête) des enfans à leur naissance, les autres ont prescrit de la raser" (op.cit., p.116), and likens these children to "un jeune arbrisseau, dont on auroit arraché le feuillage" (p.122). This and Leroy's arguments against attempts to thicken the skull, (which presumably would not occur if the hair were merely cut short) suggests that the head was actually shaved.



his disciples in the practical field.<sup>(a)</sup> Another interesting question which arises from the emergence of misinterpretation is the extent to which extremism on the part of his followers coincides with the delirious enthusiasm of the readers of the Nouvelle Héloïse. It seems likely that these two reactions may be closely connected; enthusiasm for Rousseau the novelist might well be coupled with enthusiasm for his ideas as expressed in the novel and also in his more serious works.

Leroy also discusses more general aspects of physical education. On the subject of cold baths he criticises "des Philosophes modernes qui se plaisent à marcher dans le chemin des extrêmes",<sup>1</sup> and whose inappropriate advice had already led to a number of deaths of infants who had been plunged into cold water. Rousseau had often been charged with extremism, but it is impossible to ascertain whether the reference is to him amongst others although earlier comments suggest that Rousseau may well have been held responsible for the dangerous effects of the cold bath. Leroy in fact

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1. Leroy, op.cit., p.325.

(a) J. Lemaitre, for example, mentions the case of a M. Ango who had brought up his son according to the principles of Emile. On being informed of this, Rousseau is reported to have said: "Tant pis, Monsieur, tant pis pour vous et pour votre fils." Jean-Jacques Rousseau, pp.245-246.

recommends, as Rousseau does, that the child should be introduced gradually to cold baths, but he makes no direct reference to Rousseau on this subject.

By 1774 Fourcroy de Guillerville notes another change in fashion, this time in favour of maternal breast-feeding:

"On ne peut qu'applaudir à l'espèce de mode qui commence à s'introduire chez les Dames, d'allaiter elles-mêmes leurs enfans".<sup>1</sup> (a)

But, despite this change, reform is obviously far from being general:

"il en est par malheur, un trop petit nombre de celles -là. Il est étonnant combien a encore de force le préjugé contraire".<sup>2</sup>

Despite his disapproval that Rousseau, a mere "philosophe-garçon", undertakes to deal with subjects normally the concern of fathers, he has no hesitation in attributing a considerable part of the success of the campaign, however slight it may be, to Rousseau and his Emile, which, he reports, is by now well-known, both for its interesting contents and its literary style:

"Le Citoyen de Genève dans son Emile, ne traite que par spéculation, du premier période de la vie, et des soins qu'il demande. Il est facile à un pere éclairé, qui n'a pas quitté ses enfans

1. Fourcroy de Guillerville: Les enfans élevés dans l'ordre de la nature, Paris 1783, p.15. First edition 1774.

2. Ibid., p.18.

(a) The reasons he gives for their doing so are exactly the same as those given by earlier writers to encourage them to do so. (pp.15-17).

depuis l'instant de leur naissance, de s'appercevoir qu'il en parle en philosophe-garçon, et qu'à ce titre il n'avoit aucune connoissance des détails du ménage. On voit seulement que cet homme de génie, la tête remplie de différens systèmes qu'il s'étoit formé, croit par-tout en trouver des preuves dans ses observations passagères et momentanées sur les enfans du premier âge. Malgré tout cela, son Livre, qui est fort connu parce qu'il est très-intéressant par son sujet et très-bien écrit, a détruit une partie des anciens préjugés des Nourrices. Il y a meme beaucoup à profiter pour ceux qui le liront avec discernement et dans cette vue, personne n'ayant mieux démontré que lui les avantages réciproques de la lactation maternelle pour la Mere et pour l'Enfant. Il a sûrement contribué beaucoup à en amener la mode, et c'est un grand bien qu'il a fait".<sup>1</sup> (a)

This indicates fairly clearly the early progress of Rousseau's reputation: his ideas first adopted by the general public, and followed to some extent, later recognised by theorists like Fourcroy, who, though retaining some of the earlier criticisms of Rousseau, ("cet homme de génie, la tête remplie de différens systèmes") are, nevertheless, forced to recognise Rousseau's growing prestige, and, in turn, acknowledge the strength of some of his ideas, ("personne n'ayant mieux démontré que lui les avantages réciproques de la

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1. Fourcroy de Guillerville: op.cit., p.29.

(a) Despite his criticisms of Rousseau's ideas on the early education of the young child, Fourcroy gives his whole-hearted support to Rousseau's educational programme for 5 to 12 year olds, op.cit., pp.292-3.



lactation maternelle ...."). by a number of other writers: (a)

Although he rates Rousseau higher than the other advocates of maternal breast-feeding, Fourcroy subordinates Rousseau's general usefulness to that of Tissot,<sup>1</sup> whom he follows on various issues, and particularly on the subject of cold baths, which he continues to support with equal energy in this later work. He once again draws attention to its success in the case of his own delicate son. His report of the way in which his insistence on cold baths was received in 1770, shows clearly that, by that date, very few attempts had been made to test the practical advantages of the cold bath:

"les plus modérés ... étoient ceux qui me regardoient comme un téméraire, qui, entêté d'un système nouveau dont jamais personne n'avoit ouï parler, vouloit se jouer de la vie de son fils unique".<sup>2</sup>

Although Fourcroy claims that his experiments were completely successful, those who witnessed them refused to follow him.<sup>3</sup>

Fourcroy is at pains to point out once again that he is consciously following Tissot on this point, and that he is directly opposed to Rousseau's method, which, he

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1.) Fourcroy, op.cit., p.33.

2.) Ibid., p.71.

3.) Ibid., p.76.



maintains, has been adopted by a number of other writers: (a)

"Ce n'est donc pas, comme on le lit dans d'Emile de J.J. Rousseau ni dans tous les Ouvrages modernes où l'on a suivi ses principes, par degrés, et un thermomètre à la main, qu'il faut accoutumer les enfans insensiblement au lavage froid. Tout cet appareil de pure fiction, qui montre le peu de nerf de ceux qui l'ont imaginé, n'est absolument bon qu'à faire perdre un tems précieux ..."1

He does not refer specifically to his earlier correspondence, but more generally to objections he has received from those who, he maintains, have adopted Rousseau's principles: (b)

"on m'a objecté, d'après Jean-Jacques Rousseau, que les enfans se ressentant beaucoup de la mollesse de leur pere et mere, il convenoit de les habituer par degrés au lavage froid".2

All this merely confirms his earlier account, and shows that misinterpretation of Rousseau's ideas on the cold bath had not yet reached the educational theorists.

In the following year, 1775, Grivel reports what appears to be a considerable return to maternal

1. Fourcroy, op.cit., p.101.

2. Ibid., p.258.

- (a) Besides the anonymous writer of the letter to the Sieur Godart, Leroy, for example, also recommends the gradual introduction to cold baths, although he makes no direct reference to Rousseau. Fourcroy certainly knew this book as he recommends it on the subject of dress.
- (b) He not only mentions partisans of Rousseau's method, he also speaks of another group which supports Balxsert's arguments: "D'autres ont pensé avec Balxserd qu'on ne devoit laver les enfans qu'après le sevrage ... (op.cit., p.258).

breast-feeding: Grivel notes that Grivel attaches the idea

that "les exhortations réitérées des vrais Citoyens, sur un sujet aussi intéressant, se sont fait entendre au coeur de plusieurs. J'ai déjà vu dans plus d'une Province de France, la nature reprendre ses droits, et l'heureuse coutume d'alaiter ses enfans, commencer à se remettre en vigueur".<sup>1</sup>

However, he does not distinguish Rousseau's role in this general movement towards reform, but, instead, turns his attention to Rousseau's recommendation of the cold bath. He mentions neither Buffon, Tissot nor Fourcroy on this topic, but expects his readers to attribute the idea of the cold bath to Rousseau. He also obviously expects to find opposition to this idea, and, in fact, indicates that there has already been opposition. This has obviously resulted from the persistent opinion that here is just another of Rousseau's "paradoxes", which should not be taken seriously:

"Ce sentiment sur les bains froids, que bien des gens ont improuvé dans d'autres livres d'éducation, ne trouvera pas sans doute plus d'indulgence auprès d'eux dans cet Ouvrage. Eh quoi! Vous adoptez les paradoxes de l'Auteur d'Emile? De pareilles nouveautés ne sont recommandables que par leur bizarrerie: vous voulez donc faire périr ces innocentes créatures; ...  
"... Je recommande, ainsi que l'Auteur d'Emile, les bains froids comme propre à fortifier le corps dans l'âge tendre, parce que la raison et l'expérience en font sentir l'utilité".<sup>2</sup>

1. Grivel, Théorie de l'éducation, Paris 1783, p.271.

2. Ibid., pp.303-312.

It is interesting to note that Grivel attaches the idea that cold baths will strengthen the child to Rousseau when it is, in fact, much more reminiscent of Tissot or Fourcroy's arguments. Rousseau does recommend cold baths as part of a plan which will make the child strong and healthy, but he recommends it particularly as a means of preparing the body to endure every degree of heat or cold:

"Cet usage du bain une fois établi ne doit plus être interrompu, et il importe de la garder toute sa vie. Je le considère non seulement du côté de la propreté et de la santé actuelle, mais aussi comme une précaution salutaire pour rendre plus flexible la texture des fibres, et les faire céder sans effort et sans risque aux divers degrés de chaleur et de froid. Pour cela je voudrais qu'en grandissant on s'accoutumât peu à peu à se baigner quelquefois dans les eaux chaudes à tous les degrés supportables, et souvent dans les eaux froides à tous les degrés possibles. Ainsi, après s'être habitué à supporter les diverses températures de l'eau, qui, étant un fluide plus dense, nous touche par plus de points et nous affecte davantage, on deviendrait presque insensibles à celles de l'air".<sup>1</sup>

Grivel himself recommends introducing the child gradually to cold baths as Rousseau does, but his remarks on the subject confirm that, while the theorists continued to correctly interpret Rousseau's ideas, popular opinion, confusing various arguments on the subject of cold baths, had attributed this presumably rather strange idea to Rousseau, as being the only writer capable of such

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1. Emile, pp. 32-33.



singularities. We can assume from this and earlier remarks that, in practice, a section of the public, in all probability a fanatical minority, had adopted the use of cold baths, and were dressing their children and shaving their heads as Leroy described, believing that they were bringing up their children "à la Jean-Jacques", while another was unwilling even to consider the idea of cold baths, this being just another strange idea of that eccentric author, Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Though he often disagrees with Rousseau, Grivel, like Coyer, gives his support to Rousseau's programme of games for the young child. He quotes Rousseau at length on this, and concludes:

"Nous suivrons les conseils contenus dans ce passage énergique, en observant la graduation indiquée des balles et des raquettes, nous rassurerons la tendresse craintive des peres, qui s'alarment sur la moindre apparence au sujet de leurs enfans".<sup>1</sup>

In 1776 Sancerotte won a prize offered by the Académie Royale des Sciences et Belles-Lettres at Nancy for an essay which was published in 1777 under the title Examen de plusieurs préjugés et usages abusifs; concernant les femmes enceintes, celles qui sont accouchées, et les Enfans en bas âge. In it he continued the old campaign

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1. Grivel, op.cit., Bk.II, p.19.



for maternal breast-feeding and against swaddling-bands, though he admits, as others before him had done, that as far as the latter is concerned:

"les gens sans prévention ont déjà secoué ce préjugé de la mode ... depuis quelques années qu'on en a proscrit en partie la pernicieuse coutume d'emmailletter, on voit moins d'enfans incommodés qu'auparavant".<sup>1</sup>

Although he does not attribute this reform to any particular writer, he attributes a closely connected change, that of the whale-bone corset, to, amongst others, and presumably above them, "l'éloquent Orateur de Genève":

"Cette pernicieuse mode n'est à la vérité plus autant en vigueur depuis que l'éloquent Orateur de Genève, et plusieurs autres amis de l'espèce humaine l'ont foudroyée".<sup>2</sup>

He adds, however, that this reform has not yet reached the bourgeoisie. This testimony supports Leroy's earlier attribution of success to Rousseau on the question of the whale-bone corset.<sup>3</sup>

By 1780 Rousseau's success concerning the return to maternal breast-feeding is quite obviously firmly established. Landais in his prize essay of 1779: Dissertation sur les avantages de l'allaitement des enfans par leurs meres, which was subsequently published in 1781,

1. Sancerotte, op.cit., pp.69-70.

2. Ibid., p.84.

3. See p.

notes that:

"Jean-Jacques Rousseau a contribué sans doute, et contribué pour beaucoup à accréditer et étendre la pratique de l'allaitement des enfans par leurs meres".<sup>1</sup> (a)

Landais, however, himself a doctor, tries to draw attention to the original impact of the Paris medical faculty on the question of maternal breast-feeding. His attitude suggests that Rousseau is now considered as the key figure in this reform. To counterbalance Rousseau's prestige, he maintains that the reform had already been set in movement before the publication of Emile, and attributes the initial impulse to Antoine Petit (to whom Balexsert had dedicated his work) and his disciples, whose work had passed unrecognised alongside Rousseau's growing reputation:

"Des Médecins avoient senti et annoncé les avantages ~~de~~ de l'allaitement maternel longtemps avant que Rousseau eût écrit; et M. Antoine Petit enseignoit à Paris, ou plutôt démontroit d'une manière bien intéressante toute la bonté de cette méthode, qui dès-lors commençoit à prendre faveur, ensorte que guidées

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1. Landais, op.cit., p.viii Note 1.

(a) On the 25th February 1779, the Correspondance secrète de Métra published an article on Rousseau which confirms his influence in the field of education by this date:

"Accordez cela avec l'influence prodigieuse que J.J. a eue sur le changement de nos moeurs en quelques parties, par exemple relativement a l'Education". P.-P. Plan: Jean-Jacques Rousseau raconté par les gazettes de son temps, Paris 1912. Note, p.182.

de la par les conseils de ce savant Médecin, et par ceux de ces Elèves, déjà un grand nombre de femmes, tant à Paris qu'en Province, nourrissoient leurs enfans au moment que l'Emile parut. Je pourrois dire la même chose avec la même vérité des autres parties de l'éducation physique des enfans; des Médecins avoient discuté et approfondi ces matières, long-tems avant que Jean-Jacques en eût parlé".<sup>1</sup>

This is an obvious attempt to encourage the reading public to see Rousseau's significance in perspective, not only on the question of breast-feeding, but also on all the questions of physical education popularly attributed to him at that time. Nevertheless, despite this attempt, Landais strongly recommends Rousseau's remarks on the abuses of eighteenth century education:

"C'est dans l'immortel Auteur de l'Histoire de la Nature qu'il faut lire les dangers du maillot; c'est dans l'Emile de l'éloquent Rousseau qu'il faut voir les abus de notre éducation risible et contradictoire".<sup>2</sup>

He also ends his book with a quotation from "l'auteur si célèbre de l'Education" (i.e. Rousseau) which encourages the return to maternal breast-feeding.<sup>3</sup> By 1780 Rousseau's reputation as a serious thinker on physical education is obviously made.

De Beaurieu, author of L'Elève de la Nature, published in 1782 a work entitled: De l'allaitement et

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1. Landais, op.cit., p.viii, Note 1.
  2. Ibid., p.51.
  3. Ibid., p.55.

de la première éducation des enfans. In it he follows Tissot on the subject of cold baths, quoting him at length. On swaddling-bands and whale-bone corsets he is content to state merely that these subjects have already been adequately discussed by "de dignes vengeurs des droits de la nature".<sup>1</sup> He makes no reference to Rousseau on either of these subjects, but refers his readers to books by Macquart and Winslow.

However, on the subject of education as distinct from child care, he considers that this has been adequately discussed by Locke, Rousseau and Balexserd. He speaks of all three as if their ideas were by this time accepted, and their reputations firmly established. Towards the end of his essay, however, he includes a letter previously published in the Journal de Paris in 1782, in which the author, like Landais, tries to curb Rousseau's growing prestige on the subject of physical education:

"L'illustre Citoyen de Genève n'aurait éclairé personne, malgré tout le feu de son éloquence, si le funeste bandeau n'avait déjà été tant soit peu abaissé de dessus nos yeux par les mains de quelques autres zélateurs de la nature et de la raison".<sup>2</sup>

He attempts to describe the impact of Rousseau's Emile,

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1. De Beaurieu, op.cit., pp.53-54.  
 2. Ibid., p.63.



which, though striking, could not completely break down traditional prejudices and habits. Although he does not say explicitly that the new interest in physical education, and particularly the return to maternal breast-feeding, is beginning to look like a mere passing fashion, his reference to persistent prejudice, coupled with his use of the past tense (Past Historic not Perfect) and the phrase "nous eûmes le courage de regarder un moment la vérité", suggests obviously enough, that this is so:

"Il nous pénétra d'un trait de flamme: nous eûmes le courage de regarder un moment la vérité, et nous allions voler dans son sein; mais nous étions, et nous sommes encore, retenus par tant de chaînes honteuses, que nos élans furent trop faibles pour les rompre.

.....  
 "Les femmes, sur-tout, furent frappées de la lumière que répandirent les Ecrits de J.J. Rousseau .... Elles virent avec effroi la multitude de maux qu'elles attireraient et sur leurs enfans et sur elles-mêmes, elles voulurent s'acquitter des devoirs délicieux et sacrés que la Nature impose aux meres, et dont elle les récompense si bien".<sup>1</sup>

Madame de Genlis, in her Adèle et Théodore of 1782

also insists on Rousseau's popularity with women:

"C'est aux femmes qu'Emile a dû ses plus grands succès; toutes les Femmes en général ne louent Rousseau qu'avec enthousiasme".<sup>2</sup>

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1. De Beaurieu, op.cit., pp.63-64.

2. Mme. de Genlis: Adèle et Théodore, 2nd edition, 1785, Vol.I, p.190.

" She also gives us evidence of the fashionable nature that maternal breast-feeding had acquired. One of her characters in Adèle et Théodore, Madame d'Ostalis, is impressed by what Rousseau says about breast-feeding. The baroness agrees that this is a woman's natural duty to her child, but warns against trying to combine it with a social life:

"... j'en connois même plusieurs qui alloient aux bals après dîner, et qui y dansoient; je les rencontrois sans cesse aux spectacles ou faisant des visites, bien parées, avec des paniers, des corps, etc. Croyez-vous que les enfans de ces élégantes nourrices, n'eussent pas été plus heureux dans le fond d'une chaumière avec une bonne paysanne assidue à son ménage ".<sup>1</sup>

She also points out the ostentation which accompanied some of the returns to breast-feeding:

"Je me souviens que pendant un hiver je dînois souvent dans une maison où je rencontrois toujours une jeune femme qui nourrissoit son enfant; elle arrivoit coëffée en cheveux, mise à peindre, & à peine étoit-elle assise, qu'elle avoit déjà trouvé le secret de parler deux ou trois fois de son enfant; ..... devant sept ou huit hommes, elle lui donnoit à teter: je voyois ces hommes rire entr'eux & parler bas, & tout cela ne me paroissoit qu'indecent & importun".<sup>2</sup>

She contrasts this with a more sincere attempt to fulfil the duties of motherhood:

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1. Mme. de Genlis, op.cit., p.155.

2. Ibid., p.156.

"j'allois quelquefois chez Madame d'Ar .... qui remplissoit alors le même devoir, mais avec cette simplicité que la vraie vertu porte toujours dans ses actions les plus sublimes, car on n'est orgueilleux de faire le bien qu'à proportion des efforts qu'il en coûte et du peu de plaisir qu'on y trouve. Je voyois Madame d'Ar .... au milieu de sa famille & de ses amis, & j'éprouvois l'émotion la plus douce en la contemplant, tenant son enfant dans ses bras, cet enfant, auquel elle sacrifioit sans effort, comme sans vanité, & le monde & tous les plaisirs qu'il peut offrir!"<sup>1</sup>

By 1783, their arguments accepted, their differences obscured, Locke, Buffon, Tissot, Fourcroy, Rousseau, Balxserd etc. are represented as a well-established school of thought. Philipon de la Madeleine in his Vues patriotiques sur l'éducation du peuple insists especially on the general recommendation of cold baths, ignoring the existence of different views on this matter:

"Ainsi l'ont pensé tous ceux qui se sont occupés de l'éducation physique des enfans. Tous (and he lists the writers mentioned above) regardent l'usage des bains d'eau froide dans l'enfance comme le meilleur préservatif contre les maux du corps, et comme le plus sur garant d'une forte santé".<sup>2</sup>

In 1785 Roze de l'Epinoy is yet another writer to insist on Rousseau's role in the return to maternal breast-feeding. Although he refers to "un Philosophe" only, it is nevertheless obvious in the light of what we already

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1. Mme. de Genlis: op.cit., pp.156-7.
  2. De Beaurieu: op.cit., p.91.

know, that he is referring to Rousseau:

"Un Philosophe, à qui ce siècle sera redevable à jamais d'avoir fait revivre les droits de la nature, est déjà parvenu à persuader aux meres, qu'elles ne sauroient se dérober à l'allaitement, sans se rendre coupables. Les raisons qu'il en a données, il les a puisées dans le coeur et dans le devoir des meres; aussi son éloquence persuasive a-t-elle réussi auprès d'un grand nombre".<sup>1</sup>

This reform is, however, far from being general:

"malheureusement l'indifférence pour ce devoir, la répugnance pour la contrainte, et plus que tout, l'attrait puissant du plaisir, détournent encore beaucoup de meres d'allaiter leurs enfans".<sup>1</sup>

De l'Epinoÿ too insists on Rousseau's success where others had failed, this time not regretting his impact, but according him the place of honour:

"Les Médecins dès long-tems pénétrés des avantages physiques et moraux que la société retireroit, si les meres allaitoient elles-mêmes leurs enfans, avoient en vain conseillé ce devoir le plus sacré. Il étoit réservé à l'Auteur d'Emile d'abolir les préjugés et d'être l'oracle de son siècle".<sup>2</sup>

But although de l'Epinoÿ does not grudge Rousseau his success, he is, nevertheless, very critical of the effect his book has had. He considers it a mistake to have encouraged each and every mother to feed her own child, regardless of her suitability, and to have created a mere

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1. Roze de l'Epinoÿ: Avis aux meres qui veulent allaiter, 1785, p.ii.

2. Ibid., pp.1-2.



fashion instead of a moral re-birth:

"ce Philosophe a rendu trop général un devoir que nécessairement souffre des exceptions. Pour avoir voulu rappeler les meres à leur devoir, on a trop échauffé leur imagination; et ce qui n'auroit dû être que le fruit de la tendresse, est devenu l'ouvrage de la mode qui outre tout".<sup>1</sup>

This prompts de l'Epinoÿ to attempt to restrict maternal breast-feeding, and virtually reverse the progress of the earlier campaign. Now, in contrast to the earlier encouragement to sacrifice worldly pleasures in favour of the more certain happiness of fulfilling one's duty, he advocates the occasional sacrifice of what is now considered a pleasant duty:

"Lorsque par des raisons pressantes une mere se détermine à sacrifier ce plaisir au bien de son enfant, ce sacrifice qui souvent coûte beaucoup de regrets à sa tendresse, etc. ...."<sup>2</sup>

It is interesting to note that the Approbation, signed by Desbois de Rochefort, and dated 21 July 1785, supports de l'Epinoÿ's campaign for moderation in maternal breast-feeding:

"Il seroit à désirer que les préceptes qui y sont sagement énoncés, et qui sont appuyés sur une pratique suivie, arrêtassent un usage fondé, à la vérité, sur la nature, mais que beaucoup de raisons puisées dans une mauvaise habitude physique et morale devroient contredire souvent, sur-tout dans les grandes villes ..."<sup>3</sup>

1. Roze de l'Epinoÿ, op.cit., pp.2-3.

2. Ibid., p.3.

3. At end of text. No page number.

The remarks of all these writers on physical education allow us to draw certain conclusions about the nature of Rousseau's reputation during the period 1762 to about the mid 1780's.

In the first place, Rousseau's reputation in the field of child care and physical education seems to have been restricted to a handful of topics. Some writers acknowledge his success concerning maternal breast-feeding; some his effective arguments against corsets; others see him as an authority on cold baths, but there are few direct references to his ideas on teething-rings, the use of wine, a vegetarian diet, etc. In fact, as we might expect, his reputation seems to have depended entirely on the issues in which he appeared to gain most success, or the questions which most interested his contemporaries.<sup>(a)</sup>

Secondly, his reputation appears to have developed through various stages. During the years immediately following the publication of Emile (1762-1770) we find complete silence concerning Rousseau on the part of the educational theorists, coupled with an apparent lack of success of the campaign, and a growing interest in the beneficial effects of the cold bath starting from birth,

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(a) Samuel S.B. Taylor has recently pointed out the selective nature of Rousseau's prestige in the educational field. Op.cit., p.1555.

an idea which seems to have come to the fore as a result of Tissot's Avis au peuple rather than Rousseau's Emile. It is not until 1767 that Anel Lerebours indicates a slight return to maternal breast-feeding. Rousseau is first mentioned as an authority on physical education only in 1770 when Coyer recommends his ideas on physical freedom and sensibly graduated exercises and games. Fourcroy's collection of letters, however, shows that, by this date, Emile had already gained a reputation for itself with the general public, and was being subjected to a certain amount of misinterpretation on the question of cold baths. Two years later, Leroy presents us with information which shows quite clearly that Rousseau's reputation had been growing amongst the general public, while completely ignored by the theorists. Leroy announces the disappearance of whale-bone corsets, which he attributes unhesitatingly to Rousseau's influence, at the same time accusing him of having, through Emile, concentrated attention on boys' education at the expense of girls'. Rousseau's success concerning the whale-bone corset, (and this is the only reform which does not appear to have achieved any success independently of Emile), is attested again in 1776, this time by Sancerotte.

Leroy also gives us evidence of Rousseau's growing prestige at the expense of doctors writing on the same subject, and additional information showing that popular enthusiasm had distorted some aspects of Rousseau's original ideas (the belt and the shaving of the head). Fourcroy's later work, and also that of Grivel, confirm that this was still happening on the subject of cold baths, which continued to be as much a topic of popular criticism as of popular enthusiasm.

In 1774, Fourcroy announces a definite return to maternal breast-feeding, the success of which he attributes to Rousseau. By 1779 Landais acknowledges Rousseau's significant role in a considerable return to maternal breast-feeding, at the same time attempting to encourage the enthusiastic public to see Rousseau's significance in perspective. From what he says, it is obvious that most of the ideas on child care currently in vogue were being popularly attributed to Rousseau, who, by this point, had been generally acknowledged as the leader of the movement towards reform. (a) In 1782, Madame de Genlis supports the

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(a) That Rousseau continued to be considered as the leader of the reform, despite later attempts to put his work into perspective, is obvious from L.S. Mercier's: De J.J. Rousseau considéré comme l'un des premiers auteurs de la Révolution, published in Paris in 1791. He maintains that:



reports of Rousseau's success concerning breast-feeding, and describes the fashionable quality this had acquired. Throughout this period comment is varied. Recommendation and criticism are both to be found, although the theorists' opinions are generally subordinated to recognition of Rousseau's success where their predecessors had failed.

By about 1782, however, two things become clear. Firstly, the popular image of Rousseau, eloquently and successfully persuading his public to fulfil their neglected duties, appears to give way to a more stable picture of Rousseau as an accepted authority on physical education. De Beaurieu speaks of him, along with Locke and Balexserd, as if he were an established authority on the subject. Popular enthusiasm now seems to give way (and this may be seen particularly in the first signs of a lapse in the fashion of breast-feeding) to esteem and general acknowledgement of Rousseau's ideas and the role he has played in the reform, both on the part of the

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(a) (Continued)

"Quand on a vécu avant l'apparition de l'Emile, on ne peut plus de nos jours voir un enfant se jouer au milieu de nous sans se dire; c'est Rousseau qui lui a restitué la liberté, les graces, la joie naïve du premier âge; c'est lui qui l'a désentravé des ridicules liens qui le garrottoient, emblème des servitudes innombrables dont on devoit bientôt opprimer ses facultés intellectuelles". (Vol.I, p.13).

general public and the theorists, although this is still subject to some limitations.<sup>(a)</sup> This change in the quality of his reputation may, in fact, coincide with his death in 1778. It is, however, quite definitely connected with the achievement of success in the practical field, and a general acceptance of the belief that the basic principles of the reform are right.

Secondly, it becomes obvious that the various misinterpretations which had grown up around the reputation of Emile, especially the idea of cold baths from birth, had become permanently associated with Rousseau's name, and by 1783 had even spread to the theorists. Although the popular image of Rousseau changed, the new image retained the ideas

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(a) This recognition is further attested by, for example, (i) the bas-relief of the tombstone at Ermenonville which depicts a mother, holding a copy of Emile in one hand, while she breast-feeds her child and happily watches her older children playing. Another child sets fire to swaddling-bands, and others jump about and play with a bonnet, the symbol of freedom. (1780). Described by H. Buffenoir: Le prestige de J.J. Rousseau, Paris 1900, p.329.

(ii) a print by E. Voysard, after a drawing by Borel, which depicts a group of mothers feeding their children, and contains two inscriptions; one on a statue of Humanity, which says: "Secours pour les meres nourrices", and the other on a house falling in ruins, which says: "Prison pour les mois de nourrice" (1784). Description in J.J. Rousseau: Genèse et rayonnement de l'Emile: Musée pédagogique, Paris 1956, p.71. (Catalogue of exhibition) Exhibit No. 318.

1. Emile, p.62.  
 2. Fourcroy, op.cit., p.194.  
 3. Emile, p.32.

which had been gradually attributed to Rousseau throughout the years, probably as comment and discussion replaced a more precise examination of the text.

I would suggest that Fourcroy's statement is directly or indirectly inspired by Rousseau's.

Although on minor issues, there are few direct references to Rousseau during this period, nevertheless on the subject of whether the new-born child should be washed in wine and water or water alone, we find several

remarks which suggest that the author has Rousseau in mind. In 1775 Grivel rejects the French habit of washing the child

The problem remains unquestioned, except by Rousseau, until 1767 when Anel Lerebours states simply that:

"l'eau suffit; le vin qu'on y mêle ordinairement est inutile".<sup>1</sup>

She offers no authority for this statement.

In 1774, Fourcroy recommends Tissot's advice that the child should be washed in wine and water, though he feels that "l'eau toute seule dégourdie au feu, ou l'été au soleil, peut suffire".<sup>2</sup> Both Fourcroy and Rousseau have basically similar reasons for believing this, although they express them somewhat differently. Rousseau rejects wine because:

"Comme la nature ne produit rien de fermenté, il n'est pas à croire que l'usage d'une liqueur artificielle importe à la vie de ses créatures".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Lerebours, op.cit., p.62.
  2. Fourcroy, op.cit., p.154.
  3. Emile, p.32.

Fourcroy says: used for washing the new-born child, and

"l'art et ses apprêts n'étant pas nécessaires dans un objet aussi peu important",<sup>1</sup>

I would suggest that Fourcroy's statement is directly or indirectly inspired by Rousseau's.

Balexserd, who had previously recommended a mixture of wine and water, merely recommends, in his later work of 1775:

"une eau tiède savonneuse ou aromatisée".<sup>2</sup>

In 1775 Grivel rejects the French habit of washing the child in wine and recommends pure water. The subject seems to have been shelved shortly after this, as subsequent writers continue to recommend a mixture of wine and water.

This slight change in the attitude towards the use of wine for washing the new-born child coincides with a climax in the development of the ideological concepts of art and nature, which we discussed earlier in connection with the position of Emile.

Although, already in 1762 and 1763, Désessartz and Balexserd are more obviously convinced supporters of physical nature than, for example, Brouzet had shown himself to be, they are not, however, entirely opposed to the artificial. Neither of them oppose mixing wine

1. Fourcroy, op.cit., p.154.

2. Balexserd, op.cit., p.35.

3. Ibid., p.39.



with the water used for washing the new-born child, and Balxserd supports the re-modelling of the child's head in cases of deformity. Also in 1763, Tissot sees nothing contradictory in washing the child in wine.

Anel Lerebours is perhaps the first writer on physical education after Rousseau to support nature consistently, although on the whole she does not use the opposition of art and nature to support her arguments.

It is with Coyer, a strong supporter of Rousseau, that we find the first outstanding example of conviction in his support of nature and the natural. In this respect his remarks are very similar to those of Rousseau, and, because of his support of Rousseau's ideas elsewhere, I would suggest that they are directly inspired by Emile. On the subject of school entrance at the age of four, he argues:

"Plutôt, ce serait forcer la nature. Plus tard, ce serait la retarder".<sup>1</sup>

Or again, he suggests:

"Secondons la nature ...."<sup>2</sup>

He criticises medicine on the grounds that:

"on a sacrifié ... la nature à l'art; et ... cet art compliqué, bizarre, incertain, ressemble à certains champs plus fertiles en poisons qu'en remèdes".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Coyer, op.cit., p.5.

2. Ibid., p.24.

3. Ibid., p.39.

He believes that:

"la Nature en donne le germe; mais c'est à chaque individu à le développer",<sup>1</sup>

an idea very similar to Rousseau's conception of art helping original nature. Like Rousseau, Coyer would use only natural methods in order to do so. All these remarks could be paralleled with passages from Emile, and show a conscious conception of the opposition of art and nature, emphatic support of all that is natural, and a belief that art might help original nature, all of which is remarkably similar to Rousseau's ideas as expressed in Emile.

Conscious opposition to Rousseau's support of nature against art in the form of medicine is found in Leroy's Recherches sur les habillemens des femmes et des enfans of 1772. We have already seen his criticism of Rousseau's attitude towards the medical profession. He extends his argument to the opposition of art and nature:

"les Philosophes modernes en exaltant le pouvoir de la nature, croient déprimer celui de ses ministres; mais cette nature dont ils vantent tant la bienfaisance, admet souvent en aveugle les instrumens de sa ruine; ce n'est quand on le considère de près, qu'un agent nécessaire qui cause les maladies comme il les expulse; c'est donc à l'art à diriger les opérations de la nature, et tel est l'emploi de la Médecine".<sup>2</sup>

Leroy only supports art, however, in as much as it implies

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1. Coyer, op.cit., p.48.

2. Leroy, op.cit., p.12.

medicine. Most of his arguments reveal a basically naturalistic philosophy:

e.g. "ne la (l'enfance) conduisez que dans le chemin qu'<sup>a</sup> tracé la nature".<sup>1</sup>

In 1774 Fourcroy presents us with information which suggests that the cult of nature had spread considerably during the years 1767 to 1774. It had, moreover, given rise to various different interpretations of the term 'nature'. He criticises the changes which Anel Lerebours had made in some of her arguments in the second edition of her Avis aux meres which appeared in 1770. He reproaches her<sup>for her</sup> adoption of an extreme naturalistic philosophy, which had prompted her to suggest, for example, that the new-born child should be kept warm in the mother's bed. Such arguments, he maintains, are based on a false analogy of man with the animal world, which has led writers like Lerebours to imagine they are following the laws of nature when, in fact, they are ignoring completely the particular qualities which constitute the definition of human nature. Any analogy which exists between man and the animal world must be of a very general and universal order, and not restricted to any particular species. Man as a distinct species, he argues, requires a unique education "justement

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1. Leroy, op.cit., p.195.

approprié à sa nature",<sup>1</sup> and only the adoption of such an education can be correctly interpreted as following nature. Fourcroy himself is an ardent supporter of what he considers to be correctly defined nature:

"la Nature en liberté ne produit rien que de la parfait".<sup>2</sup>

He is consciously opposed to the interference of art:

"Tant qu'on voudra s'écarter de cette simplicité naturelle, en y mettant de l'art, des préjugés ou de l'entêtement, on préparera à ses enfans des maux et des accidens sans nombre",<sup>3</sup>

and even goes so far as to interpret illness as being, in part, a natural remedy necessary to restore the basic equilibrium of the body. Because of this he recommends "la Médecine observatrice" in preference to "la Médecine agissante".<sup>4</sup> His one inconsistency in an otherwise completely naturalistic philosophy, is his acceptance of purging. His excuse for this discrepancy is that modern man is perhaps too far from the natural state for the mother's first fluid to be sufficient. However, he shies away from the use of wine as a purgative, and instead favours Tissot's mixture of chicory and honeyed water.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Fourcroy, op.cit., p.91.

2. Ibid., p.37.

3. Ibid., p.45.

4. Ibid., pp.53-56.

5. Ibid., pp.60-62.

1. Fourcroy, op.cit., p.140.

2. Orivel, op.cit., p.289.

3. Ibid., p.378.

4. Nicolas, op.cit., p.133.



Fourcroy's basic attitude is strikingly similar to that of Rousseau, i.e., he believes that natural methods can and should help original nature. He recommends that parents should:

"faciliter chez les enfans les opérations de la nature, en détruisant tous les obstacles qui pourroient les retarder".<sup>1</sup>

Grivel too supports nature in what concerns physical education:

"Plus les hommes s'éloignent de la nature, plus ils s'éloignent de la perfection".<sup>2</sup>

For this reason he recommends a simple diet, since in this way:

"on éloignera moins les enfans de la nature, dont les goûts les plus simples sont les plus universels ..."<sup>3</sup>

In 1775, another educational theorist, Nicolas, calls his book Le cri de la nature. In it he consistently follows what he considers to be the natural order, with one exception. This is with regard to teething:

"Ce seroit cruellement s'abuser que d'attendre, dans tous ces cas (i.e. of difficult teething), un triomphe complet de la nature".<sup>4</sup>

On this question he stands in direct opposition to an earlier recommendation by Fourcroy that teething should be left entirely to nature.

1. Fourcroy, op.cit., p.140.

2. Grivel, op.cit., p.289.

3. Ibid., p.378.

4. Nicolas, op.cit., p.133.

with It is not until about the year 1780 that any real break in the naturalistic tradition becomes apparent. This does not take the form of a conscious reaction, but merely makes room for the re-introduction of earlier discussions and suggestions. We have already noticed the absence of discussion about wine and water during this period. The change is also emphasised by a new discussion of the merits of animal milk and the panade. Although criticism of the bouillie had never relaxed, consideration of animal milk as an alternative to human milk faded from discussion during the 1770s. Now, with Baudeloque's L'art des accouchemens, it reappears, although the author warns his readers that this has rarely been successful. Baldini, in his Manière d'allaiter les enfans à la main au défaut de Nourrices, which was first published in 1784, and translated into French in 1786, discusses at length the frequent need to use artificial methods of feeding. This reintroduction of the discussion of artificial feeding strikingly coincides with De Beaurieu's report that maternal breast-feeding is merely a passing fashion, and De l'Epinoÿ's attempts to restrict breast-feeding to suitable mothers only. I would suggest that support of nature as opposed to art reached its climax at the time when the return to maternal breast-feeding and preoccupation

with various aspects of physical education were at their height. This also coincides with a growth in Rousseau's prestige as the acknowledged leader of the reform. It is probable that not only did the success of Emile amongst the general public prove the sparking point for subsequent reform, but that Rousseau's very obviously naturalistic philosophy also provoked an increase in the support of nature in opposition to art. The cult of the natural loses ground at the same time as maternal breast-feeding wavers and as Rousseau's reputation loses the aura of excited enthusiasm which had surrounded it during the seventies, and enters its more assured phase of authoritative respectability. I suggest that basically the authority of nature remains (viz., official approval of De l'Epinoys thesis that maternal breast-feeding, though based on nature, must unfortunately be sometimes forbidden), but that it loses the atmosphere of campaign which had previously surrounded it and which had led to somewhat extreme naturalistic philosophies and the need to omit entirely consideration of the artificial. Now, by 1785, on the one hand the rights of nature seem assured, and fresh consideration of human interference in the natural order can be safely discussed, and on the other, new abuses resulting from the reform become apparent,

and, in fact, necessitate a new consideration of the artificial. It is at this point that, the basic principles of the reform established, a new kind of criticism appears, which seeks to limit the uncontrolled development of reform.

Rousseau's reputation is intricately connected with the progress of reform in the practical field. His ideas provoke the reform and the growth in the cult of nature. As the reform gathers ground he is enthusiastically hailed as its leader both by the general public and the educational theorists. Once the principles of reform are accepted, his reputation in turn becomes more firmly established though his success in the practical field begins to wane. Once criticism of some aspects of the reform are introduced, they naturally affect his reputation in so far as he is held responsible for the initiation of the reform, and is the obvious scape-goat for any abuses which its development may entail.

The original tendency in secular morality, that of the Libertins, was towards egoistic hedonism, but the realisation that the pleasures and happiness of civilised man are completely dependent on his relationships with his fellow-men, and that the happiness of others is an essential

1. Massillon: Petit-Carême, Paris, 1795 edition, pp. 149-150.
2. Voltaire: Oeuvres complètes, Garnier edition, 1877, Vol. 9, Discours en vers sur l'homme, Discours de l'homme, p. 409.



factor in the happiness of the individual, is to be found as early as the Histoire de Calixte. Gilbert states quite simply that: PRIVATE and PUBLIC EDUCATION

The gradual transition from the Mediaeval concept, still strong in the seventeenth century, of a moral code entirely dependent on religious faith, to the secular, social morality of the eighteenth century, which was fast developing into the patriotic and civic spirit of the early Revolution, constitutes one of the most striking episodes in the history of ideas. Between Massillon's:

"Je dis ... que la probité humaine, sans la crainte de Dieu, est presque toujours fausse, ou du moins qu'elle n'est jamais sûre ..."<sup>1</sup>

and Voltaire's:

"Il faut que l'on soit homme avant d'être Chrétien",<sup>2</sup> a revolution has taken place in public opinion.

The original tendency in secular morality, that of the Libertins, was towards egoistic hedonism, but the realisation that the pleasures and happiness of civilised man are completely dependent on his relationships with his fellow-men, and that the happiness of others is an essential

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  2. Voltaire: Oeuvres complètes, Garnier edition, 1877, Vol.9, Discours en vers sur l'homme, Cinquième Discours, p.409.

Économistes-Financiers du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, Paris 1841, p.355.

factor in the happiness of the individual, is to be found as early as the Histoire de Calejava. Gilbert states quite simply that:

"Un homme qui raisonne juste voit bien qu'il ne peut trouver son plaisir qu'en en procurant aux autres, et qu'il ne sauroit être heureux, si dans son bonheur les autres ne trouvent le leur: il faut donc pour être heureux, rendre les autres heureux aussi".<sup>1</sup>

This idea is closely linked in Gilbert, and in other writers, with the idea that general utility is the criterion of all morality:

"Toutes les vertus ne sont telles qu'à cause qu'elles apportent quelque utilité aux hommes"<sup>2</sup>.

Since individual happiness can only be attained by means of universal happiness, so individual utility must be sacrificed to the common good. This idea had been expressed, on a practical level, as early as Boisguillebert's Traité des grains:

"Il est aisé de voir que pendant que chaque homme privé travaille à son utilité particulière, il ne doit pas perdre l'attention de l'équité et du bien général puisque c'est de cela qu'il doit avoir sa subsistance ..."<sup>3</sup>

This development of a philosophy based on what is

1. Cl. Gilbert: Histoire de l'Ile de Calejava, 1700, p.85.

2. Idem.

3. Boisguillebert: Traité de la nature, culture, commerce et intérêt des grains. Exact date of composition unknown, but posterior to 1697. Reprinted in Economistes-Financiers du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, Paris 1843, p.355.

ultimately a universalistic hedonism, and different only in emphasis from nineteenth century utilitarianism, is the key to much subsequent eighteenth century thought. It led, on the one hand, to the cosmopolitan character of many eighteenth century French writers. For others, however, a general desire for the common good of mankind gave way to a much more particularised notion of the good of one's fellow citizens. This trend can be explained by the political and economic development of France during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Men gradually became aware of the flagrant abuses of the old system, and slowly found courage to criticise. Fénelon, for example, protesting against the incessant wars waged by Louis XIV, which were slowly draining the country's resources, declared that:

"Le bien des peuples ne doit être employé qu'à la vraie utilité des peuples mêmes."<sup>1</sup>

By as early as the 1720s a significant number of French thinkers were writing and speaking as citizens and patriots, transposing the theory of the common good to that of the good of their fellow-citizens.<sup>(a)</sup>

1. Fénelon: Oeuvres complètes, Paris 1850, Vol.VII, Examen de conscience sur les devoirs de la royauté, p. 90.

(a) cf. G. Lanson: "Le rôle de l'expérience dans la formation de la philosophie du XVIIIe. siècle en France", La Revue du Mois, Vol.IX, Jan. to June 1910, pp.5-28 and 409-429.

In his recent thesis, Dr. Annandale<sup>1</sup> traces the development of this new patriotic or civic spirit, based on concern for the general welfare of the State, distinguishing it from the old, nationalistic patriotic spirit, based on loyalty to the king and French institutions. He points to the increasing use of the terms patrie and citoyen during the first half of the eighteenth century, leading to a conscious attempt to define these terms and the nature of patriotism during the 1750s. This he correlates with the undertone of developing civic consciousness of many of the political and economic theorists of the first half of the eighteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

This development of a civic or patriotic conscience intimately concerned the question of education. If the individual were to act as a conscious member of society, he must be educated with his future role of citizen in view. This was obviously not possible in the context of traditional schools and colleges, still dominated by mediaeval traditions and, if interested at all in the modern world, orientated towards producing subjects fitted for life in a hierarchical society where the highest values

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1. E.T. Annandale: The civic and patriotic spirit in the French theatre in the eighteenth century, Ph.D. (London) 1963.
  2. See especially pp. 22-50 and 101-130.



were honneur and gloire. Such ideas of public service as were conveyed to college pupils came from the Latin authors of prescribed texts.

With the educational reformer, Rollin, there is a change of emphasis. Since man is destined to live in society:

"Pour peu qu'on examine la nature de l'homme, ses inclinations, sa fin, il est aisé de reconnoître qu'il n'est pas fait pour lui seul, mais pour la société",<sup>1</sup>

he must receive a moral education which will prepare him for his social position in a society based on the doctrine of the common good:

"C'est la vertu seule qui met les hommes en état de bien remplir les postes publics ... C'est la vérité ... qui lui inspire l'amour de la patrie, et les motifs pour la bien servir, qui lui apprend de préférer toujours le bien public au bien particulier".<sup>2</sup>

To achieve this, teachers would have to aim at producing an 'honnête homme' rather than a 'savant'; they would have to be less concerned with making their pupils 'habiles' than with making them 'vertueux; bons fils, bons peres, bons maîtres, bons amis, bons citoyens'.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Rollin: De la manière d'enseigner et d'étudier les belles lettres par rapport à l'esprit et du coeur, 1726. This edition, Amsterdam, 1732, p.13.

2. Ibid., p.14.

3. Ibid., p.15.

a part. The arts and sciences would not have to be entirely neglected, but could be used as a means of achieving the ultimate goal:

"Elles (les lettres et les sciences) n'ont pas pour objet immédiat la vertu, mais elles y préparent ..."1

Twenty-five years later, ideas like Rollin's were to spread considerably amongst educational reformers.

In 1750 Duclos wrote his Considérations sur les moeurs, in which he criticised the unpatriotic character of contemporary French education, and, at the same time, suggested a new education based on the theory of the common good:

"On trouve parmi nous beaucoup d'instruction et peu d'éducation ... On y forme des savants, des artistes de toute espèce; chaque partie des lettres, des sciences et des arts y est cultivée avec succès, par des méthodes plus ou moins convenables. Mais on ne s'est pas encore avisé de former des hommes c'est-à-dire de les élever respectivement les uns pour les autres, de faire porter sur une base d'éducation générale toutes les instructions particulières, de façon qu'ils fussent accoutumés à chercher leurs avantages personnels dans le plan du bien général et que dans quelque profession que ce fût ils commençassent par être patriotes."2

In 1755, the Abbé Coyer suggested that the education of the citizen should take precedence over education for

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1. Rollin: op.cit., p.17.

2. Duclos: Considérations sur les moeurs, ed.F. Green, 1939, p.20.

a particular profession:

"Pourquoi ne pas inculquer à ce jeune homme qui prend l'épée pour faire son chemin, qu'il fera quelque chose de mieux, le bien public, et à cet autre qu'on élève pour juger les citoyens que la patrie le jugera. Si dans ces maisons où l'on forme des ministres pour la religion, on leur disoit qu'ils sont à la patrie avant que d'être aux autels, pense-t-on que les autels en seroient moins bien servis?"<sup>1</sup>

So far the accent was on the need for a reformed education, which would subordinate individual interest to the achievement of the public good, but little attention had been paid to the question of whether this might best be carried out by means of a private or a public education. A later writer, Philipon de la Madeleine in fact maintained that Rollin's refusal to choose between the two meant that he dared not commit himself in favour of a system of education which entailed so many disadvantages.<sup>2</sup> Other writers, however, insisted, in the 1750s on the need for a reformed public education, this being the only sure way of producing socially conscious citizens.

The Abbé de Saint-Pierre had suggested the need for a truly public education as early as 1728.<sup>3</sup> He believed

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1. Coyer: Dissertation sur le vieux mot de patrie, La Haye, 1775, p.32.
  2. Philipon de la Madeleine: Vues patriotiques sur l'éducation du peuple, Lyon, 1783, Note, p.30.
  3. C. de Saint-Pierre: Ouvrages de morale et de politique, Rotterdam, 1738, Vol.XVI, Réflexions sur l'éducation, pp.359-77.



that, in order that children might be successfully prepared for society, they should receive a public education, which would oblige them to spend their school-years away from home in a boarding-school, with no holidays. In this way they would learn to live together in a miniature society which would prepare them for adult society later on. In 1755, Morelly planned, in his Code de la Nature, a similar public education for the children of his imaginary republic:

"A l'âge de cinq ans, tous les Enfants dans chaque Tribu, seront rassemblés, et les deux sexes séparément logés et nourris dans une Maison destinée à cela; leurs alimens, leurs vêtemens et leurs premières instructions seront par-tout uniformement les mêmes, sans aucune distinction selon les règles, qui seront prescrites par le Sénat."<sup>1</sup>

These children would be taught the laws of their patrie and learn to respect them. At the age of ten they would leave the "commune demeure paternelle" for the workshop of their choice, where, at the same time as they were trained for their future trade, they would also receive a moral training based on the principle of "le bonheur particulier, inséparablement attaché au bien commun".<sup>2</sup> This education would prepare them for a future society where the entire social order would be ranked according to "les degrés de zèle, de capacité, ... l'utilité des services de chaque citoyen".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Morelly: Code de la Nature, ed. Chinard, 1950, pp.314-5.
  2. Ibid., p.317.
  3. Ibid., p.171.



and car All these writers are representative of the new spirit that was slowly penetrating every branch of French thought during the first half of the century. In comparison, Rousseau's decision to give Emile a private education, apparently designed to make him independent of his fellow-men, rather than prepare him for life as an active member of a corporate group, seems, superficially at least, to be reactionary and almost anachronistic. However, his position on this subject is a complex one, and demands closer examination. The problem revolved around an essential question: He discards the idea of public education for two reasons. The most obvious of these in fact amounts to a direct criticism of what Duclos, Morelly and others were attempting to do. Rousseau believes that it is impossible to educate men to become citizens and patriots in a society which is not designed for civic and patriotic behaviour:

repré "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. Ces deux mots patrie et citoyen doivent être effacés des langues modernes."<sup>1</sup>

But the fact that a truly public, patriotic education is not possible in the hierarchical system of the Ancien Régime, where a public education would mean educating men to accept

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1. C. de Saint-Pierre: Ouvrages . . . Vol. II, Projet pour rendre les livres et autres ouvrages plus honorables, plus utiles et plus utiles à la postérité, p.248.

and carry out the notions of inequality and injustice of which Rousseau refused to approve, is not the sole reason for his choice of a private education for Emile. This is also the result of his attitude towards a basic philosophical problem: that of the definitions of natural and social man and their respective positions. *in the natural state.*

The gradual secularisation of moral thought had not only focussed attention on man's position in society, it had also encouraged discussion about the nature and origin of morality. The problem revolved around an essential question: is morality entirely relative to society, or does it spring from natural laws? Hence, can natural man be virtuous, or is this an entirely social attribute?

The educational writers already mentioned differed only slightly in their attitude to this question. The Abbé de Saint-Pierre, for example, believed that human life represented a continual movement from chaos to perfection.<sup>1</sup> This meant that man's original state, which he assumed to be that of Nature, was necessarily the worst, since it merely represented man's first step towards perfection. He saw it as a state of chaos and destruction, from which

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1. C. de Saint-Pierre: Ouvrages ..., Vol.II, Projet pour rendre les livres et autres monuments plus honorables pour les auteurs futurs et plus utiles à la postérité, p.248.

men were saved only by their innate capacity to progress. This led them to form a society, the interests of which, as distinct from those of its individual members, were to be safe-guarded by a social contract. The formation of the social contract represented the first introduction of morality, which had not existed in the natural state. This innate tendency of man to progress from chaos to perfection by passing from a state of amorality to one of morality, meant that the social state was necessarily superior to the natural. Such a system was, moreover, in keeping with the traditional view. The abbé concentrated his attention entirely on the formation of social man, disregarding any question of the possible rights and interests of natural man.

Rollin did not discuss man's original state in his educational treatise, but, as we have seen, portrayed him as primarily destined for Society:

"Pour peu qu'on examine la nature de l'homme, ses inclinations, sa fin, il est aisé de reconnoître qu'il n'est pas fait pour lui seul, mais pour la société. La Providence l'a destiné à y remplir quelque emploi. Il est membre d'un corps, dont il doit procurer les avantages: et comme dans un grand concert de musique, il doit se mettre en état de bien soutenir sa partie pour rendre l'harmonie parfaite."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Rollin: op.cit., p.13.

1. Duolow: op.cit., p.20.  
2. Ibid., pp.21-22.

In this way, the natural and social states become one, the question of individual interests is excluded, and man can be educated as a purely social being, whose interests and happiness only exist in relation to the interests and happiness of the total society.

Duclos, too, implied that man is naturally sociable, and that the individual should only exist in his relation to the whole:

"on ne s'est pas encore avisé de former des hommes c'est-à-dire de les élever respectivement les uns pour les autres, de faire porter sur une base d'éducation générale toutes les instructions particulières, de façon qu'ils fussent accoutumés à chercher leurs avantages personnels dans le plan du bien général, et que, dans quelque profession que ce fût, ils commençassent par être patriotes".<sup>1</sup>

It is obvious from his final remark that he did not merely mean that man should be educated to take his place as a member of the general human society, but, more specifically, that he should be educated to take his place as a member of the state in which he lived. He says this more explicitly elsewhere:

"Quelques anciens peuples tels que les Egyptiens et les Spartiates, n'ont-ils pas eu une éducation relative à l'état et qui en faisoit en partie la constitution? .... il est donc constant que dans l'éducation que se donnoit à Sparte on s'attachoit d'abord à former des Spartiates. C'est ainsi qu'on devroit, dans tous les états, inspirer les sentiments de citoyen, former des François parmi nous, et, pour en faire des François, travailler à en faire des hommes."<sup>2</sup>

1. Duclos: op.cit., p.20.

2. Ibid., pp.21-22.



This means that the formation of social man (whom he defines simply as "l'homme") is merely the preliminary stage in the achievement of the ultimate goal, i.e. the formation of the citizen.

For Rousseau the problem is more difficult to solve. His belief in the goodness of man's essential nature is not limited to the hypothetical, primitive state of the Discours sur l'inégalité. He believes that natural man still exists and is manifest, on the one hand, in the position of the child before contact with society, and on the other in man's innate tendency to fulfil his natural needs and desires. In the state of nature, where man is responsible only to himself, this is right and good, but in the social state, it conflicts with man's relationship to his fellow-men. The social state is also a natural development, which stems from man's innate tendency towards compassion for the other members of his species. Rousseau correlates this development with the physical development of the child, who, at adolescence, is prompted to reach beyond himself and attempt to form relationships with his fellow-men. Both the state of nature and that of society are good and desirable, but, the rights of natural man, which Rousseau equates with those of the individual in society, necessarily conflict

with those of social man, who exists only in his relationship to other men. Rousseau discusses this conflict at the beginning of Emile.

In the first place there is natural man:

"L'homme naturel est tout pour lui; il est l'unité numérique, l'entier absolu, qui n'a de rapport qu'à lui-même ou à son semblable."<sup>1</sup>

His needs and desires spring from purely natural sources:

"Nous naissons sensibles, et, dès notre naissance, nous sommes affectés de diverses manières par les objets qui nous environnent. Sitôt que nous avons pour ainsi dire la conscience de nos sensations nous sommes disposés à rechercher ou à fuir les objets qui les produisent, d'abord, selon qu'elles nous sont agréables ~~en~~ ou déplaisantes ..."<sup>2</sup>

Consequently, his happiness, and any question of morality in the form of rights and obligations are <sup>peculiar</sup> to himself alone, and constitute the fulfilment of his natural desires and needs.

In the second place there is social man, or more precisely the citizen:

"L'homme civil n'est qu'une unité fractionnaire qui tient au dénominateur, dont la valeur est dans son rapport avec l'entier qui est le corps social."<sup>3</sup>

Social man's relationships with his fellow-men imply a relative morality, no longer based on the achievement of

1. Emile: p.5.
2. Ibid., p.4.
3. Ibid., p.5.

individual happiness, but on the happiness of all the members of the social group.

This opposition between the two states means that it is impossible to produce a man who can fulfil the demands of both the natural and the social state, since the creation of social man inevitably demands the destruction of natural man:

"Les bonnes institutions sociales sont celles qui savent le mieux dénaturer l'homme, lui ôter son existence absolue pour lui en donner une relative, et transporter le moi dans l'unité commune; en sorte que chaque particulier ne se croie plus un, mais partie de l'unité, et ne soit plus sensible que dans le tout."<sup>1</sup>

If man tries to reconcile the two, he achieves neither one nor the other:

"Celui qui, dans l'ordre civil veut conserver la primauté des sentiments de la nature ne sait ce qu'il veut. Toujours en contradiction avec lui-même, toujours flottant entre ses penchants et ses devoirs, il ne sera jamais ni homme ni citoyen; il ne sera bon ni pour lui ni pour les autres."<sup>2</sup>

This is the case of the current system of French education, which fails because it confuses the two possible goals, and therefore attains neither:

"Entraînés par la nature et par les hommes dans des routes contraires; forcés de nous partager entre ces diverses impulsions, nous en suivons une composée qui ne nous mène ni à l'un ni à

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1. Emile: p.5.

2. Ibid., p.6.

and of l'autre but. Ainsi combattus et flottants, In  
 durant tout le cours de notre vie, nous la  
 this terminons sans avoir pu nous accorder avec original  
 nous, et sans avoir été bons ni pour nous  
 tender ni pour les autres."1 and which would otherwise have

The educator's job is, therefore, to choose between the two:

In Le "Forcé de combattre la nature ou les institutions  
 sociales, il faut opter entre faire un homme et  
 of edu faire un citoyen: car on ne peut faire à la fois  
 l'un et l'autre."2

In this case, the Voltaire is correct, which, although it is  
 These two alternatives are reached by two essentially  
 a little society, is one of the "natural" affections  
 different systems of education, the one, private and  
 have been preserved.  
 individualistic, the other, public and universalistic.

But, in fact, he is not correct to let the question  
 remain a simple choice between the two. Rousseau  
 Rousseau now brings in his second argument, which will  
 sway, which he has decided to let the question  
 or that of the citizen, which he has decided to let the question  
 the form of government essential to his conception of  
 public education does not exist in eighteenth century  
 which he considers to be the only one which he considers  
 France, since the ideas of patrie and citoyen have lost  
 "Si peut-être la patrie  
 contradictions  
 their original definitions, he cannot choose public  
 education. This would imply a corresponding political  
 reform, which he does not seem to envisage in Emile.

His conclusion is that all that can be done is to protect  
 the child from the corrupting influences which surround  
 him, and to do this he separates the child from his family

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1. Emile: p.7.

2. Ibid., p.4.

1. Emile: p.7.



and educates him in a state of relative isolation. In this way, he believes he can preserve the child's original tendencies, which are good, and which would otherwise have been stifled by the corrupting influences of modern society. In La Nouvelle Héloïse he offers a similar solution, that of educating the child privately in a suitable environment, in this case, the Wolmar household, which, although it is a little society, is one in which "natural" affections have been preserved.

But, in fact, he is not content to let the question remain a simple choice between the preparation of natural man, which he has defined as the goal of private education, or that of the citizen, prepared by public education.

Emile in fact represents an attempt to resolve the dichotomy which he considers exists between the two situations:

"Si peut-être le double objet qu'on se propose pouvoit se réunir en un seul, en ôtant les contradictions de l'homme on ôteroit un grand obstacle à son bonheur."<sup>1</sup>

In Emile Rousseau attempts this double, yet completely harmonised education of both natural and social man. Emile is educated from birth until adolescence in complete ignorance of social relationships. He is regarded, for the sake of argument, as a completely a-moral, a-social,

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1. Emile: p.7.

a-sexual being, whose only relationships are to the physical world, and whose only responsibilities are the fulfilment of his natural needs and desires. Any relationships which he does contract with his fellow-men are based on self-interest (amour de soi), and have no abstract, moral connotations. Neither do they demand any knowledge of society as an organisation.<sup>1</sup> At adolescence a physical and emotional crisis occurs which precipitates him out of the security of his natural, physical environment into a moral, social environment in which he must take an active part. From now on he becomes a moral, social, sexual being, whose relationships are of a moral order, and whose responsibilities must be seen in their relationship to his fellow-men. Emile must be integrated into society, but at the same time he must retain his natural aptitudes and independent opinions. This transition from the natural, isolated position of the child to the relative social position of the adult, which must, however, respect the rights and duties of the individual to himself as well as to his fellow-men and to the society as a whole, constitutes a formidable difficulty, which Rousseau, in fact, does not hope to solve satisfactorily.

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1. See Books I-III.

Emile's entry into human society as a whole is seen as part of a natural process which leads the adolescent first to a desire for relationships with his fellow-men on a general scale and subsequently to the particular relationship of sexual union:

"Le premier sentiment dont un jeune homme élevé soigneusement est susceptible n'est pas l'amour, c'est l'amitié. Le premier acte de son imagination naissante est de lui apprendre qu'il a des semblables, et l'espèce l'affecte avant le sexe."<sup>1</sup>

His first affections will be for those around him, but his own experience of affection and the desire for friendship will gradually make him aware of the affections of others. In this way his affections will gradually be extended to the whole of society.

But how is he to take his place in the particular social order to which he belongs? Rousseau first introduces him to society through history, then through actual experience. He also arranges for him to find a suitable wife. From what we know of Rousseau's original intentions concerning the plan of Emile, it seems that he intended Emile's integration into the social order to be effected either through politics or through marriage. In the final version he has chosen marriage. But before this, Emile

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1. Emile: p.248.

must choose the position he will adopt when, as husband and father, he becomes, not merely a member of human society, but of the particular society in which he lives:

"En devenant chef de famille vous allez devenir membre de l'Etat. Et qu'est-ce qu'être membre de l'Etat? 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 tout 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."<sup>1</sup>

In order to acquire this knowledge Emile visits various countries where he studies their respective systems of law and government, and from which he returns, disappointed by what he has seen of human institutions and apparently intent on retaining his freedom as a natural man within the social order:

"Riche ou pauvre, je serai libre. Je ne le serai point seulement en tel pays, en telle contrée; je le serai par toute la terre. Pour moi toutes les chaînes de l'opinion sont brisées; je ne connais que celles de la nécessité. J'apprends à les porter dès ma naissance, et je les porterai jusqu'à la mort, car je suis homme; et pourquoi ne saurais-je pas les porter étant libre, puisque étant esclave il les faudrait bien porter encore, et celle de l'esclave pour surcroît?

"Que m'importe ma condition sur la terre? que m'importe où que je sois? Partout où il y a des hommes, je suis chez mes frères: partout

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1. Emile: p.554.



où il n'y en a pas, je suis chez moi. Tant que je pourrai rester indépendant et riche, j'ai du bien pour vivre, et je vivrai. Quand mon bien m'assujettira, je l'abandonnerai sans peine: j'ai des bras pour travailler, et je vivrai ...."<sup>1</sup>

Emile, in fact, does not achieve the desired integration into the civil order. It is his tutor who reminds him of his duties to the State even in an unreformed society, and who attempts the final synthesis:

"où est l'homme de bien qui ne doit rien à son pays? .... Tes compatriotes te protégèrent enfant, tu dois les aimer étant homme. Tu dois vivre au milieu d'eux, ou du moins en lieu d'où tu puisses leur être utile, et où ils sachent où te prendre si jamais ils ont besoin de toi".<sup>2</sup>

This does not mean, however that he must lead an active public life. His tutor's ideal is, in fact:

"La vie patriarcale et champêtre, la première vie de l'homme, la plus paisible, la plus naturelle et la plus douce à qui n'a pas le coeur corrompu".<sup>3</sup>

But, in the midst of this, he must not forget his duties as a citizen:

"Souviens-toi que les Romains passaient de la charrue au consulat. Si le prince ou l'Etat t'appelle au service de la patrie, quitte tout pour aller remplir, dans le poste qu'on t'assigne, l'honorable fonction de citoyen."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Emile: pp.585-6.

2. Ibid., p.587.

3. Ibid., pp.587-588.

4. Ibid., p.588.

That Rousseau, despite this attempt at synthesis, in fact preferred ideally public education to private, becomes apparent from some of his remarks in Emile and in his other writings. For him, although natural man is happy and free, he cannot be virtuous. His ignorance of moral relationships prevents him from achieving virtue, and allows him to attain only a kind of worthless goodness. Since he has no knowledge of evil, he cannot commit evil. He can only follow his natural inclinations, and these, Rousseau maintains, are "good" in the natural order. Natural man is well-inclined towards his fellow-men, and is capable of compassion, but there is no question of his having to dominate his natural inclinations in order to achieve the "good", which is entirely relative to his own preservation and that of his species. This is the privilege of social man who must consciously subordinate himself to the community as a whole. He alone can achieve virtue, and this Rousseau places above any form of natural goodness:

"où est l'homme de bien qui ne doit rien à son pays? Quel qu'il soit, il lui doit ce qu'il y a de plus précieux pour l'homme, la moralité de ses actions et l'amour de la vertu. Né dans le fond d'un bois il eût vécu plus heureux et plus libre; mais n'ayant rien à combattre pour suivre ses penchants il eût été bon sans mérite, il n'eût point été vertueux, et maintenant il sait l'être malgré ses passions. La seule apparence de l'ordre le porte à le connaître, à l'aimer. Le bien public, qui ne sert que de

prétexte aux autres, est pour lui seul un motif réel. Il apprend à se combattre, à se vaincre, à sacrifier son intérêt à l'intérêt commun".<sup>1</sup>

The best preparation for this is obviously through public education, which teaches man to see himself as a fraction of the whole right from the start. Rousseau had already advocated this in his article De l'Economie Politique which he wrote for the Encyclopédie. But it is important to note that he attached it to a particular form of political system, denying that it was possible in eighteenth-century France:

"L'éducation publique, sous des règles prescrites par le gouvernement, et sous des magistrats établis par le souverain, est ... une des maximes fondamentales du gouvernement populaire ou légitime. Si les enfants sont élevés en commun dans le sein de l'égalité, s'ils sont imbus des lois de l'état, et des maximes de la volonté générale, s'ils sont instruits à les respecter par-dessus toutes choses, s'ils sont environnés d'exemples et d'objets qui leur parlent sans cesse de la tendre mère (i.e. la patrie) qui les nourrit, de l'amour qu'elle a pour eux, des biens inestimables qu'ils reçoivent d'elle, et du retour qu'ils lui doivent, ne doutons pas qu'ils n'apprennent ainsi à se chérir naturellement comme des frères, à ne vouloir jamais, que ce que veut la société, à substituer des actions d'hommes et de citoyens au stérile et vain babil des sophistes, et à devenir un jour des défenseurs et les pères de la patrie dont ils auront été si longtemps les enfants."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Emile: p.587.

2. Oeuvres complètes, ed. Petitain, Paris 1839, Vol.IV, De l'Economie Politique, p.239.



He was to express this idea again in his project for the Polish government. Here again he paralleled the need for political reform with the need for educational reform:

"L'éducation nationale n'appartient qu'aux hommes libres; il n'y a qu'eux qui aient une existence commune et qui soient vraiment liés par la loi. Un François, un Anglais, un Espagnol, un Italien, un Russe, sont tous à peu près le même homme; il sort du collège déjà tout façonné pour la licence, c'est-à-dire pour la servitude. A vingt ans un Polonois ne doit pas être un autre homme; il doit être un Polonois. Je veux qu'en apprenant à lire il lise des choses de son pays."<sup>1</sup>

Professor J.S. Spink<sup>2</sup> has already pointed out the significance of Rousseau's position on this subject in La Nouvelle Héloïse and Emile in comparison to what he says elsewhere. Aware that the ideas, expressed by writers like Duclos and Morelly, on the need for a public education, based on concern for the general good and love of one's country, were incompatible with the existing régime in France, he found himself compelled to declare that a good education, whether private or public, was impossible in France. Mme d'Epinaÿ reports a conversation of 1757 in which Rousseau is said to have maintained that to obtain a good education "il faudroit commencer à refondre toute la société".<sup>3</sup> Current education

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1. Oeuvres complètes, ed. Petitain, Vol.IV. Considérations sur le gouvernement de Pologne, p.439.

2. John S. Spink: "Les premières expériences pédagogiques de Rousseau" AJJR, Vol.XXXV, pp.97-103.

3. Lalive d'Epinaÿ: Mémoires, ed. Paul Boiteau, Paris 1865, Vol.II, p.277.



as he saw it consisted in teaching maxims of good conduct which had no relation to the practices of adult society and which were merely abandoned in later life.

Above "On n'ose leur dire qu'il faut être menteur, faux et méfiant, mais on sent très-bien qu'il faudroit qu'ils le fussent. Voilà l'embarras de l'éducation."<sup>1</sup>

However, as we have already seen, Rousseau does not insist on educational reform by 1762. An anonymous work published that year under the title *De l'éducation publique* contains ideas very similar to those of Ducloux or Morelly. Believing removed from the political sphere and educated, either in public education to be essential if knowledge is to spread, the a-political atmosphere of the Wolmar household, the author defines its aim as the formation of virtuous, patriotic citizens. He does not envisage a parallel aristocratic standing would not be involved in the political reform, but places his trust in the efficacy of educational reform alone, or in the contrived isolation of Emile.

To what extent Rousseau's contemporaries and successors appreciated his position in Emile remains to be seen. Did they merely regard it as a treatise on private education, or did they realise that it was, in fact, a direct criticism of the ideas which had been rapidly gaining ground during the 1750s and which implied that the republican notions of citizenship, virtue, or the common good could be applied to the existing social order of inequality and injustice?

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1. Lalive d'Epinaÿ: op.cit., p.277.

Did they understand the attempt to synthesise the formation of natural and social man, to preserve the integrity of the individual without pitting him against the total community? Above all, did they accept or reject these ideas?

Firstly what stage had been reached in the arguments on educational reform by 1762? An anonymous work published that year under the title De l'Education Publique<sup>1</sup> contains ideas very similar to those of Duclos or Morelly. Believing public education to be essential if knowledge is to spread, the author defines its aim as the formation of virtuous, patriotic citizens. He does not envisage a parallel political reform, but places his trust in the efficacy of educational reform alone.

By 1763, however, a slight change occurs. The expulsion of the Jesuits in 1762 prompts a number of later writers to see the divorce of religious control from education as the first step towards the practical achievement of ideas expressed by the earlier reformers. This, however, seems positively to discourage any emergence of ideas concerning coincidental political and educational reform. The disappearance of religious authority from the field of education seems, for a short time, sufficient in

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1. Usually attributed to J.B.L. Crevier.

itself to make practicable the idealistic suggestions of earlier writers. La Chalotais, commissioned to write a plan of public education after the expulsion of the Jesuits, is the first to put his faith in the simple substitution of State for religious control. In his Plan d'Education Nationale of 1763 he shows that a truly public education can emerge now that individual interests which conflict with the general good have been removed:

"Ce n'est donc qu'en nous délivrant de cet esprit monacal qui depuis plus de deux siècles embarrasse les Etats policés, par des entraves de toute espece, qu'on peut parvenir à établir une base d'éducation générale sur laquelle porte toutes les instructions particulières."<sup>1</sup>

This general education will be orientated towards "la plus grande utilité publique",<sup>2</sup> which can only be achieved by "une éducation qui ne dépende que de l'Etat".<sup>3</sup> Similar ideas were to be expressed by other writers during the following decade.

The first writer to comment on Rousseau's position is the author of the article on Emile in the Journal des Sçavans. Although he does not discuss the relative merits of private and public education, he nevertheless criticises

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1. Caradeuc de la Chalotais: Essai sur l'éducation nationale, 1763, p.22.

2. Ibid., p.3.

3. Ibid., p.17.

the principle upon which Rousseau's position is based, i.e., that of the basic opposition between natural and social man. He refuses to accept Rousseau's definition of natural man as "l'unité numérique, l'entier absolu", maintaining that if natural man comes into contact with his fellow-men, he will inevitably lose his absolute character, but will not for that lose his "naturalness". This is because he sees society as a natural development which affords no real opposition to the desires and needs of the individual. For him, Rousseau's dilemma is already solved. Social man has two functions: one is to seek his own preservation and well-being; the other is to seek the good of the community, since without this he could not justify his claim to individual happiness. The fact that these two functions do not conflict is because the individual possesses an innate dislike of disorder which restrains him from acting against the interests of his fellow-men.<sup>1</sup> He believes that Rousseau's mistake is that he had confused corrupt, contemporary society with original society which is a natural and rightful institution.<sup>2</sup>

His criticism of Rousseau's ultimate insistence on the formation of natural man, instead of concentrating his

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1. Journal des Sçavans, Vol.LXXI, pp.233-234.
  2. Ibid., p.233.



attention on that of social man, reveals the prevailing preoccupation of the intellectuals with the formation of social man, and prepares us for later interpretation and comment. If, he says, Rousseau had limited himself to criticising what man has become, and showing how he could have been better within the social order, he would have been supported generally:

"mais ces reproches ont été faits mille fois au genre humain: il vous falloit du nouveau".<sup>1</sup> (a)

The first writer to mention Rousseau's ideas on private and public education is the author of a work entitled Principes généraux pour servir à l'éducation des enfans.<sup>2</sup> Anxious to draw his readers' attention to the fact that, despite marked similarities to parts of Emile, his book was composed quite independently of it, he adds a foreword to his book, in which he compares the two works. In this foreword, he reveals an interesting point of what appears to be misinterpretation. For him, a basic difference exists between the two books. Whereas Rousseau is only

1. Journal des Sçavans, Vol.LXXI, p.231.

2. [ ] Principes généraux pour servir à l'éducation des enfans, particulièrement de la noblesse française, Paris, 1763 (attributed to Poncelet by Barbier).

(a) He does, however, realise that Rousseau is attempting to synthesise the formation of natural and social man. His criticism is that the formation of natural man could well have been omitted.

concerned with the formation of natural, solitary man, independent of all social ties, he, Poncelet, is dealing with the formation of useful, sociable citizens. Confident in the political and religious climate of France, he attempts what a realistic appraisal of the situation had prompted Rousseau to avoid. But, in emphasising the opposition between Rousseau's system of private education and his own proposal of a public education, he overlooks the fact that the difference is one of method rather than ultimate goal, and entirely misses the complications involved in Rousseau's decision to isolate his pupil during the period of his education only to reintegrate him into the social order at a later date. Poncelet says:

"... Persuadé qu'il y a une Patrie et une Religion, je me suis proposé pour objet de mon travail de former non des Robinson Crusoé, mais des Citoyens utiles; non des Hommes purement naturels, mais des Chrétiens raisonnables; non des Misanthropes, mais des Hommes amis des Hommes."<sup>1</sup>

This statement suggests that he has understood Rousseau's reason for removing Emile from corrupt society, and that he either fails to understand the further development of Rousseau's system or simply refuses to see it. The latter would in fact be a natural enough reaction to a book which sets out to attack contemporary society. An author wishing

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1. Poncelet, op.cit., p.ix.

to defend this same society would naturally be unwilling to recognise the full implications of Emile, and would be quite likely to use only those aspects which he could most easily criticise, and which would be most likely to coincide with current attitudes. At all events, he draws attention to one aspect of Emile at the expense of the system as a whole.

Poncelet himself, unlike Duclos and Morelly, seems to appreciate the need to educate children for the society in which they live, but his final position is scarcely an advance on theirs. He merely arranges his system of education to fit the existing pattern of French society wherever possible, and completes it with impracticable suggestions for educational reform wherever he cannot fully accept existing social institutions:

"J'ai conformé mes préceptes aux moeurs dominantes, quand elles m'ont paru supportables; et je m'en suis écarté quand elles m'ont paru vicieuses."<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting to see that he consciously avoids any question of political reform, which, he maintains, is not the concern of private citizens. To those who seek reform outside the educational field, he issues a warning:

"Philosophes de toutes les espèces, suivez l'impétuosité de votre verve indiscrete! Ecrivez sur la Nature, sur l'Esprit, sur les

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1. Poncelet, op.cit., p.x.



Loix, sur les Gouvernemens, sur les Moeurs, sur les Sciences, sur la Religion; bouleversez les idées communes; détruisez, renversez, vous serez admirés des uns, blâmés des autres: mais parce que vous nous transportez dans les espaces imaginaires, dans la région des songes, tout le monde ira son train."<sup>1</sup> (a)

A similar reaction to Emile is found in Formey's Anti-Emile of 1763. Though not himself an educational theorist, Formey nevertheless comments on various aspects of Rousseau's arguments concerning public and private education, natural and social man. The fact that he discusses these topics in detail with reference to Emile makes his ideas worth examining at some length, although, as we shall see, many of his remarks which are interesting at the outset, tend merely to demonstrate the fact that his basic ideas are different from Rousseau's, and offer no constructive criticism.

Starting from different first principles, Formey refutes Rousseau's statement that the educator must choose between forming a man or a citizen. Basing his argument on the a priori belief that man is naturally sociable,

1. Poncelet, op.cit., p.xi.

(a) He presumably includes Rousseau in this. He says elsewhere when commenting on Emile: "Je ne sçais même si l'Ouvrage du Citoyen de Genève exige une Critique en règle; ce qu'il contient de faux, de dangereux, ou de suspect, se réfute à la simple lecture, et ce qu'il offre de bon, d'utile, d'agréable, se fait sentir. Tout y est clair, tout y est frappant: le Pyrrhonisme, l'irréligion, l'indépendance d'une part, les vertus civiles, le bonheur philosophique de l'autre." op.cit., p.vii.



he equates the role of natural and social man (by which he means civil man, the citizen) in much the same way as Duclos had done:

"Si l'on ne fait pas le citoyen en faisant l'homme, on dénature l'homme, on le détourne de sa destination. La nature n'est que l'aptitude à recevoir les institutions sociales; en la tournant, en la fléchissant du côté opposé, on la détruit."<sup>1</sup>

i.e., man must be educated in order to be true to his own nature, which is that of a social being. He strengthens his argument elsewhere when he criticises Rousseau's statement:

"Il faudroit .... connoitre l'homme naturel."

Any knowledge of human nature which can be gained from a study of natural man can, he maintains, only serve to help in the formation of social man (because natural man is social man) and even if the two were different, our knowledge of natural man should only be used to form social man (because, presumably, in this case, Formey would rank social man as superior to natural man):

"Cette connoissance (de l'homme naturel) ne peut et ne doit servir qu'à former l'homme social."<sup>2</sup> (a)

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1. Formey: Anti-Emile, 1763, p.23.

2. Ibid., p.25.

(a) He stresses man's sociability again by contradicting Rousseau's statement that "tant qu'on ne connoit que le besoin physique, chaque homme se suffit à lui-même." Formey maintains that this is impossible even with the best of educations. Op.cit., p.109.

In this way Formey avoids the difficulties which Rousseau had encountered by distinguishing between the essential qualities of natural and social man, and merely shows that his basic tenets are very different from those of Rousseau.

For Formey, the "natural", or rather the original, pre-social state of man is very similar to the state of chaotic destruction which Saint-Pierre describes. He himself uses one of Hobbes' definitions to describe it:

"Sans les loix et la société, les hommes ne seroient que ces enfants robustes dont parle Hobbes, semblables aux sauvages qui, malgré la prédilection de M.R. pour eux, sont une fort vilaine engeance."<sup>1</sup>

This does not mean however, that he supports the ideal of a social order based on concern for the public welfare put forward by Rousseau's predecessors and contemporaries. His attitude is much more that of Poncelet, reaction to Rousseau's attack on society, and his own support of it. His admiration for human society in general is in fact coupled with admiration for the same existing social system of eighteenth century France which Rousseau was attacking, and which Formey himself is quick to defend:

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1. Formey: op.cit., p.61.

"Les Rois les Grands, Les Riches, s'ils ont des principes et des vertus, bien loin d'être foibles, ont un excédent de forces, qu'il faut tourner au profit de la société; c'est ce qui fait le prix des dignités et des trésors."<sup>1</sup> (a)

The same spirit prompts him to support the existing system of education which prepares men for life in a hierarchical society. Here he supports Locke's gentleman in order to refute Rousseau's Emile:

"C'est (le gentilhomme de Locke) un homme qui est élevé comme il lui convient de l'être. Autre sera l'éducation d'un Menuisier. Autre celle d'un Sauvage."<sup>2</sup> (b)

It is for this same reason, and not from any attempt to reinstate a new ideal of public behaviour, that he combats

1. Formey: op.cit., p.61.

2. Ibid., p.117.

(a) He says elsewhere that inequality of fortune is part of Providence's and society's plan. He shows his approval of this by supporting the idle rich:

"on peut contribuer au bien public par l'usage légitime de ses richesses ... Celui qui s'occupe de la culture de son esprit, qui élève sa famille, qui entretient l'ordre dans sa Maison, qui soulage les pauvres ne touchât-il jamais aucun outil, n'est point un Citoyen oisif, beaucoup moins un fripon." Op.cit., p.115.

Both this remark and the one above are, of course, disguised by his insistence on the correct use of one's advantages, but in fact they merely indicate Formey's satisfaction with the existing hierarchical system.

(b) He also supports the colleges which represent the current French system of public education. His attitude is that they are not responsible for all the pupils they produce, and even if they give rise to some criticism they stand a better chance of producing pupils than anyone who undertakes to bring up a child "à la sauvage ou même à l'Emile." Op.cit., p.25.



Rousseau's remark that the terms citoyen and patrie should be banished from modern languages, since the concepts they represent no longer exist. Formey maintains that they need not be restricted to a particular political system, and suggests that they be retained with the definitions which now apply to them, i.e. in the context of absolute monarchy:

"Un François qui aime sa patrie, son Roi, sa ville, sa famille et qui agit en conséquence, est un bon Citoyen, meilleur peut-être que le Romain et le Spartiate, chez qui il y avait plus d'illusion et d'enthousiasme, que de jugement et de réflexion."<sup>1</sup>

None of these remarks provide a very interesting comment on Rousseau's arguments. They merely illustrate the attitude of a reactionary, content to support the established order, to some of Rousseau's attacks on contemporary society, and in this he seems to be echoing Poncelet's earlier interpretation of Emile.

Formey also shows interest in the more specific problem of contact, or rather, lack of contact with society. He criticises Rousseau's insistence that Emile should be totally ignorant of society as an organisation until he reaches an age when he will be able to understand social relationships. Formey believes that, although the child is not a full member of society, he is, nevertheless,

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1. Formey: op.cit., p.24.



attached to society in certain respects, and must learn about those relationships which affect him from an early age:

"Si un enfant n'est pas membre de la société dans le même sens ou sur le même pied qu'un homme, il l'est à divers égards, et par plusieurs relations dont il importe qu'il se fasse de bonne heure de justes idées."<sup>1</sup> (a)

This argument is closely connected with Rousseau and Formey's different conceptions of the birth of reason and the child's capacity to comprehend social morality. Whereas Rousseau maintains that the child should not be made aware of any moral notions before the age of about fifteen in order that he may not form false notions of them, Formey obviously believes that the child should be acquainted with them, at least to a certain degree, from a much earlier age. He does not discuss the possibility of this leading to the formation of false ideas. Here again he merely shows that he disagrees with Rousseau's basic ideas. It is also apparent from his attitude on this point that he fails to understand Rousseau's complex position on the question of Emile's isolation from the corrupting influences of contemporary society. However from what we know of

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1. Formey: op.cit., p.106.

(a) This would presumably only be desirable for Rousseau in a "just" society.

Formey's attitude elsewhere, it is obvious that had he fully understood Rousseau's position, he could never have supported the decision to isolate Emile from a social order which he himself supported.

He also quibbles with several minor points connected with this question. He criticises Rousseau's choice of Robinson Crusoe as a model for Emile, pointing out, in practical fashion, that the positions of Crusoe and Emile are totally different. Brought up and educated in society, Crusoe knew what he needed and how to set about obtaining it.<sup>1</sup> This criticism overlooks the fact that Rousseau's idea is not one of total isolation (an idea which was to appear later in De Beaurieu's L'Eleve de la Nature), but of contacts directed by one human being, the tutor, through whom the child can learn everything which concerns himself and his physical needs.

However, Formey does touch on one difficult point in Rousseau's educational plan, that of the integration of Emile into society. Unfortunately he restricts his discussion to a rather superficial point, that of the introduction of Emile into eighteenth century polite society. The question as he sees it is not how will

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1. Formey: op.cit., p.108.

society affect Emile, but rather, will society accept him? He uses the episode in which Emile is taken to a banquet to illustrate his point:

"Emile a donc des relations, il voit le grand monde. Mais y est-il présentable lui qui n'est qu'un être physique?"<sup>1</sup>

Just as he had earlier supported the established political order now he gives his support to established social conventions. Rousseau, he maintains, simply cannot afford to allow Emile to show his disapproval of social habits; for example, the distinction between men's behaviour towards women and towards other men:

"La fausse politesse et l'usage du monde sont deux choses différentes. En préservant un élève de la première, on ne peut se dispenser de l'instruire de l'autre et de le lui faire pratiquer."<sup>2</sup> (a)

Above all, Formey cannot understand Rousseau's attempt at synthesis. He sees his idea of integrating natural man into the social order as destined to lead to an eternal contradiction: either society will not accept

1. Formey: op.cit., p.111.

2. Ibid., p.112.

(a) Formey also ridicules what he considers to be Rousseau's illusion that Emile will philosophize about society on his first introduction to it. op.cit., p.111. Here he overlooks two points (i) that Rousseau thinks he can introduce Emile to society through history before actual contact with his fellow-men (ii) that Emile's education is not one of complete isolation and lack of training.

the uncivilised Emile, or Emile will be forced to become like his fellow-men in order to be accepted. To Rousseau's:

"Emile n'est pas un sauvage à réléguer dans les déserts; c'est un sauvage fait pour habiter les villes",

he replies:

"S'il demeure sauvage, il sera le jouet ou le rebut des villes; s'il s'apprivoise, ce ne sera plus Emile."<sup>1</sup>

At a practical level this is perhaps Formey's most valid comment.

Despite his remarks concerning Emile's introduction to society, Formey seems to have believed that the basic aim of Emile is the formation of natural, solitary man. He finds Rousseau's statement that any man who wishes to see himself as an isolated being can never be anything but unhappy as a complete contradiction of what he has been attempting to do in all his works:

"puisque dans tous ces Ouvrages il ramene, autant qu'il est possible, les hommes à l'état originaire, et à l'égalité primitive".<sup>2</sup>

Formey's comments contain the mistakes common to the kind of criticism he attempts. Because he picks on isolated statements rather than analysing the author's ideas as a whole, his remarks tend to remain at a

1. Formey: op.cit., p.123.

2. Ibid., p.113.



superficial level, and prevent him from fully understanding the complexities of Rousseau's thought. Although potentially interesting, his remarks are generally disappointing in their lack of depth and elaboration, though they probably give us a fairly accurate picture of early reactions to Emile. Startling points of view, or simply ideas with which the reader does not agree, are extremely likely to stimulate criticisms of individual points at a first reading, when the total contents of the book have not been fully digested. Moreover, much of Emile must have proved difficult reading even for the most enlightened of readers.

After these first reactions to the apparently anti-social orientation of Emile's education, little attention seems to have been paid to the book by writers on public education. In 1764 neither Guyton de Morveau nor Maubert de Gouvest so much as mention Emile, and Garnier, in his De l'éducation civile of 1765 remains equally silent.

Garnier's work merely represents a continuation of the older ideas that education should form "hommes d'Etat" and "Citoyens vertueux", based on the belief that men are naturally sociable, but with no reference to the difficulty of achieving this without complete social change.

(a) Later, in his suggestions for education, he corrects stealing, he says: "Je ne veux pas que l'imitation de la vertu de Jean-Jacques, et de son imitation; je conviens que l'imitation de son d'Emile, et moi, et dans tous les ouvrages de la morale motive ne m'obligent pas de changer." Part III, 1771 edition, Note p. 144.

In 1763, however, an amazing novel was published, which dealt much more comprehensively with Rousseau's system than Poncelet and Formey's comments had done. This was Gaspard de Beaurieu's L'Eleve de la Nature.<sup>1</sup> Despite its exaggeration and sentimentality, which immediately condemn any possible appeal it might have for the modern reader, this book went through eight separate editions during the years 1766 to 1794.

From the start the author acknowledges the fact that he is following Emile, although he does not mention either the book or the author by name. He merely says:

"Un Ecrivain célèbre a dit depuis peu, que le seul Roman qu'un jeune homme dût lire, étoit Robinson."

and declares that the present work is by "quelqu'un qui paroît avoir travaillé selon ses vues".<sup>2</sup> (a)

1. Gaspard Guillard de Beaurieu: L'élève de la nature, La Haye et Paris, 1763.

2. De Beaurieu: op.cit., this edition Amsterdam and Paris, 1766, p.iii.

(a) Later, in his suggestions for education, he acknowledges his debt to Emile. After describing his method of correcting stealing, he says: "Voilà, me diront les personnes qui ont lu Emile, une mauvaise et maladroite imitation de la scène de Jean-Jacques, d'Emile et du jardinier Robert. Je conviens que c'en est une imitation; je conviens avec plaisir et avec reconnoissance, que je prends pour maître l'Auteur d'Emile, et ici, et dans tous les endroits où de grands motifs ne m'obligent pas de abandonner." Part III, 1771 edition, Note p.114.

De Beaurieu's book is outstanding in that it consciously adopts the double formation of Emile and Rousseau's method of obtaining it, though this is grossly exaggerated and transformed. In the Preface the author states that his system of education has two goals, the first to form "un honnête homme heureux par lui-même", the second to "rendre cet honnête homme encore plus heureux, en en faisant un bon citoyen".<sup>1</sup> Despite similarity to Emile, a basic difference is obvious even from this point. The author is not attempting a synthesis of natural, independent man and the citizen, but rather a progression through the natural state to the superior state of social co-operation. This becomes more apparent as the story unfolds.

The formation of individual and independent man is attempted by completely isolating the pupil from all contact with human society. The hero spends the first part of his existence in a wooden cage until, at about the age of fifteen, he is shipped off to a desert island, where he is to be educated by Nature alone.<sup>(a)</sup> Although

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1. De Beaurieu: op.cit., p.iv.

(a) Despite the exaggeration of this early negative education, the general tone of the book gives us no reason to suppose that it is a parody of Emile. Both sentimental and naive, the book is, nevertheless, always serious,



on this island he learns to enjoy the universe uniquely in terms of physical pleasure, and in its relationships to himself alone, he also begins to feel the need for contact with his own species. The sight of other creatures together makes him acutely aware of his isolation:

"Ces plantes, ces fleurs, ces arbres, s'ils ne se font point de caresses, parce que cela n'est pas nécessaire à leur bonheur, ont au moins le plaisir de se voir, d'être ensemble; et moi je suis seul. Est-il possible d'être heureux, quand on est seul?"<sup>1</sup>

De Beaurieu bases this desire for contact with human society on an insatiable desire for a female companion, unlike Rousseau, who places a general desire for human society prior to the more particularised desire for a companion of the opposite sex. The pupil's subsequent meeting with a shipwrecked pair, father and daughter, satisfies both these desires, and leads to the formation of an idyllic society, in which De Beaurieu's hero, who

1. De Beaurieu: op.cit., Pt.I, p.54.

(a) (Continued)

and suggests conviction on the part of the author. What we know of De Beaurieu himself confirms this opinion. His eccentric costume and life, and his fanatical support of nature, suggest that he was quite capable of taking seriously the idea of keeping the pupil in a cage for the first fifteen years of his life in an attempt to preserve him from error and vice. Moreover, the details he includes during this period are dealt with too seriously to suggest parody. cf. E. Legouis: Un disciple compromettant de Rousseau: G.G. de Beaurieu et son élève de la nature, Taylorian Lecture, Oxford 1925, p.24.



by this time has been named Ariste, is shown to be much happier than he had been in his former solitary state:

"Depuis plus de deux mois j'avois le bonheur de vivre avec Euphémon et sa fille; je jouissois de tous les vrais plaisirs de la société."<sup>1</sup>

De Beaurieu uses this to show that man is naturally sociable. When Ariste's father and friends return to fetch him, Ariste expresses man's innate longing for society:

"j'étois si aise de voir beaucoup d'hommes ensemble que j'aurois passé dans le feu pour les aller rejoindre. Ce fut bien en ce moment que je sentis que nous aimons naturellement la société".<sup>2</sup>

Ariste is now commanded to return to Europe and visit contemporary society, just as Emile is commanded to follow his tutor and study human society before he becomes an active member of it. But, unlike Rousseau, de Beaurieu emphasises Ariste's impact on society as much as what society will teach him:

"Viens prouver aux hommes par ton exemple, qu'ils naissent bons, sensibles, vertueux, que l'éducation la plus parfaite n'est point celle qui leur donne ce qu'on peut appeler des talents et des vertus à grand bruit; mais celle qui éloigne d'eux les vices de la société, qui les rapproche de la Nature, et qui les remet pour ainsi dire, entre ses mains."<sup>3</sup>

1. De Beaurieu, op.cit., Pt.I, p.157.

2. Ibid., Pt.I, p.193.

3. De Beaurieu, op.cit., Part II, 1771 edition, (Lille), p.130.

So far, the ideas of consciously removing the child from the corrupting influences of society, and preserving his natural goodness, (though "vertueux" goes further than Rousseau's "bonté"), by allowing him to be educated by physical nature alone, are, despite the exaggerated treatment they receive, very close to some of the basic ideas of Emile. The break in the development of natural and social man is also very similar to Emile. Ariste in fact only feels the need for society at adolescence just as Emile does. However, De Beaurieu moves away from Emile with Ariste's introduction to society. He returns to Europe where he finds difficulty in making contact with his fellow-men, particularly in the polite society of Paris. De Beaurieu's insistence on this point bring to mind Formey's fears for Emile much more than Emile itself:

"J'avois l'air sauvage, l'air d'un homme qui se trouve déplacé, qui craint tout, qui se méfie de tout; j'étois gauche, maladroit; je n'avois aucun usage du monde; mes manières contrastoient autant que mes moeurs, avec celles des autres hommes. Je leur déplaisois, et ils ne me déplaisoient pas moins ... Nous partîmes enfin et j'en eus la plus grande joie".<sup>1</sup>

Now, however, unlike Emile, Ariste is not expected to remain in unreformed society, and reconcile his independent upbringing with his role as a member of society.

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1. De Beaurieu, op.cit., Pt.II, p.172.

De Beaurieu carefully avoids the problems which Rousseau had encountered in attempting to do this. Ariste is allowed to make a complete break with the old society, and return to his island, where with his family and several like-minded companions, he founds a new society based on laws acceptable to natural man. The foundation of a new society brings Ariste closer to Morelly's imaginary republic than to Emile. Although many of the details contained in Ariste's new system of education are taken directly from Emile, they are, nevertheless, elements of Emile transposed into the context of public education. Now that a society exists in which the laws of nature are respected, and in which the question of environmental corruption cannot arise, Ariste can turn his attention to a system of public, society-centred education in which the children are prepared for their future role as citizens. He entirely subordinates the formation of the individual to the formation of the citizen:

"la Nature qui nous a faits pour la société, puisque nous l'aimions avant même que de la connoître, veut que nous commençons de bonne heure à être humains et sociables, à être citoyens sinon de tel ou tel pays, au moins du monde".<sup>1</sup>

1. De Beaurieu: op.cit., Part III, p.101.

De Beaurieu obviously understands the basic structure of Emile much more clearly than either Poncelet or Formey had done, or, at least, he is more eager to support its implications than they. It seems, however, that he did not fully appreciate Rousseau's attempt to harmonise the contradictory situations of natural and social man, and merely used the two-stage education of Emile to support his own belief that, although nature must provide the basis to human society, any anti-social tendencies it may produce in the individual must be ultimately subordinated to the good of society as a whole. His novel is especially interesting in that it remains sufficiently close to certain ideas in Emile to be associated with it in the mind of an uncritical reader, while, at the same time, it rejoins some of the more utopic treatises of Rousseau's predecessors. To what extent Emile was known to eighteenth century readers only through this perhaps more palatable form of De Beaurieu's Eleve de la Nature is impossible to assess. All we can say is that one edition had already been published under the name of Rousseau when De Beaurieu himself drew attention to this mistake in the 1771 edition of his book. (a)

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(a) Rousseau's reaction to De Beaurieu's book is interesting to note. Despite an initially complimentary remark:

(Note continued on page 166)



Although President Rolland in 1768 is perhaps the first educational reformer to understand that educational and political reform must be closely linked, but he makes no reference to Emile on this subject. He understands<sup>1</sup> that a new, well-educated generation will inevitably demand better laws, but he does not appear to envisage any problem concerning the integration of these children into a social order for which they have not been prepared. He may, of course, although he does not say so specifically, imagine that this would automatically lead to revolution and subsequently to the establishment of an entirely new social order.

Apart from Poncelet's brief remarks, the Abbé Coyer<sup>2</sup> seems to be the first pedagogical writer to deal with Rousseau's ideas on private and public education.

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1. Rolland: Plan d'éducation, Paris, 1783 (Compte-rendu du 13 Mai 1768), p.23.
  2. Coyer: Plan d'éducation publique, Paris 1770.

(a) (Continued)

"J'ai déjà commencé par l'Eleve de la nature: on ne peut pas en effet penser avec plus d'esprit, ni dire plus agréablement ..."

he goes on to exclaim scathingly:

"Je lui conseille toutefois de s'attacher toujours plus aux sujets qu'on peut traiter en descriptions et en images, qu'à ceux de discussions et d'analyse, et qu'en général aux matières de raisonnement.

1. Coyer: Plan d'éducation publique, Paris 1770. Un traité d'agriculture sera tout à fait de son genre". CG., Vol.II, No.0291, p.82. Rousseau to Panckoucke, 25 May 1764.

Although he supports various ideas expressed in Emile, (mainly those on physical education), he nevertheless criticises Rousseau's attitude towards the problem of public education. Coyer himself strongly supports public education, although he is aware of the disadvantages of the current system in France. He is convinced however, that a reformed public education will soon manifest its obvious superiority over private tuition, the more so since, unlike private education which is only available to the privileged few, public education can be enjoyed by all:

"Si l'Education Publique reste telle qu'elle est dans nos Colleges, le cri général décide contr'elle. Mais si on l'élève au degré de perfection dont elle est susceptible, elle reprendra bientôt la supériorité qu'elle mérite; et ce qui doit terminer la question, c'est que l'Education privée ne pouvant convenir qu'à un petit nombre de familles opulentes, l'Education Publique est absolument nécessaire au corps de la Nation. En effet, tout Etat policé en a une, quelle qu'elle soit. Le point vraiment intéressant, est de l'avoir bonne".<sup>1</sup>

It is because of this that he criticises those, like Montaigne, Locke and Fleury, who have restricted their valuable ideas on education to the field of private education, and especially Rousseau, who, although he

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1. Coyer: op.cit., p.vii.

realises the abuses of the French colleges, has nevertheless concentrated on private education, and the formation of natural rather than social man: raising the question

"Pourquoi l'Auteur d'Emile, sifflant ces risibles Etablissements qu'on appelle Colleges, ... au lieu d'appliquer ses forces à l'Education privée, ne les a-t-il pas consacrées à l'Education Publique? Pourquoi encore, au lieu de s'occuper uniquement de l'homme de la Nature, ne s'est-il pas attaché à la formation de l'homme de la société?"<sup>1</sup>

It is clear from this statement that Coyer completely fails to see that Emile is ultimately destined for society, and to appreciate both Rousseau's dilemma concerning public education in an unreformed society, and his attempt to combine the formation of natural and social man, while respecting the rights of each. He is, in fact, continuing the misinterpretation of Poncelet and Formey, although his basic attitude is not at all similar to theirs.

Whereas they are criticising the anti-social orientation of Emile because they support both society in general and the particular form of society of eighteenth century France, Coyer is merely criticising Rousseau for apparently refusing to deal with the most pressing problem of the time, i.e. the reform of public education.

Coyer himself oversimplifies the question of

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1. Coyer: op.cit., p.ix.

educational and political reform. He avoids the difficulties which Rousseau encounters, and which he apparently fails to see, by not raising the question of parallel reform, and the difficulties involved in a one-sided reform. He nevertheless goes further than Duclos and Morelly by realising that children must be removed from the corrupting influences of their environment, and plans to place them in state boarding-schools from the age of four:

"le mal ne sera pas sans remède. Les enfans ont-ils quatre ans; la Patrie les demande pour en faire des hommes".<sup>1</sup>

However, he does not discuss the question of the reintegration of these children into a society for which they had not been prepared. This idea of a public education conducted in isolation from corrupt society makes its first appearance with Coyer, but it is impossible to say whether this is in any way inspired by Emile. At all events, Coyer makes no reference to Rousseau on this point. His subsequent plan of public education is interesting in that, like De Beaurieu, he introduces elements from Emile into the context of public education. In 1773 Helvétius' De l'Homme was published

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1. Formey: op.cit., p.5.



posthumously. In it he criticises a number of ideas expressed in Emile and the letter on education of the Nouvelle Héloïse. Many of his criticisms are concerned with psychological and philosophical concepts, but he does also deal with some minor aspects of Rousseau's general educational ideas, including the question of private education.

Helvétius does not discuss the question of the total isolation of Emile, but deals with the private education described in La Nouvelle Héloïse, and which he seems to extend to Emile. His main criticism is that much that Rousseau suggests is impracticable in the home. How, he asks, can one ensure that no undesirable environmental influences affect the child? How can the tutor<sup>r</sup> and servants control their behaviour for long hours at a time in order that the child may not receive unwanted impressions and experiences? In addition, how can a private individual afford the salary which a good tutor demands? All this, he argues, only becomes possible in the context of public education, the advantages of which he extols elsewhere.

We can conclude very little concerning Emile from these remarks, except that like Poncelet, Formey and Coyer, Helvétius seems to see Emile as a treatise on private education. He makes no reference to Rousseau's discussion

of public and private education. However, the most interesting aspect of his ideas on education is that, apparently independently of Emile, he expresses quite clearly the need for parallel political and educational reform:

"Les préceptes de cette éducation nouvelle sont-ils en contradiction avec les moeurs et le gouvernement? ils sont toujours réputés mauvais. En quel moment seroient - ils adoptés? Lorsqu'un peuple éprouve de grands malheurs, de grandes calamités, et qu'un concours heureux et singulier de circonstances, fait sentir au Prince la nécessité d'une réforme. Tant qu'elle n'est point sentie, on peut, si l'on veut, méditer les principes d'une bonne éducation. Leur découverte doit précéder leur établissement. D'ailleurs plus l'on s'occupe d'une science, plus on y apperçoit de verités nouvelles, plus on en simplifie les principes. Mais qu'on n'espere pas les faire adopter."<sup>1</sup>

Apart from Rolland's vague suggestions Helvétius is the first after Rousseau to put forward this opinion boldly. But here the similarity ends, for Helvétius does not adopt a system of private education as a temporary expedient.

For Le Mercier de la Rivière, the author of a treatise on public education<sup>2</sup> published in 1775, Emile again seems to spring to mind when he thinks of private education. Although he is writing about the need for public education, Le Mercier in fact prefers private, and

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1. Helvétius: De l'homme, Londres 1773, Bk.II, p.368.
  2. Le Mercier de la Rivière: De l'instruction publique, 1775.

insists on the value of the early impressions to add support to his own idea that the best first impressions are to be received in the parental home:

"Quelque utilité cependant qu'on se promette de ces Institutions (i.e. des écoles publiques) on doit en attendre une plus grande encore de l'Instruction domestique, de celle que donnent journellement aux enfants les exemples et les discours de leurs parents; on peut même les regarder comme la base, comme le germe de toute autre instruction: les premières impressions que nous recevons dans notre enfance, se gravent en nous si profondément, qu'il est bien rare de les voir s'effacer; nous devons dire au contraire, avec l'Auteur d'Emile, qu'elles décident presque toujours de notre caractère moral pour le reste de notre vie."<sup>1</sup> (a)

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1. Le Mercier de la Rivière: op.cit., p.113.

- (a) This is a misinterpretation of Rousseau's definition of the 'caractere moral'. For him this is inherent not acquired. In La Nouvelle Héloïse he says:  
 "Chaque homme apporte en naissant un caractère, un génie, et des talens qui lui sont propres"  
 (Pléiade edition, Part V, Letter III, p.566)  
 and this principle is also followed in Emile. Education does not form the individual temperament or character, since this is present from the start, but sets out to develop this to its full capacity. External impressions can, however, cause the formation of false ideas, and affect the child's character, but this does not imply the original formation of the individual temperament. Julie says, for example:  
 "je n'ai pas tardé de connoître qu'en se faisant un droit d'être obéis les enfans sortoient de l'état de nature presque en naissant, et contractoient nos vices par notre exemple, les leurs par notre indiscretion". (ibid. p.571).  
 The determination of character by early impressions is the method of Helvétius and the other environmentalists. Moreover, Le Mercier's system of examples given by the parents is not in accordance with Rousseau's methods of education in Emile.



Despite this fairly general feeling that Emile is concerned with private education, the outstanding work on private education of the time Condillac's Cours d'étude pour l'instruction du prince de Parme of 1775, makes no reference to it. This is, however, most probably because Condillac is more concerned with the practical issues of teaching and studies than with the theoretical aspects of education. Moreover, Condillac had nothing to learn from Emile on the association of ideas in education. On the contrary, Rousseau learns from him on such matters.

It is not until Philipon de la Madeleine's work on public education in 1783 that we find any further references to Emile on this question. This means that, during the 1770s when considerable attention was being paid to Rousseau's ideas on physical education, relatively little was said about the position of Emile and its relation to one of the main preoccupations of pedagogical writers, the question of a reformed public education. Grivel, though he mentions Emile on other points fails to mention it on this. His own attitude remains close to the old idea of a public education based on a desire for the common good, and although he seems to realize the difficulty of putting a reformed public education into practice, he looks for

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1. Plan de réformation des études élémentaires, La Haye, 1776.



the achievement of this to a moral regeneration of the adult population rather than to political reform. Borelly does not mention it either, but it is interesting to see that he talks explicitly about forming children for the society in which they are to live. In his case, however, the question of necessary political reform does not arise, since his book<sup>1</sup> was composed with the reformed political situation of Poland in view. This book in fact coincides with Rousseau's Projet in which he was committing himself in favour of public education as being the solely acceptable form of education under a popular government. Although Borelly does not mention Emile on public education, he does recommend Rousseau's ideas on physical and moral man to be included in a comprehensive study of man, which would form part of the syllabus in his proposed scheme of public education.

De la Madeleine, then, revives the question of Rousseau's position on public and private education in Emile in 1783. Although he himself insists on the need for a good public education for the masses, he in fact prefers private education. However, he criticises Rousseau's refusal to grant education to the poor, arguing that their position is not, as Rousseau suggests, unalterable, but that,

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1. Plan de réformation des études élémentaires, La Haye, 1776.

with education, they can, even under the present form of government, improve their social position.

Emile. Philipon does not refer directly to Emile as a work on private education, but he nevertheless mentions Rousseau in such close connection to Locke that it is very probable that he places him amongst those who prefer private to public education. He describes Emile as a vulgarisation of the ideas of Locke and Montaigne:

"Cet intéressant sujet (l'éducation des enfants) n'a été vraiment bien traité que par Locke, Montaigne et Rousseau, qui n'a presque fait autre chose, que de commenter, développer, rapprocher du commun des hommes les idées des deux premiers, et sur-tout leur donner ce coloris vif et séduisant, qui fait un livre agréable d'un livre infiniment solide."<sup>1</sup>

In the same note he quotes Locke's assessment of public education and his preference for private:

"les défauts d'une éducation domestique valent infiniment mieux que toutes ces belles acquisitions (i.e. les petits avantages que procure l'éducation publique). Puisque la vertu est la grande et la principale fin qu'on doit se proposer dans l'éducation, le meilleur est qu'un jeune homme soit élevé dans la maison de son pere ...."<sup>1</sup>

It seems fair to conclude from this that he thinks of Emile as yet another treatise on private education.

It is interesting to notice in passing that, like Coyer and De Beurieu, Philipon refers to Rousseau as an

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1. Philipon de la Madeleine: op.cit., Note, p.29.

authority on physical education, and includes details of what, by now, would be recognised as similar to ideas in Emile, e.g. fresh air, hard beds, healthy diet, etc. in the context of public education. This habit of mentioning Emile in a work on public education, and either not mentioning Rousseau's position with regard to public education, or counting him as a writer on private education, seems, judging by the authors already mentioned, to have been a fairly common occurrence.

In 1785 Proyart<sup>1</sup> gives us a different kind of information concerning Emile. He reports that some teachers have adopted certain aspects of Emile and attempted to fit them into the school curriculum; i.e. they have been using ideas from a treatise ostensibly on private education in the context of public education, though Proyart himself does not in fact make this distinction. This, he maintains, has been a failure, and, in the practical field, suggests that the system of the University of Paris might be more successful than Emile:

"Où sont, je le demande, les sujets de marque sortis des écoles de nos mentors modernes? J'ai beau chercher de toutes parts l'Emile de Jean-Jacques Rousseau, je ne le trouve que dans son livre; au lieu, que les Emiles formés par

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1. Proyart: Oeuvres complètes, Paris 1819, Vol.VI, De l'éducation publique.



l'Université de Paris, je puis les montrer à la tête du clergé et de la Magistrature, je puis les montrer se distinguant de la foule dans tous les états et toutes les conditions de la société."1 (a)

Proyart himself seems to understand the connection between public morality and education and thinks that the time has come to reform what he considers to be the main sources of social corruption. However, his ideas on education are centred around the basic idea of children educated together in a miniature republic where they will forget their original social inequalities. He makes no effort to resolve the problem of subsequent contact with the inequalities of the existing social order, or rather, he does not even seem to be aware of the problem.

It is only with the Revolution in 1789 that the connection between political and educational reform seems to crystallise in the minds of the reformers. Madame Molinier in one of her articles on pedagogical ideas during the Revolution<sup>2</sup> emphasises their political character, and this seems to be true right from the start.

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1. Proyart: op.cit., p.233.

2. M. Molinier: "Les plans pour une nouvelle éducation sous la Constituante." Dossiers documentaires, September 1963.

(a) Dr. Tash's interpretation of this passage as a complaint on Proyart's part that the University does not form Emile's (op.cit., p.100) is not borne out by the rest of his essay which is a panegyric of the University's achievements.



Villier's Nouveau plan d'éducation et d'instruction publique of 1789 for example, illustrates this sudden crystallisation, showing at the same time that the point of emphasis changes. The question is no longer as Rousseau and Helvétius had seen it: how can a new, public-spirited education be possible without a new, public-spirited régime, but, as one would expect after the event of political revolution: can the new régime be expected to last without a corresponding reform in education? As Villier puts it:

"Vos réglemens les plus sages, vos meilleures lois, resteront sans exécution, si vous n'avez soin de travailler à former une génération capable d'en sentir l'utilité ...."<sup>1</sup>

De la Cour in his Ecoles nationales of 1790 devises a practical plan of education based on the idea of "la nécessité d'élever, pour de nouvelles lois, une race d'hommes toute nouvelle".<sup>2</sup> Desramèr<sup>s</sup> appeals for educational reform to the National Assembly, which, he declares, is already:

"vivement persuadée que c'est de la réforme de l'éducation que dépend la régénération, la gloire et le sort de la Nation".<sup>3</sup>

None of these writers, however, look back to Emile as having first formulated the need for both political and educational reform.

1. Villier: op.cit., p.v.

2. De la Cour: op.cit., p.1.

3. Desramèr: L'Université à l'agonie, 1790, p.4.

References to Emile's position with regard to public and private education, natural and social man are extremely rare at this time. One writer, Jean-François Major brings up the old complaint that Emile is too concerned with private education to be practicable in the field of public education. He heads his essay with one of Rousseau's criticisms of the existing French Colleges:

"Parmi les diverses sciences qu'ils (les colléges) se vantent de leur enseigner, ils se gardent bien de choisir celles qui leur soient véritablement utiles."<sup>1</sup>

but he is far from thinking of Emile as an alternative to the existing system. His main criticism, and he maintains that this is a commonly held criticism, is that much of the teaching method of Emile is only suitable for private education. Of Rousseau's attempt to let the child learn from his own experience, Major says:

"Ce qu'un gouverneur fait pour Emile, un professeur ne peut le faire pour 30 ou 40 élèves: il n'a pas toujours des hommes pour les faire agir."<sup>2</sup>

and this he repeats again, despite his admiration for Emile in principle. Major also criticises the way in which Rousseau restricts his pupil to academic pursuits at an age when he thinks the child could be socially useful:

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1. J.F. Major: Tableau d'un college en activité, presented to the National Assembly, 22 Dec. 1790, Frontispiece.
  2. Ibid., Note, p.77.

"M. Rousseau veut-il que les jeunes gens commencent l'étude des langues à seize ans? Je dis qu' à cet age ils pourront faire des choses plus utiles pour eux-mêmes et pour la société."<sup>1</sup>

This is very close to the earlier criticisms of the anti-man, or the individual and the member of a social group, social orientation of Emile.

It is interesting to see how, in fact, the points which catch other writers' attention vary according to the time and circumstances of composition. Whereas Helvétius, interesting to see that he is dealing with a point which intent on obtaining a system of public education, criticises various aspects of Emile as being impossible in private education, Major, faced with the practical possibility of introducing a new system of public education, criticises those aspects of Emile which he finds unsuitable for public education.

In contrast to Major's comments which link up easily enough with earlier criticisms, Degranthe, the author of an essay entitled: Abus de l'ancienne éducation, dévoilés et réformés par les progrès de la raison, picks on an aspect of Emile, which had so far passed unnoticed. He heads his essay with the following quotation from Emile:

"Peu lui importe à qui tombe un plus grand bonheur en partage pourvu qu'il concoure au plus grand bonheur de tous; c'est le premier intérêt du sage après l'intérêt privé; car

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1. Major: op.cit., p.78.



chacun est partie de son espece et non d'un  
autre individu."<sup>1</sup>

Exactly to what extent Degranthe had understood Rousseau's discussions on the relationship of the private and public man, or the individual and the member of a social group, is not clear from this one quotation, but it does suggest, however, that Degranthe had understood Rousseau's position much better than his predecessors had done. It is also interesting to see that he is dealing with a point which had attracted no attention from the pre-Revolutionary writers.

In contrast to the dearth of comments on Emile and private and public education etc. during the first two years of the Revolution, most of the essays on public education of this period incorporate details from Emile, or praise Rousseau in the course of their recommendations. Villier, for example, agrees with Rousseau that botany should be taught at school, and recommends that Rousseau's works, should be studied along with those of Boileau, Molière, Corneille and Voltaire as fine examples of the beauties of the French language. Many of his ideas obviously owe much to Emile although the author does not draw attention to this fact. For example, he situates his

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1. Degranthe: op.cit., Frontispiece.



school out in the country, so that the curriculum can include long walks, and he refers to the present French colleges as "ces risibles établissements",<sup>1</sup> a phrase obviously taken from Emile. Desram<sup>s</sup>er describes his picture of an ideal education, which also seems to owe many of its details to Emile, although in Desram<sup>s</sup>er's plan the social destination of the pupils is emphasised much more than in Emile:

"Qu'ils (i.e. the chosen teachers) soient responsables des dispositions, des qualités, des talents que la nature a mis en chacun de nous. Qu'ils nous rendent le corps robuste et agile; qu'ils ornent notre esprit de connoissances utiles et agréables, et notre coeur de toutes les vertus sociales. Qu'ils nous excitent à chérir de plus en plus notre patrie, à répandre courageusement notre sang pour la défendre contre ses ennemis."<sup>2</sup>

His belief that the profession of teacher is "le plus important, le plus honorable de tous"<sup>3</sup> is also very reminiscent of Rousseau's attempts in Emile to raise the status of the tutor. The Abbé Auger too in his collection of <sup>lectures</sup> conferences held during 1790<sup>4</sup> emphasises the need in any good education to follow Nature: "dont les plus belles et les plus importantes productions sont lentes".<sup>5</sup>

1. Villier: op.cit., pp.115-6.
2. Desram<sup>s</sup>er: op.cit., p.6.
3. Idem.
4. Auger: Organisation des écoles nationales, 1791.
5. Ibid., pp.iv-v.

Despite the frequency of ideas which seem to have received their original impetus from Emile, relatively few are actually attributed to Rousseau. Above all, the authors of these essays have no objection to taking details from what before the Revolution was generally seen as a treatise on private and somewhat anti-social education and placing them in their own treatises on public, society-centred education. Like their predecessors, they are uniquely concerned with educating children for society, and are totally unconcerned about the individualistic elements of Emile's education. Most of them hardly seem to notice these aspects any more. Jean-François Major, as we have seen, criticises the anti-social orientation of Emile, but he seems to have been an exception at this time. In contrast to Major another writer, Fèvre du Grandvaux seems to think that his essay on public education is in fact a realisation of the ideas of Emile.

Fèvre's Plan d'Education, which was first read to the Constituante early in 1791 and later published under the title of L'Emile réalisé<sup>1</sup> acknowledges its debt to Emile much more directly than the others had done. Despite this, it remains very close to the other early Revolutionary plans

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1. Fèvre du Grandvaux: L'Emile réalisé ou Plan d'éducation générale, Corfou An VII.

of education, in that its basic aim is the formation of socially-conscious, patriotic citizens, and that to do this it proposes a system of communal education which will be open to all. Some of its ideas are, however, perhaps closer to the basic ideas of Emile than the others had been.

The author hopes to produce a regeneration of human society by basing education on the laws of nature. This does not entail a return to an earlier state, but the rational achievement of the essential virtues of an earlier state in which man was directed towards a state of instinctive goodness:

"En les instruisant, je veux reléguer de cette terre les préjugés qui nous avilissent, et dissiper l'ignorance, la source des plus grands maux. C'est alors que nous ferons par raison ce que, dans l'état de nature, nous faisons par instinct; c'est alors que plus rapprochés de cette même nature, nous retrouverons enfin notre premier bonheur."<sup>1</sup>

This is, in fact, very similar to Rousseau's idea of the superiority of the social state, in which man can achieve virtue by rational choice, in contrast to the natural state, in which ignorance of the moral situation prevents man from achieving morality and, hence, virtue. Like Rousseau, Fèvre also sees a state based on the laws of environmental nature as a desirable state, capable of

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1. Fèvre du Grandvaux: op.cit., p.1.

satisfying man's desire for happiness.

Fèvre's plan, however, though it shares many details with Rousseau's ideas on the physical environment of the child; school in the country, vegetarian diet, breast-feeding (although this is to be done by carefully selected wet-nurses, not the mother), gardening etc. together with some of Rousseau's educational methods; training in workshops, no religion until adolescence, also contains the egalitarian, society-centred ideas common to the other revolutionary essays on education. Fèvre teaches his pupils about society, and trains them to fill specific offices in it. He also provides them with a moral code based on their duties towards society, which is to take the place of the varying moral codes of religion:

"on leur recommandera à tous d'être bons et justes, de gagner l'estime de tout le monde en se rendant utiles et en faisant du bien, chacun selon son pouvoir: car c'est là la meilleure et même l'unique religion."<sup>1</sup>

Fèvre's plan, like many others at this time, demands a complete break with the old system in order to be effective. Children are to be educated in a separate, self-supporting community, the "Berceau de la Nation", from which they will proceed to the national schools. Their only contact with

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1. Fèvre du Grandvaux: op.cit., p.12.



the outside world will be on visiting days when they will meet their parents in the presence of their nurses and teachers. No-one who leaves the "Berceau" or a national school will be allowed to re-enter it.

This idea of isolating children from corrupt society by placing them in state boarding-schools was already fashionable by the time Fèvre du Grandvaux uses it. Villier had also planned to isolate his pupils from the corrupting influences of society by placing them in state boarding-schools. Discussing the danger of children receiving a bad education before they are old enough to enter the new boarding-schools, he says:

"J'ai tari cette source inépuisable de désordres; je n'admets point d'enfans au-dessus de six ans. A cet âge, il y a toujours de la ressource ... J'exige de plus, que les enfans de six ans, une fois entrés dans mon établissement n'en sortent que pour n'y plus revenir, ou après leur éducation finie. Avec toutes ces précautions, je suis assuré de leur conserver des moeurs pures - de les rendre utiles à leur patrie, à l'humanité."<sup>1</sup>

The Abbé Audrein in his Mémoire sur l'éducation nationale française, given to the National Assembly in December 1790, also insists on the corrupting influence of the parental home and advocates the establishment of egalitarian boarding-schools open to all. He criticises

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1. Villier: op.cit., p.113.

the isolation of private education, because it fails to produce public-spirited citizens,<sup>1</sup> and substitutes for it the communal isolation of the state boarding-school.

It is impossible to say how much this idea of isolation owes to Emile. It had already been expressed by Coyer in 1770, and in fact goes back as far as Saint-Pierre's idea of a separate, school community. It also seems to be a natural enough solution in a situation where a new political and legal system had just been enforced, and which could not seriously be expected to represent a moral re-birth of the population as a whole. Moreover, the problem of reintegrating these children into a corrupt social order should, theoretically at least, no longer exist, since these children are now to be educated to fit the new social system in France. The authors of these plans on public education are, in fact, extending the idea of isolation from corrupt society of Emile, and transposing it into the plural, but none of them seems to associate their decision with Rousseau's earlier suggestion.

The only writer who comes close to the dual formation of Emile, i.e., the combination of natural and social man, at this time, is Jean Debry, who completed his Essai sur

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1. Audrein: op.cit., p.35.

l'éducation nationale in November 1790. Unfortunately, the first part of his essay is unobtainable, but the second part illustrates fairly clearly the essential contents of the first. Debry is concerned with an education in two stages: the first deals with the child uniquely in relation to himself and culminates in a "fête de l'ingenuité"; the second represents a complete break with the first and is concerned with the formation of the citizen:

"L'enfance est écoulee, nous touchons à l'adolescence; il n'y a pas un instant à perdre, formons le citoyen; car à mesure que les considérations sociales et harmoniques gagnent d'étendue, il importe que les affections individuelles diminuent d'énergie."<sup>1</sup>

This educational programme in two stages is quite obviously following Rousseau's division of Emile's education into a pre-social, a-moral phase followed by a social and moral period. Like De Beaurieu, however, Debry misses the synthetic quality of Emile's education and gives his pupils first an education which is concerned only with themselves and their individual talents, and then subordinates this to their formation for society in which they are only considered in their role as citizens and in their relationship to the patrie. From adolescence, everything in Debry's plan gains a communal character, which is directed

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1. Debry: op.cit., Pt.II, p.7.

towards the group, not the individual:

"dirigés par les leçons que devancent leurs penchants, bientôt ils aspireront après l'instant mémorable où le sentiment qui les lie à leurs condisciples les embrâsera d'amour pour la société".<sup>1</sup>

The patrie is to give them wives, whom they can only obtain by proving themselves to be worthy citizens. Their education will reach its climax in a public festival, the "fête de l'amour et du patriotisme".<sup>2</sup>

Very little of Rousseau's ideas on the relationship of nature and society, natural and social man, the individual and the citizen, private and public education, seems to have come across to the writers of the pre-revolutionary and early revolutionary period. The early years show a reaction to the apparently anti-social orientation of Emile, and support for the current régime. Many writers on public education ignore Emile or comment briefly on other aspects of it. Only De Beaurieu seems to have understood the basic structure of Emile's education, and even then he gives it a twist of his own, which overemphasises man's social role at the expense of his rights as an individual. In the 1770s, Emile seems to have been generally interpreted as a treatise on private education, and criticised as such,

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1. Debry: op.cit., p.38.

2. Ibid., p.39.



though those who criticise it on this point adopt other aspects of the book and incorporate them in their own essays on public education. By the time the Revolution comes Emile is obviously popular, but hardly any comments are made on this particular question. The fact is, that those who write about education during the second half of the eighteenth century are more interested in private education and the individual than Duclos and Morelly had been. They fail to understand Rousseau's difficulty concerning the need for political and educational reform, although this idea does seem to emerge little by little before it finally crystallises at the Revolution, but it does so apparently independently of Emile. At first, the educationists criticise Emile's individualistic education; by the time the Revolution arrives they ignore it. Only Major raises the old objection, and even then this is on practical issues, rather than on the system as a whole.

If the Revolutionary plans seem to owe a great deal to Emile, most of it is to the now popularised ideas of physical education and teaching methods. These had been gradually incorporated into works on public education, and, according to Proyart, had even been tried out in

schools, and the Revolutionaries simply incorporate them en masse in their own plans for reformed public education.

The question of isolation from corrupt society is more difficult to place. It may owe a great deal to Emile, but in 1789 and 90 this is not directly recognised by the educationists. Fèvre du Grandvaux may in fact think this is one of the elements of Emile he is putting into practice, but he makes no point of saying so. It would be interesting to see if the later Revolutionary plans for public education make any more direct references to Rousseau on the question of isolation, and if, in fact, they realise the transformation which has taken place.

The material element attaches man to the animal world of the senses and passions, while the immaterial element raises him towards the purely spiritual nature of God. The rational faculties of the human soul, intellect and will, are to be understood in their relationship to the divine. They are immaterial and need no bodily organ for their performances, although, in this life, they depend on the senses for their activities. They are capable of cognizing the universals, and reflecting on their own performances. Man is conscious of his existence through the exercise of his rational faculties (Descartes: Cogito ergo sum), and is distinguished from the animal world by his use of reason and free will. (According to Descartes animal reactions are purely mechanistic.)

## CHAPTER III

THE FORMATION OF THE PERSONALITY

Rousseau's handling of philosophical, or what we might term, early psychological questions in Emile represents yet another attempt at synthesis; this time of traditional philosophy, as developed by Descartes and Malebranche, and the more modern system of Sensationalism.

Traditional philosophy defines man as a combination of two substances, a material body and an immaterial soul. The material element attaches man to the animal world of the senses and passions, while the immaterial element raises him towards the purely spiritual nature of God. The rational faculties of the human soul, intellect and will, are to be understood in their relationship to the divine. They are immaterial and need no bodily organ for their performances, although, in this life, they depend on the senses for their activities. They are capable of cognizing the universals, and reflecting on their own performances. Man is conscious of his existence through the exercise of his rational faculties (Descartes: Cogito ergo sum), and is distinguished from the animal world by his use of reason and free will. (According to Descartes animal reactions are purely mechanistic.)

Malebranche continued Descartes' definition of the dualism of human nature. For him, <sup>matter, and therefore the human</sup> the body is merely "l'étendue en longueur, largeur et profondeur; et toutes ses propriétés ne consistent que dans le repos, et le mouvement, et dans une infinité de figures différentes"<sup>1</sup> i.e. it is a purely passive faculty, whereas the soul is an active faculty "moi qui pense, qui sent, qui veut: c'est la substance où se trouvent toutes les modifications dont j'ai le sentiment intérieur, et qui ne peuvent subsister que dans l'ame qui les sent".<sup>2</sup>

These two substances are closely connected by means of fibres which communicate with the brain. The senses and mind are not, in fact, separate, since perceptions through the senses must be conscious perceptions (i.e. one cannot have pain without feeling it, and hence perceiving it) and, in this way, we can say that the senses merely allow us to perceive gross, material objects which are present, and the impressions these make on our senses are immediately communicated to the brain. Absent objects are perceived by another faculty, the imagination, while intellectual concepts, like a perfect circle or perfection, are perceived

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1. Malebranche: De la recherche de la vérité, Paris, 1772, Vol.I, p.110.

2. Ibid., Vol.I, p.111. , Vol.I, p.106.



by the understanding alone, independently of the senses. These degrees of perception are subjected to two kinds of judgement, the one, passive and mechanical (e.g. the eyes automatically adjust and record according to distance, etc., and demand no real judgement) and the other, an active principle which judges and reasons, causing sensations within itself. This according to Malebranche, can only be the effect of "une intelligence et d'une puissance infinie".<sup>1</sup> That is to say, everything is organised and brought into effect by God. Even the sensations which are the occasion of our ideas are caused by him. Purely intellectual ideas are seen only in God (i.e. we see a round disc in our imagination, but a circle is seen in God). Judgements based on pure intellections can never be wrong, unlike those based on sensation. Error comes about when volonté (will, the active judgement faculty) depends too much on knowledge received from entendement (understanding, the passive examining faculty) which has been occasioned by the senses. The only way to avoid error is by never agreeing to information provided by entendement until all aspects are examined and we can do so without pricks of conscience. Man's ultimate guides towards truth are the voice of God

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1. Malebranche: op.cit., Vol.I, p.106.

and conscience, which direct us towards the general good.

The Sensationalists, on the other hand, do not define intellect in its relation to the divine, but rather, reverse the situation, and base the judgements of the intellect entirely on knowledge acquired through the senses. For the Sensationalists everything from man's consciousness of his existence to his formation of complex, abstract ideas comes from sensation (cogito ergo sum becomes sentio ergo sum).

The first thinker to completely dispense with a higher influence in man's being, and reduce consciousness and the formation of ideas to a purely sensory basis is Condillac. In his Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines he states that, since the Fall:

"Nous n'avons point d'idées qui ne nous viennent des sens"<sup>1</sup>

and works out a system in which all the operations of the mind develop from the initial stage of perception which is occasioned in the mind by an action of the senses, resulting from impressions on the senses. Unlike Descartes, he grants animals the same capacity as man for forming ideas, the sole distinction being that animals are only capable of the first stages in the thought mechanism. They cannot, as man can,

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1. Corpus général des philosophes français, ed. R. Bayer, Paris 1947, Vol. XXXIII, Oeuvres philosophiques de Condillac, Vol. I. Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines I, I, § 8, p. 7.

control their imagination or attach their ideas to arbitrary signs, and this prevents them from carrying out the higher operations of thought.

Despite the close relationship of sensation to ideas in Condillac's system he, nevertheless, carefully distinguishes between them. Sensation is "l'impression qui se produit en nous à la présence des objets en tant qu'elle vient par les sens",<sup>1</sup> while ideas are formed from sensations "lorsque la réflexion nous les fait considérer comme images de quelque chose".<sup>2</sup>

Buffon too insists on a similar process of thought, and a similar distinction between idea and sensation, though he denies that animals are capable of forming ideas.

Talking about the formation of ideas, he says:

"ils (les animaux) ont des sensations, mais il leur manque la faculté de les comparer, c'est-à-dire la puissance qui produit les idées: car les idées ne sont que des sensations comparées, ou, pour mieux dire, des associations de sensations".<sup>3</sup>

More extreme Sensationalists, however, dropped the distinction between sensation and idea and equated the operations of feeling and judging. Helvétius, for example, defines the ability to receive impressions caused by external

1. Condillac: op.cit., I, III, § 16, p.40.

2. Ibid., I, IV, 2, § 18, p.45.

3. Buffon: op.cit., Vol.IV, Discours sur la nature des animaux, p.41.

objects as "sensibilité physique", and the ability to retain this impression, memory, as "une sensation continuée mais affoiblie".<sup>1</sup> The two are, in fact, one and the same principle, sensation:

"Lorsque par une suite de mes idées, ou par l'ébranlement que certains sons causent dans l'organe de mon oreille, je me rappelle l'image d'un chêne, alors mes organes intérieurs doivent nécessairement se trouver à peu près dans la même situation où ils étaient à la vue de ce chêne. Or, cette situation des organes doit incontestablement produire une sensation: il est donc évident que se ressouvenir, c'est sentir".<sup>2</sup>

He extends the power of sensation to the exercise of judgement:

"Quand je juge la grandeur ou la couleur des objets qu'on me présente, il est évident que le jugement porté sur les différentes impressions que ces objets ont faites sur mes sens, n'est proprement qu'une sensation; que je puis dire également: je juge ou je sens que, de deux objets, l'un que j'appelle toise, fait sur moi une impression différente de celui que j'appelle piéd; que la couleur que je nomme rouge, agit sur mes yeux différemment de celle que je nomme jaune; et j'en conclus qu'en pareil cas, juger n'est jamais que sentir."<sup>3</sup>

In this way he defines man's ability to think as a completely passive function, mechanically operated by the capacity to

1. Helvétius: Oeuvres complètes, Paris, 1818, Vol.I, De l'Esprit, pp.1-2.

2. Ibid., p.7.

3. Ibid., p.9.

2. Ibid., p.150, 26.

3. Idem.



distinguish between sensations.

A similar definition appeared in the Encyclopédie, article "Evidence" - The author equates the capacity to see two different objects with the capacity to judge that they are different:

"un grand bâton et un petit bâton vûs ensemble, font naître la sensation du grand bâton et la sensation du petit bâton ....

"Ainsi juger .... qu'un bâton est plus grand qu'un autre, n'est autre chose que sentir ou appercevoir ces sensations telles qu'elles sont. Il est donc évident que ce sont les sensations elles-mêmes qui produisent les jugemens".<sup>1</sup>

The resulting concordance of sensations constitutes a purely passive function of the sensitive being. All the operations of the brain are reducible to the basic corporeal mechanism of sensation:

"les causes sensibles qui agissent sur nos sens, et qui sont les objets de nos sensations, sont eux-mêmes les objets de nos connoissances, et la source de notre intelligence, puisque ce sont eux qui nous procurent les sensations par lesquelles nous sommes assurés de l'existence et de la durée de notre être sensitif, et de l'évidence de nos raisonnemens".<sup>2</sup>

Or again:

"l'exercice de nos sens est le principe de toute certitude, et le fondement de toutes nos connoissances".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, Paris 1751-7, Vol.VI, "Evidence", p.148, 20.
  2. Ibid., p.150, 26.
  3. Idem.

It is against this extreme form of Sensationalism, the reduction of the mind to one passive faculty, sensation, and not against the mere basing of knowledge on the experience of the senses, that Rousseau is writing in Emile. His own system of education is, in fact, based on the acquisition of knowledge through the senses, and is a striking example of what is essentially a Sensationalist method, learning through experience and observation of the concrete, physical world. The whole of Books I and II is based on the idea that, since the senses are the first organs to develop in the child, they must be exercised first, and that it is through them that the intelligence will be able to develop:

"Exercer les sens n'est pas seulement en faire usage, c'est apprendre à bien juger par eux, c'est apprendre, pour ainsi dire à sentir; car nous ne savons ni toucher, ni voir, ni entendre, que comme nous avons appris. .... N'exercez donc pas seulement les forces, exercez tous les sens qui les dirigent; tirez de chacun d'eux tout le parti possible, puis vérifiez l'impression de l'un par l'autre. Mesurez, comptez, pesez, comparez. N'employez la force qu'après avoir estimé la résistance; faites toujours en sorte que l'estimation de l'effet précède l'usage des moyens. Intéressez l'enfant à ne jamais faire d'efforts insuffisants ou superflus. Si vous l'accoutumez à prévoir ainsi l'effet de tous ses mouvements et à redresser ses erreurs par l'expérience, n'est-il pas clair que plus il agira, plus il deviendra judicieux."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Emile: p.131.

Rousseau's definitions of sensation and the formation of ideas are also very close to the Sensationalists' definitions:

"de la comparaison de plusieurs sensations successives ou simultanées, et du jugement qu'on en porte, naît une sorte de sensation mixte ou complexe que j'appelle idée".<sup>1</sup>

This judgement is, however, not the unique, passive faculty of Helvétius and the author of "Evidence", but a dual mechanism, one operation of which is passive, the other active:

"Les idées simples ne sont que des sensations comparées. Il y a des jugements dans les sensations complexes, que j'appelle idées simples. Dans la sensation, le jugement est purement passif, il affirme qu'on sent ce qu'on sent. Dans la perception on idée, le jugement est actif; il rapproche, il compare, il détermine des rapports que les sens ne déterminent pas."<sup>2</sup>

In the Profession de Foi Rousseau continues his refutation of the levelling tendencies of "Evidence".

Using the example of the two sticks, he writes:

"Voir deux objets à la fois, ce n'est pas voir leurs rapports ni juger de leurs différences; apercevoir plusieurs objets les uns hors des autres n'est pas les nombrer. Je puis avoir au même instant l'idée d'un grand bâton et d'un petit bâton sans les comparer, sans juger que l'un est plus petit que l'autre, comme je puis voir à la fois ma main entière, sans faire le compte de mes doigts. Ces idées comparatives,

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1. Emile: p.228.

2. Idem.



plus grand, plus petit, de même que les idées numériques d'un, de deux, etc., ne sont certainement pas des sensations, quoique mon esprit ne les produise qu'à l'occasion de mes sensations."<sup>1</sup>

Rousseau's arguments in the Profession de Foi do not, however, merely constitute a refutation of the passivity of the thinking faculty. Unable to divest himself of an inner conviction that God exists, and that the human soul and its rational faculties, despite their dependence on the senses, are ultimately connected through conscience to the divine, he brings back the old arguments of the independence of reason, the freedom of the will, and the immortality of the soul. He finds in man not only an active faculty of judgement, but also an active, creative force, the will, which enables man to control his actions, and combat the lowering influences of sense and passion:

"En méditant sur la nature de l'homme, j'y crus découvrir deux principes distincts, dont l'un l'élevait à l'étude des vérités éternelles, à l'amour de la justice et du beau moral, aux régions du monde intellectuel dont la contemplation fait les délices du sage, et dont l'autre le ramenait bassement en lui-même, l'asservissait à l'empire des sens, aux passions qui sont leurs ministres, et contrariait par elles tout ce que lui inspirait le sentiment du premier. En me sentant entraîné, combattu par ces deux mouvements contraires je me disais: Non l'homme n'est pas un: je veux et je ne veux pas, je me sens à la fois esclave et libre; je vois le bien, je l'aime, et

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1. Emile: p.315.

3. Ibid., p.329.



je fais le mal; je suis actif quand j'écoute la raison, passif quand mes passions m'entraînent; et mon pire tourment quand je succombe est de sentir que j'ai pu résister."<sup>1</sup>

It is this activity of the judgement and will (both of which stem from the same active principle, the "faculté intelligente":

"si l'on comprend bien que l'homme est actif dans ses jugements, que son entendement n'est que le pouvoir de comparer et de juger, on verra que sa fierté n'est qu'un pouvoir semblable, ou dérivé de celui-là; il choisit le bon comme il a jugé le vrai; s'il juge faux, il choisit mal"<sup>2)</sup>

that constitutes man's freedom and immateriality:

"Le principe de toute action est dans la volonté d'un être libre: on ne saurait remonter au delà .... Supposer quelque acte, quelque effet qui ne dérive pas d'un principe actif, c'est vraiment supposer des actes sans causes, c'est tomber dans un cercle vicieux. Ou il n'y a point de première impulsion, ou toute première impulsion n'a nulle cause antérieure, et il n'y a point de véritable volonté sans liberté. L'homme est donc libre dans ses actions, et, comme tel, animé d'une substance immatérielle ..."<sup>3</sup>

But, although he is free, he is nevertheless able to know what is right and good through the exercise of conscience, a faculty which is independent of the senses and in direct, spiritual contact with the divine will:

"La suprême jouissance est dans le contentement de soi-même; c'est pour mériter ce contentement que nous sommes placés sur la terre et doués de

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1. Emile: p.326.
  2. Ibid., p.328.
  3. Ibid., p.329.

la liberté, que nous sommes tentés par les passions et retenus par la conscience."<sup>1</sup>

Despite the lowering influences of the senses and passions, Rousseau reaffirms his faith in the sureness of knowledge through the senses. It is not sensation which causes error, but the active faculty of judgement:

"la vérité est dans les choses et non pas dans mon esprit qui le juge, et ... moins je mets du mien dans les jugements que j'en porte, plus je suis sûr d'approcher de la vérité".<sup>2</sup>

This attempt to combine a belief in the sureness of knowledge through the senses with an intuitive knowledge of what is right and good, and the whole idea of, on the one hand, basing the intellect on the senses and, on the other, of tracing its relation to the divine, creates various difficulties in Rousseau's conception of the working of the child's mind and the necessary teaching methods it implies. Emile's early education, as we have seen, is based entirely on education through the senses, and demands merely a capacity to associate sensations and form simple ideas. This Rousseau terms "la raison puérile ou sensitive". At about the age of twelve, however, Emile develops the capacity to compare the simple ideas he already has and form complex, abstract ideas, and about the age of fifteen he

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1. Emile: p.329.  
2. Ibid., p.316.

acquires his full rational faculties and a sense of conscience. These various faculties do not in fact develop naturally from the basic principle of sensation, and seem to have a different, independent source. Rousseau merely seems to imagine that they will develop automatically in conjunction with the child's physical development.

This combination of Cartesian and Sensationalist ideas was unlikely to satisfy either the Cartesians or the Sensationalists, and a lengthy criticism of Rousseau's ideas did in fact appear. This was by the man whom Rousseau thought he was refuting when he re-established the active thinking faculty, Helvétius, the author of De l'Esprit. His refutation of some of Rousseau's ideas in Emile was published posthumously and forms part of his second major work, De l'Homme, in which he attempts to justify some of his basic ideas which he had already put forward in De l'Esprit.<sup>(a)</sup>

As he sees the problem, the main differences between his philosophy and Rousseau's depend on the acceptance in Rousseau's case, and the non-acceptance in his own, of two fundamental premisses: the first, that the inequality of individual minds is the result of the greater or lesser

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(a) As a detailed analysis of Helvétius' criticisms of Rousseau does not exist, I have decided to include a detailed examination of his points in this section.

perfection of the sensory organs, and the second, that our virtues, like our views, are innate.<sup>1</sup>

Let us examine the first of these. Although, as we have seen, Helvétius believes that sense and mind are one and the same thing, he nevertheless believes, as Malebranche had done, that the perfection of the mind is independent of the perfection of the senses. In De l'Esprit he argues:

"Si la toise, par exemple, est aux yeux d'un tel homme plus petite, la neige moins blanche, et l'ébène moins noire qu'aux yeux de tel autre, ces deux hommes appercevront néanmoins toujours les mêmes rapports entre tous les objets: la toise, en conséquence, paraîtra toujours à leurs yeux plus grande que le pied; la neige, le plus blanc de tous les corps; et l'ébène, le plus noir de tous les bois.

"Or comme la justesse d'esprit consiste dans la vue nette des véritables rapports que les objets ont entre eux .... j'en conclus que la plus ou moins grande perfection de l'organisation, tant extérieure qu'intérieure, ne peut en rien influencer sur la justesse de nos jugemens."<sup>2</sup>

In De l'Homme he repeats this point of view, this time taking his arguments on to a more practical level:

"l'Expérience .... n'est pas sur ce point d'accord avec le raisonnement: elle démontre bien que c'est à nos sens que nous devons nos idées, mais elle ne démontre point que l'esprit soit toujours en nous proportionné à la finesse plus ou moins grande de ces mêmes sens. Les femmes, par exemple, dont la

1. Helvétius, De l'Homme, Londres, 1773, Vol.II, p.2.

2. Helvétius, De l'Esprit, Vol.I, pp.234-5.



However, "peau plus délicate que celle des Hommes, leur autre  
donne plus de finesse dans le sens du toucher  
aspect n'ont pas plus d'esprit qu'un Voltaire ...."<sup>1</sup> calls to

Helvétius in fact endows all men with the necessary education  
sensitivity to form ideas equally well. For him, the of the  
inequality of individual minds stems from an unequal  
capacity for attention, which is itself stimulated by the  
strength of the passions. However, all men are equally  
capable of attaining the same degree of attention. Any  
inequality which exists between individuals in this respect  
is ultimately the result of their environmental education:

physical "l'inégalité d'esprit aperçue dans les hommes  
que j'appelle communément bien organisés, ne  
Rousseau dépend nullement de l'excellence plus ou moins the  
grande de leur organisation, mais de l'éducation  
Sensat différente qu'ils reçoivent, des circonstances  
of it du peu d'habitude qu'ils ont de penser, de la  
haine qu'en conséquence ils contractent, dans  
leur première jeunesse, pour l'application, de sa the  
dont ils deviennent absolument incapables dans  
questi un âge plus avancé".<sup>2</sup> the sensory organs on the

capacit Rousseau, on the other hand, as we have already seen,  
considers the training of the senses to be vital to the  
subsequent development of the mind: bodily illness or

indiv "Voulez-vous donc cultiver l'intelligence de  
refut votre élève, cultivez les forces (i.e. the  
senses) qu'elle doit gouverner!"<sup>3</sup> argues

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1. De l'Homme, Vol.I, pp.128-9.
  2. De l'Esprit, Vol.I, p.397.
  3. Emile: p.111.

However, Helvétius, in criticising this, overlooks other aspects of Rousseau's definition of the mind, and fails to draw attention to Rousseau's attempt to unite an education based on the senses with a belief in the combination of the material and immaterial substances of the human soul.

Rousseau, in fact, says nowhere that the intelligence is always entirely dependent on the development of the senses, although, given his method of education based on the senses, and carried out by means of concrete examples, his pupil could only benefit from an intensive preparatory sense and physical education. Helvétius is perhaps over accentuating Rousseau's insistence on this point, and emphasising the Sensationalist aspects of Rousseau's system at the expense of its Cartesian elements.

Diderot was later to rally to Rousseau's side on the question of the influence of the sensory organs on the capacity of the mind. He, in fact, shifts the emphasis

of the problem from the perfection of the training of the senses to the detrimental effect of bodily illness or indisposition on the intellectual faculties. In his refutation of Helvétius' De l'Homme, he argues:

"... Quelle correspondance plus rigoureuse que celle de l'état de mon corps avec l'état de mon esprit? Quelle est la vicissitude, si légère qu'elle soit, qui ne passe de mon

which "organisation à mes facultés intellectuelles?"

J'ai mal dormi, je pense mal; je digère mal,  
je pense mal ....

"l'état sain ou malsain des organes, durable  
ou passager, pendant un jour ou pendant tout  
le cours de la vie, depuis l'instant de la  
naissance jusqu'au moment de la mort est le  
thermomètre de l'esprit".<sup>1</sup>

With what concerns the supposedly false second premise,  
Helvétius finds Rousseau to be self-contradictory. The first  
quotation he chooses to illustrate this reveals an obvious  
*determination*  
conviction on Rousseau's part to regard individual  
temperamental differences as innate and fundamentally  
unchangeable:

"Pour changer les caracteres il faudroit pouvoir  
changer les tempéramens; vouloir pareillement  
changer les esprits, et d'un sot faire un homme  
de talens, c'est d'un blond vouloir faire un  
brun. Comment fondroit-on les coeurs et les  
esprits sur un modèle commun? nos talens, nos  
vices, nos vertus et par conséquent nos  
caractères, ne dépendent-ils pas entièrement  
de notre organisation?"<sup>2</sup> (a)

This he contrasts with another of Rousseau's statements in

1. Diderot: Oeuvres complètes, ed. Assézat, Paris 1875,  
Vol.II, Réfutation suivie de l'ouvrage d'Helvétius  
intitulé l'Homme pp.405-6.
2. De l'Homme, Vol.II, p.3. Paraphrased version of  
La Nouvelle Héloïse, p.566.

(a) This is in fact a quotation from the letter on education  
in La Nouvelle Héloïse. However, since Helvétius  
considers this letter as "un extrait de l'Emile fait par  
l'auteur lui-même" (De l'Homme II, p.289) I shall  
include his criticisms of it with his criticisms of  
extracts taken directly from Emile.



which he appears to be saying the opposite, i.e. that certain characteristics at least, are not innate, but acquired:

"Lorsqu'on nourrit les enfans dans leur première simplicité, d'où leur viendraient des vices dont ils n'ont pas vu d'exemple, des passions qu'ils n'ont nulle occasion de sentir, des préjugés que rien ne leur inspire?"<sup>1</sup>

Helvétius himself accepts the second of these.

In La Nouvelle Héloïse Rousseau's position on this question is, indeed, somewhat ambiguous. Wolmar opposes Saint-Preux (who represents Helvétius' point of view) on the question of innate or acquired characteristics.<sup>(a)</sup>

He argues that it is impossible to change the individual's natural dispositions, which must be allowed to develop freely. Consequently, education must be individualistic and not universalistic as Helvétius suggests:

"C'est donc en vain qu'on prétendrait refondre les divers esprits sur un modèle commun. On peut les contraindre et non les changer: on peut empêcher les hommes de se montrer tels qu'ils sont, mais non de les faire devenir autres... Or avant de cultiver le caractère il faut l'étudier, attendre paisiblement qu'il se montre."<sup>2</sup>

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1. De l'Homme & La Nouvelle Héloïse, pp.583-4.

2. La Nouvelle Héloïse, p.566.

(a) It must be remembered that Julie and Wolmar are only characters and do not necessarily represent Rousseau's point of view. Emile is a surer guide to establishing his real opinions.

innate in his Emile (pp.400-1): "L'homme ne naît rien, mais chaque homme naît avec une aptitude propre à une chose".



i.e., the educator can suppress characteristics, but he cannot create new ones. This basic principle of the uniqueness of character is applied throughout Emile. One of Rousseau's main points is that the tutor should study and know the particular potentialities of the child before trying to educate him in one direction rather than another:

"il faut bien connaître le génie particulier de chaque enfant pour savoir quel régime moral lui convient".<sup>1</sup>

It is this proposition much more than any question of self-contradiction that Helvétius is attacking. He cannot accept the idea of the génie particulier or tempérament, and himself represents the opposite line of thought, which is that of the environmentalists:

"Né sans idée, sans vice et sans vertu, tout jusqu'à l'humanité est dans l'homme une acquisition; c'est à son éducation qu'il doit ce sentiment."<sup>2</sup> (a)

The differences which divided Rousseau and Helvétius on this subject were to become even more pronounced in the arguments over tempérament and milieu in the nineteenth century.

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1. Emile, p.78.

2. De l'Homme, Vol.I, Note (b) pp.102-103.

(a) Diderot also supports the idea that characteristics are innate in his Réfutation (pp.406-7): "L'homme ne naît rien, mais chaque homme naît avec une aptitude propre à une chose".

However, Helvétius' first quotation specifically includes the question of good and bad qualities ("nos vices, nos vertus") in the category of innate characteristics. This is in fact Helvétius' interpretation of what Rousseau is saying in La Nouvelle Héloïse since the last sentence ("nos talens, nos vices, nos vertus et par conséquent nos caractères ne dépendent-ils pas entièrement de notre organisation?") does not figure in the original text. It might be argued that Rousseau's reference to "un emporté" may indicate the presence of a bad characteristic in the individual, but Rousseau does not specifically include the questions of good and evil in this passage. However, the issue is confused in La Nouvelle Héloïse by Julie's reference to children who are "bien nés",<sup>1</sup> letting the reader suppose that there are others who are not, and this can be used to justify Helvétius' interpretation and criticism of contradiction. However, in Emile, Rousseau carefully distinguishes between what are, in fact, two separate issues; on the one hand, the existence of inherent temperamental factors, on the other, the question of good and evil. We have already seen that the question of an innate individual temperament is followed throughout Emile.

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1. La Nouvelle Héloïse, p.568.

Emile also represents a firm stand on the side of the natural goodness of the child:

"Posons pour maxime incontestable que les premiers mouvements de la nature sont toujours droits: il n'y a point de perversité originelle dans le coeur humain: il ne s'y trouve pas un seul vice dont on ne puisse dire comment et par où il est entré."<sup>1</sup>

There is no doubt here that Rousseau entirely excludes the possibility of the child possessing an innate tendency

towards evil.

The question of acquired or inherent characteristics, coupled with Helvétius' conviction that the child cannot know intuitively what is just and unjust, prompts him to criticise Rousseau's conception of conscience. On this point he finds Rousseau to be again self-contradictory.

He correctly quotes two instances where Rousseau clearly shows that he believes conscience to be innate.

His third quotation is, on the contrary, intended to show that Rousseau, at other moments, tries to uphold the completely opposite point of view, e.g. when referring to the poor:

"La voix intérieure ne se fait point entendre au pauvre qui ne songe qu'à se nourrir."<sup>2</sup>

This quotation is in fact, quoted somewhat out of context.

1. Emile, p.76.

2. De l'Homme, Vol.II, p.4. Emile, p.306.

3. De l'Homme, Vol.II, p.4. Emile, p.306.

It does not imply, as Helvétius would have us believe, that Rousseau thinks that in some cases conscience is not a primitive natural faculty of man, but, that there are conditions in which this innate principle can be completely stifled, and hence, apparently non-existent. This is the case of the young man who seeks the advice of the Vicaire Savoyard:

"Sans être ignorant, pour son âge, il avait oublié tout ce qu'il lui importait de savoir et l'opprobre, où l'avoit réduit la fortune, étouffoit en lui tout vrai sentiment du bien et du mal."<sup>1</sup>

The accent is quite clearly on "étouffoit", and does not imply that conscience never had nor ever could exist in the young boy. Then follows the generalisation, which is in fact, only quoted in part by Helvétius, and which lends itself to misinterpretation:

"Il est un degré d'abrutissement qui ôte la vie à l'âme; et la voix intérieure ne sait point se faire entendre à celui qui ne songe qu'à se nourrir."<sup>2</sup>

Helvétius' fourth quotation is also concerned with the lower classes and is intended to illustrate the fact that Rousseau believes that they have no innate sense of what is "honnête":

"Le peuple a peu d'idées de ce qui est beau et honnête."<sup>3</sup>

1. Emile, pp.305-306.

2. Ibid., p.306.

3. De l'Homme, Vol.II, p.4. Emile, p.500.



Whether or not Rousseau meant to say categorically that some people simply do not possess an inherent sense of justice, etc., and, consequently, either that conscience is not inherent but acquired, (which, as Helvétius maintains, would be a contradiction of his statements elsewhere), or that conscience is only granted to the privileged few, is very debateable. He makes no direct reference to this possibility, and Helvétius' interpretation can only be implied from the passage. Moreover, Rousseau goes on to say in the same passage that the distinction, if any, between the social classes, is the result of social injustice rather than innate inequalities:

"non qu'on soit plus vicieux dans les derniers rangs que les premiers, mais parce qu'on y a peu d'idée de ce qui est beau et honnête, et que l'injustice des autres états fait voir à celui-ci la justice dans ces vices mêmes".<sup>1</sup>

This interpretation is further strengthened by the fact that, still in the same passage, Rousseau divides men into his own classes of those who think and those who do not, and attributes this not to inherent inequalities, but to inequality of education.<sup>2</sup>

However, Helvétius' final quotation on this point:

"qu'avant l'âge de raison l'homme fait le bien et le mal sans le connaître."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Emile, p.500.

2. Idem.

3. De l'Homme, Vol.II, p.4. Emile, p.43.

presents a much greater difficulty. Is this in fact a direct contradiction on Rousseau's part of his statements elsewhere that conscience is innate? If he believes in a stage during which time conscience is ineffectual and apparently non-existent, how can he logically argue that conscience is an innate principle?

In Emile, Rousseau supposes that, from birth till around the age of fifteen, the child is a completely a-moral, a-rational, a-social and a-sexual being. Time and again he states in these or similar terms:

"Avant l'âge de raison (i.e. about 15) on ne saurait avoir aucune idée des êtres moraux ni des relations sociales."<sup>1</sup>

If the child has no notion of moral relationships, then he has no notion of what is right and wrong, and hence, he can have no sense of conscience. What he does have is a basic desire for his own well-being, amour de soi or the instinct of self-preservation:

"La seule passion naturelle à l'homme est l'amour de soi-même, ou l'amour-propre pris dans un sens étendu."<sup>2</sup>

This is good in itself, since it is restricted entirely to the individual who, at this stage, has no social relationships. Later, with the emotional development of the adolescent,

1. Emile, p.71.
2. Ibid., p.76.

this principle combines with a natural capacity for compassion:

"quand le premier développement des sens allume en lui le feu de l'imagination, il commence à se sentir dans ses semblables, à s'émouvoir de leurs plaintes, et à souffrir de leurs douleurs",<sup>1</sup>

and prompts the individual to seek the good of his fellow-men as well as his own. But, since man is prone to error by the use of his free-will, this same principle can degenerate into selfish self-interest (amour-propre in its narrower sense), and prompt the individual to commit evil. However, the adolescent's developing intellectual faculties allow him to understand the difference between good and evil, and his free will, guided by reason, enables him to choose the good and attain the rational, and not merely instinctive, achievement of virtue. For Rousseau, however, knowledge of right and wrong is not merely, as Helvétius maintains, based on an intellectual understanding of morality gained from environmental experience, any more than morality itself is merely an established code of behaviour based on men's social relationships. It is rather, as we have already seen, the manifestation of God's will, communicated to man by the voice of conscience - which is an inner intuitive conviction of right and wrong and a

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1. Emile, p.251.

desire for good:

"Les actes de la conscience ne sont pas des jugements, mais des sentiments: quoique toutes nos idées nous viennent du dehors. Les sentiments qui les apprécient sont au dedans de nous, et c'est par eux seuls que nous connaissons la convenance ou disconvenance qui existe entre nous et les choses que nous devons respecter ou fuir."<sup>1</sup>

This inner sentiment is, in fact, dependent on the understanding, and can only develop in conjunction with the development of the rational faculties; i.e. man has no innate knowledge of right and wrong, but an innate capacity to desire what is right once his understanding provides him with this knowledge. Consequently, Rousseau can say that during the a-rational period of childhood, man has no sense of conscience since he has no knowledge of morality, but that with the advent of reason, and the development of social relationships, conscience, a latent but inherent faculty can develop, and guide man towards the good:

"Exister pour nous, c'est sentir; notre sensibilité est incontestablement antérieure à notre intelligence, et nous avons eu des sentiments avant des idées. Quelle que soit la cause de notre être, elle a pourvu à notre conservation en nous donnant des sentiments convenables à notre nature; et l'on ne saurait nier qu'au moins ceux-là ne soient innés. Ces sentiments, quant à l'individu, sont l'amour de soi, la crainte de la douleur, l'horreur de la mort, le désir du bien-être. Mais si, comme on n'en peut douter,

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1. Emile, p.341.



Howev "l'homme est sociable par sa nature, ou du point of  
 moins fait pour le devenir, il ne peut l'être  
 Helvét que par d'autres sentiments innés, relatifs à chief in  
 son espèce; .... Or, c'est du système moral  
 the a formé, par ce double rapport à soi-même et à conviction  
 that conscience. Connaître le bien, ce n'est pas  
 l'aimer: l'homme n'en a pas la conscience connaissance  
 entire innée, mais sitôt que sa raison le lui fait  
 connaître, sa conscience le porte à l'aimer;  
 mere c'est ce sentiment qui est inné."<sup>1</sup>

Consequently, we can say that none of the quotations chosen by Helvétius on the subject of conscience effectively prove inconsistency on Rousseau's part. Helvétius has merely failed to unravel Rousseau's tortuous arguments, and has classed as contradictions, statements which can in fact be reconciled. Moreover, his criticism in De l'Homme that all men would be good if, as Rousseau suggests, they had an innate sense of what is just, completely ignores Rousseau's insistence on man's capacity for error, and hence, sin:

that "il choisit le bon comme il a jugé le vrai;  
 il juge faux, il choisit mal",<sup>2</sup>

and his more emotional conviction that, once corruption has made its entry, the voice of conscience is extremely difficult to hear:

Rousseau's insistence is "S'il parle à tous les coeurs, pourquoi donc y  
 good en a-t-il si peu qui l'entendent? ... c'est  
 conseil qu'il nous parle la langue de la nature, que  
 tout nous fait oublier ..."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Emile, pp.341-342.

2. Ibid., p.328.

3. Ibid., p.343.

However, this makes little difference to the main point of Helvétius' criticism, which is to oppose his own belief in the acquisitive nature of conscience to Rousseau's conviction that conscience is innate. For Helvétius conscience is entirely dependent on the development of reason, and the mere result of knowing what is right and wrong:

"On peut .... donner à la Jeunesse des idées nettes et saines de la Morale: à l'aide d'un catéchisme de probité on peut donc porter cette partie de l'éducation au plus haut degré de perfection."<sup>1</sup>

One of Rousseau's "proofs" of the existence of conscience is that, without it, how could the individual sacrifice his own interests for the achievement of the public good? Helvétius criticises this statement on two counts: firstly, he believes that by achieving the public good, the individual is satisfying his own interests in that he receives honour and public esteem, and secondly, he feels that here again Rousseau is contradicting statements he has made elsewhere.

The first part of the problem revolves around Rousseau's insistence in Emile that the private and public good are not identical. Since the individual is first conscious only of his own needs and desires and does not

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1. De l'Homme, Vol.II, p.359.

contract any social relationships until the period of adolescence, his innate principle of self-love (amour de soi) can only prompt him to seek his own good. For Rousseau this can only be good, since it does not involve any considerations of social morality. However, when the adolescent enters society and forms moral relationships, he becomes a fraction of a total society and, consequently, must subordinate his interests to the common good. We have already seen, in the section on private and public education, the difficulties which Rousseau encounters by refusing to identify the private and public good, yet attempting to reconcile the two. Helvétius fails to understand this distinction between the individual's desire for his own well-being and his decision to sacrifice it for the public good. He himself bases all human actions on self-interest which means that anything which achieves the public good is in fact only an incidental result of an attempt to achieve the individual good. Moreover he fails to understand Rousseau's definition of "interest". This leads him to his second point concerning Rousseau's contradictions.

Throughout Emile Rousseau carefully distinguishes between the desired development from indifferent self-love (amour de soi) to enlightened interest (vertu) (i.e. from the individual to the community) and the possible degeneration

of self-love into self-interest (amour-propre):

"L'amour de soi, qui ne regarde qu'à nous, est content quand nos vrais besoins sont satisfaits; mais l'amour-propre qui se compare, n'est jamais content et ne saurait l'être, parce que ce sentiment en nous préférant aux autres, exige aussi que les autres nous préfèrent à eux; ce qui est impossible."<sup>1</sup>

When Rousseau declares, then, that without some inner conviction of the general good and its desirability, a man cannot be expected to sacrifice his own self-love (amour de soi) for the interests of the community, he does not mean, as Helvétius thinks he does, that without conscience, man could only act out of self-interest (amour-propre) and would therefore never sacrifice himself for the public good. Helvétius' criticism is based on a misunderstanding of Rousseau's arguments. Consequently, his accusation of subsequent contradictions is also based on misinterpretation. For Helvétius, the term 'intérêt' represents either self-interest regardless of others, or a kind of vanity which prompts man to seek the general good, whatever disadvantages it may have for his immediate welfare, in an attempt to gain the public esteem. Why, he argues, cannot Rousseau accept this second kind of self-interest as a principle of motivation elsewhere in Emile? The whole

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1. Emile, p.239.



problem now becomes involved with Helvétius' basic incapacity to understand the distinction between amour de soi and amour-propre. When Rousseau says, for example, that:

"Je veux quand mon élève s'engage avec moi, qu'il ait toujours un intérêt présent et sensible à remplir son engagement, et que si jamais il y manque, ce mensonge attire sur lui des maux qu'il voit sortir de l'ordre des choses",<sup>1</sup>

he is dealing uniquely with the idea of self-love, which, during the pre-adolescent period, prompts the pupil to see external objects merely in their physical relationship to himself and without any moral, and hence social, connotations. Rousseau's method here is to make the child fulfil his promise by forcing him to understand the importance of the promise through concrete, physical repercussions which will affect his "intérêt présent et sensible" (i.e. his immediate physical interest) not his moral self-interest which would imply a notion of moral relationships and the motivating principle of vanity, neither of which Emile possesses at this stage. The same remarks are applicable to Helvétius' other quotations from Rousseau on this point. Either Rousseau's failure to define his terms precisely, or, Helvétius' unwillingness to find harmony beneath superficial contradictions, result quite definitely in a transformation

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1. De l'Homme, Vol.II, pp.5-6. Emile, p.90.

of Rousseau's original meaning.

The question of self-interest also involves the question of attention and application. For Helvétius, attention is only possible if it is in the pupil's interest to be attentive. He would even go so far as to punish the child in an attempt to make him attentive through fear of further punishment. Although Rousseau allows self-love (or indifferent self-interest) as a principle of motivation, he cannot accept arbitrary punishment. To avoid this, and to support his view that 'interested' self-interest (amour-propre) is not behind all human action, he maintains that natural curiosity is a satisfactory motivating force.<sup>(a)</sup> His theory is that the child's developing strength will bring him, around the age of ten or twelve, to a period when, his needs adequately satisfied by an excess of physical strength, his superfluous strength will automatically turn to curiosity about the world around him:

"Le même instinct anime les diverses facultés de l'homme. A l'activité du corps que cherche à se développer succède l'activité de l'esprit qui cherche à s'instruire. D'abord les enfants ne sont que remuants, ensuite ils sont curieux;

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(a) Even if we do not stress the distinction between 'indifferent' and 'interested' self-interest, Rousseau is not contradicting himself by one moment allowing self-interest and the next maintaining that natural curiosity is sufficient. Self-interest as a motivating force is suggested only for the period prior to the intellectual age (i.e. before the age of 12) when curiosity can develop through an excess of physical strength.

"et cette curiosité bien dirigée est le mobile de l'âge où nous voilà parvenus ..."1

We can say, then, that there is no real illogicality about Rousseau's arguments on this subject. There is, rather, a basic opposition between the two thinkers: Rousseau's theory of developing strength leading to intellectual curiosity versus Helvétius' theory of attention based on self-interest.

Closely connected with the questions of conscience and self-interest is the important question of the natural goodness of man. Helvétius, basing his arguments on various passages of La Nouvelle Héloïse and Emile, sees Rousseau as a decided advocate of natural goodness, yet, nevertheless, surprisingly contradictory on a point which he so obviously wants to accept.

That Rousseau believes in the non-wickedness of natural man is clear from his statements both in Emile and elsewhere. The first sentence of Emile stresses the goodness of creation, and its subsequent depravity in the hands of man:

"Tout est bien sortant des mains de l'Auteur des choses, tout dégénère entre les mains de l'homme."2

In La Nouvelle Héloïse he asks:

1. Emile, p.178.

2. Ibid., p.1.

3. De l'éducation, p.1.



"Lorsqu'on nourrit les enfans dans leur première simplicité d'où leur viendroient des vices, dont ils n'ont pas vu d'exemple?"<sup>1</sup>

and the whole of his system in Emile is based, as we have already seen, on the idea that evil is not an inherent characteristic, but acquired through environmental influences:

"Posons pour maxime incontestable que les premiers mouvements de la nature sont toujours droits: il n'y a point de perversité originelle dans le coeur humain; il ne s'y trouve pas un seul vice dont on ne puisse dire comment et par où il y est entré."<sup>2</sup>

Does Helvétius' quotation, then, that:

"On ne plaint jamais dans autrui que les maux dont on ne se croit pas exempt soi-même",<sup>3</sup>

constitute the serious contradiction that he maintains it does?

Our earlier analysis of Rousseau's conception of amour de soi helps us to explain this apparent discrepancy. According to Rousseau, commiseration with those with whom we can identify ourselves is merely a product of amour de soi, and hence, good in itself:

"Pour devenir sensible et pitoyable il faut que l'enfant sache qu'il y a des êtres semblables à lui qui souffrent, ce qu'il a souffert, qui sentent les douleurs qu'il a senties, et d'autres dont il doit avoir l'idée, comme

1. La Nouvelle Héloïse, pp.583-4.

2. Emile, p.76.

3. De l'Homme, Vol.II, p.15. Emile, p.253.



"pouvant les sentir aussi. En effet, comment nous laissons-nous émouvoir à la pitié, si ce n'est en nous transportant hors de nous et nous identifiant avec l'animal souffrant, en quittant, pour ainsi dire, notre être pour prendre le sien?"<sup>1</sup>

Hence, our sensitivity, which is the origin of our self-love, is also the natural origin of the extension of our self-love to compassion. It is because of this progression, and not because of self-interest, as Helvétius suggests, that Rousseau believes that we can only feel pity for those with whom our sensitivity identifies us. Helvétius, on the other hand, believes that compassion is the natural derivative of amour de soi but, in his case, amour de soi means self-interest.<sup>2</sup>

His further criticisms are based on the belief that no positive results can come of telling men, in their present state of corruption, that they are naturally good. This can hardly be taken as an effective refutation of Rousseau's system, since he, like the rest of his generation, accepts the corruption of modern man, and vehemently criticises it, while expressing his belief in man's hypothetical natural goodness.

Although Helvétius says in De l'Homme that man is born neither good nor evil, but becomes good or evil according

1. Emile, p.252.

2. De l'Homme, Vol.II, p.15.

to his education,<sup>1</sup> (a) he nevertheless extends his criticism of the belief in natural goodness to an attempt to prove that man, if not naturally wicked, is naturally cruel. He seems to ignore the fact that Rousseau also examines the question of cruelty in the young child and answers it very differently. For Rousseau, cruelty before the age of fifteen cannot be defined as evil since, at this stage, the child has no knowledge of right and wrong. Moreover, since compassion is a relatively late development, which only occurs in conjunction with the birth of the imagination and other emotions, the young child cannot, according to Rousseau, extend his knowledge of suffering and physical pain to a creature other than himself. Consequently, his cruelty is not the result of an evil intention, but of the discrepancy between his desires and physical strength:

"Toute méchanceté vient de faiblesse; l'enfant n'est méchant que parce qu'il est faible; rendez-le fort, il sera bon: celui qui pourrait tout ne ferait jamais de mal."<sup>2</sup>

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1. De l'Homme, Vol.II, p.17.

2. Emile, p.42.

(a) Diderot in turn combats this idea in his Réfutation (pp.408-9). For him, tendencies towards good or evil depend on the original disposition of the individual: "Ou ne donne point ce que la nature a refusé; peut-être détruit-on ce qu'elle a donné. La culture de l'éducation améliore ses dons."

1. De l'Homme, Vol.II, p.16.

2. Ibid., Vol.II, Note 13, p.53.

For Helvétius, however, strength is often the cause of injustice, in adult and child alike:

"Le Puissant est souvent injuste; l'enfant robuste l'est de même: n'est-il pas contenu par la présence du Maître, à l'exemple du Puissant, il s'approprie par la force le bonbon ou le bijou de son camarade; il fait pour une poupée, pour un hochet, ce que l'âge mûr fait pour un titre ou un Sceptre ...."<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, the child's cruelty to insects proves, according to Helvétius, that the child has no natural feeling of compassion:

"Si le sentiment de la compassion leur était aussi naturel que celui de la crainte, il les avertirait des souffrances de l'insecte ...."<sup>2</sup>

It is clear from this statement that Helvétius does not accept, and has probably not understood, Rousseau's system of developing faculties, of which compassion is a late development, any more than he understands the late development of conscience and the early incapacity to commit evil. For him goodness and humanity are entirely the results of education.

Helvétius' remaining criticisms of Rousseau's arguments are concerned with the purpose and usefulness of education. According to Helvétius, Rousseau contradicts himself time and again by affirming and then denying that education is useful. However, when Helvétius' quotation

1. De l'Homme, Vol.II, p.16.  
2. Ibid., Vol.II, Note 13, p.53.



from Rousseau on the supposed danger of education is seen in its context, it in fact does not refer to education in general, but only to education in a limited sense, i.e. a uniform education which disregards individual characteristics.

"Qu'arrive-t-il d'une éducation commencée dès le berceau et toujours sous une même formule, sans égard à la diversité des esprits?"

in fact precedes Helvétius' paraphrased version of:

"on donne à la plupart des instructions nuisibles ou déplacés .... on les prive de celles qui leur conviendroient .... on gêne de toutes parts la nature .... on efface les grandes qualités de l'âme pour en substituer de petites et apparentes qui n'ont aucune réalité ...."<sup>1</sup>

The argument chosen by Helvétius to illustrate Rousseau's belief in the detrimental effects of education in fact, when placed in its context, merely serves to condemn that very education which Helvétius sought to recommend.

Throughout Emile, whenever Rousseau condemns education it is always either a uniform education, or the traditional education of his time, which he has in mind. As for education in general he stresses its importance at the beginning of Emile:

"Nous naissons faibles, nous avons besoin de force, nous naissons dépourvus de tout, nous avons besoin d'assistance: nous naissons stupides, nous avons besoin de jugement. Tout ce que nous n'avons pas à notre naissance et dont nous avons besoin étant grands nous est donné par l'éducation."<sup>2</sup>

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1. La Nouvelle Héloïse, p.563. De l'Homme, Vol.II, p.21.
  2. Emile, p.3.



the Rousseau's anxiety, however, to save the child from an unsuitable, and therefore worthless education, prompts him to put forward some rather extreme statements. Helvétius picks on one of these, (the idea that if the child did not even know his right hand from his left at the age of twelve, provided he was healthy and strong, his understanding would immediately respond to his first lessons) and opposes it by one of his own theories that without long years of training the child would not acquire the necessary degree of *rich time* attention with which to succeed later in life. This, of course, takes us back to the earlier arguments on the *are* principles of motivation. It also involves us in the fact that because he holds very different basic tenets to *the* Rousseau, Helvétius cannot accept Rousseau's system of *alone* negative and progressive education, in which the child is first left to develop physically until the exercise of his senses prompts intellectual activity, and in which *la nouvelle à l'âge de raison, l'éducation qu'on le progrès naturel, il leur en faut une toute* the methods used to educate him develop and change according to his physical and intellectual capacities. His *the* unwillingness to accept this prompts him to again look for contradictions in Rousseau's statements, this time *surtout ne pas le contraindre par une éducation* on the question of a premature education.

One of Rousseau's main concerns in his programme of education is that, during the period from birth to about

1. *Emile*, p. 97.

2. *De l'Homme*, Pt. II, p. 23.

the age of twelve, the child should learn nothing which he cannot properly comprehend, and since, according to Rousseau's supposition in Emile, the child does not at that age have any notion of moral and social relationships, any education which he receives must only be concerned with the physical relationships between himself and the world around. His reasoning is as follows:

(1) The most dangerous time in a child's existence is the period between birth and twelve, during which time the seeds of error and vice are sown and cannot be

(1) destroyed as the powers of reason and conscience are as yet undeveloped.

(2) It is therefore useless to educate children in the traditional manner as if they were in full possession of their reason:

"Si les enfants sautaient tout d'un coup de la mamelle à l'âge de raison, l'éducation qu'on leur donne pourrait leur convenir; mais, selon le progrès naturel, il leur en faut une toute contraire."<sup>1</sup>

(3) The only solution is to 'waste' time, - hence the remark quoted by Helvétius:

"La marche de la nature est la meilleure; il faut surtout ne pas la contraindre par une éducation prématurée."<sup>2</sup>

By allowing the child's faculties to develop freely

1. Emile, p.97.

2. De l'Homme, Pt.II, p.23.

and naturally by teaching him only that which he is able to understand, one will create "un prodige de l'éducation";<sup>1</sup> and preserve the child from error and vice. This plea against orthodox education is, then, to a large extent, the result of logical reasoning. Confusion is caused, as Helvétius so aptly points out, by Rousseau's inability to define properly what he means by lack of judgement or reasoning power. There is an apparent contradiction between:

(1) "Avant l'âge de raison l'enfant ne reçoit pas d'idées, mais des images, .... Une image peut être seule dans l'esprit qui se la représente; mais toute idée en suppose d'autres. Quand on imagine, on ne fait que voir; quand on conçoit, on compare ....

"on montre que, loin de savoir raisonner d'eux-mêmes, ils (les enfants) ne savent pas même retenir les raisonnements d'autrui; car suivez ces petits géomètres dans leur méthode, vous voyez aussitôt qu'ils n'ont retenu que l'exacte impression de la figure et les termes de la démonstration .... Tout leur savoir est dans la sensation, rien n'a passé jusqu'à l'entendement",

and (2) "Je suis cependant bien éloigné de penser que les enfants n'ont aucune espèce de raisonnement. Au contraire, je vois qu'ils raisonnent très bien dans tout ce qu'ils connaissent et qui se rapporte à leur intérêt présent et sensible ...."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Emile, p. 77.

2. Emile, p. 97.

1. De l'Homme, Vol. II, p. 27.

Rousseau is attempting here, though with insufficient clarity, and in too absolute a manner, to distinguish between the young child's obvious inability to reason in an abstract manner, and his capacity to deduce information from concrete material with which he has been taught to deal. In Emile he insists on training the child's judgement through the exercise of his senses, and at the same time, declaring that the child cannot judge. It is because of this inability to define his terms that Helvétius thinks that he can refute Rousseau's theory by observation:

"L'expérience montre que l'Enfant discerne au moins confusément au moment même qu'il sent, qu'il juge avant douze ans des distances, des grandeurs, de la mollesse des corps; de ce qui l'amuse ou l'ennuie; de ce qui est mauvais au goût, qu'enfin il sait avant douze ans une grande partie de la langue usuelle et connaît déjà les mots propres à l'exprimer."<sup>1</sup>

This is in fact exactly the sort of education which Rousseau's system achieves in Emile, Books I and II, as we can see from the summary of Emile's prowess at the end of the first stage in his education:

"Parmi les enfants de la ville nul n'est plus adroit que lui, mais il est plus fort qu'aucun autre. Dans tout ce qui est à la portée de l'enfance, il juge, il raisonne, il prévoit mieux qu'eux tous. Est-il question d'agir, de courir, de sauter, d'ébranler des corps, d'enlever des masses, d'estimer des distances, d'inventer

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1. De l'Homme, Vol.II, p.27.



"des jeux, d'emporter des prix? on dirait que la nature est à ses ordres, tant il sait aisément plier toute chose à ses volontés."<sup>1</sup>

Rousseau is not, then, proscribing all education until the age of twelve, he is merely condemning book learning etc., which teaches the child things that he is not ready to understand fully:

"Sans étudier dans les livres, la mémoire d'un enfant ne reste pas pour cela oisive: tout ce qu'il voit, tout ce qu'il entend le frappe, et il s'en souvient; il tient registre en lui-même des actions, des discours des hommes, et tout ce qui l'environne est le livre dans lequel sans y songer, il enrichit continuellement sa mémoire, en attendant que son jugement puisse en profiter. C'est dans le choix de ces objets, c'est dans le soin de lui présenter sans cesse ceux qu'il doit connaître et de lui cacher ceux qu'il doit ignorer que consiste le véritable art de cultiver la première de ses facultés, et c'est par là qu'il faut tâcher de lui former un magasin de connaissances qui serve à son education durant la jeunesse, et à sa conduite dans tous les tems."<sup>2</sup>

This is Rousseau's method of education, and he is entirely consistent in his statements when he declares that it is possible from birth:

"Pourquoi donc l'éducation d'un enfant ne commencerait-elle pas avant qu'il parle et qu'il entende, puisque le seul choix des objets qu'on lui présente est propre à le rendre timide ou courageux?" etc.<sup>3</sup>

Rousseau's meaning, when he talks about not giving the child a premature education, is that the child should

1. Emile, p.172.
2. La Nouvelle Héloïse, pp.580-581, and Emile pp.103-104.
3. Emile, pp.37-38.

not be taught things beyond his grasp. This is a result of his belief that the young child does not reason in the same way as the grown man, and must, therefore, have an education adapted to his needs and capacities. It does not mean that the child must receive no education at all, and is therefore, in no way a contradiction of his statements elsewhere that the child is educable, and should be educated, from birth.

However, Rousseau's more extreme statement that, if kept in a state of complete ignorance until the age of twelve the child's reason would develop automatically with the first instruction received, is more difficult to reconcile with his remarks elsewhere. It is, however, quite probably, merely an extreme attempt to preserve the child from an unsuitable education, which would, according to Rousseau, lead to the introduction of error and vice by teaching the child things he was unable to comprehend.

Helvétius foresees this explanation, but can only answer it with scorn:

"Sur ce point tout le monde est de son avis et convient que, mieux vaut refuser toute éducation aux Enfants que de leur en donner une mauvaise. Ce n'est donc pas sur une vérité aussi triviale que peut insister M. Rousseau."<sup>1</sup>

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1. De l'Homme, Vol.II, pp.22-23.

On the other hand, as we have mentioned before, Rousseau does tend to see the development of intellectual reason ("la raison intellectuelle ou humaine") as a more or less automatic development which occurs at a certain stage in the individual's physical development (curiosity about the age of twelve, when the child's physical strength exceeds his needs and is hence transformed into intellectual curiosity, and adult reason about the age of fifteen, which coincides with the development of the passions, imagination and desire for human relationships). Helvétius, in fact, opposes this theory by his own conviction that a child's capacity for sensation necessarily renders him capable of judgement, since, and here we come back to the original subject of contention, sensation and judgement are one and the same thing. The question for him is merely the degree of judgement of which the child is capable:

"La jeunesse réfléchit moins que la vieillesse, parce qu'elle sent plus, parce que tous les objets, nouveaux pour elle, lui font une impression forte. Mais si la force de ses sensations la distrait de la méditation, leur vivacité grave plus profondément dans son souvenir les objets qu'un intérêt quelconque doit lui faire un jour comparer entre eux."<sup>1</sup>

As a result of what he considers to be contradictions on Rousseau's part concerning the value of education,

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1. De l'Homme, Vol.II, p.30. *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, p.532.



Helvétius assumes that it is consequently quite natural that Rousseau should be an advocate of universal ignorance.

As we have seen, Rousseau does not condemn education in general, and Helvétius is merely drawing the conclusion he desires from Rousseau's apparently contradictory ideas.

Moreover, Helvétius somewhat unfortunately chooses to illustrate his point a quotation from Emile, which when correctly placed in its context, clearly does not prove the point he wishes to make.

However, what he once again fails to notice is that Rousseau's  
 "Ce n'est pas dans des Livres que les Enfants  
 doivent tirer leurs connaissances; les  
 connaissances ne s'y trouvent pas,"<sup>1</sup>

does not imply that knowledge and civilisation are completely worthless, but merely that the method whereby knowledge is culled from books without reference to observation and concrete facts, and which is consequently badly understood, leads to error and hence, according to Rousseau, vice.

We may suppose that Helvétius' criticism is prompted less by such a statement, which he must surely have understood, than by the reputation which Rousseau had already gained for himself by condemning the arts and sciences in his first Discours.

Like many of his predecessors, (Saint-Pierre and Rollin for example), Rousseau prefers virtue to knowledge.

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1. De l'Homme, Vol.II, p.34. La Nouvelle Héloïse, p.582.



Hence, in La Nouvelle Héloïse he declares:

".... rien n'est moins nécessaire que d'être savant, et rien plus que d'être sage et bon."<sup>1</sup>

Helvétius is compelled to oppose this since he believes that virtue is actually based on knowledge:

"Si l'espèce de probité nécessaire pour n'être pas pendu exige peu de lumières, en est-il ainsi d'une probité fine et délicate? Quelle connaissance des devoirs patriotiques cette probité ne suppose-t-elle pas? Parmi les stupides, j'ai vu des hommes bons, mais en petit nombre."<sup>2</sup>

However, what he once again fails to notice is that Rousseau's remark is merely a relative statement, not an absolute condemnation of knowledge.

Rousseau's real plea in favour of ignorance is based on the belief that error comes from judgement. Consequently, if we never needed to judge we would never be wrong. Hence, since the more men know, the more occasion they have to judge they are subsequently more prone to error and the only solution to this can be ignorance:

"Puisque plus les hommes savent plus ils se trompent, le seul moyen d'éviter l'erreur est l'ignorance ..."<sup>3</sup>

It is because of this tendency to err through judgement that:

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1. La Nouvelle Héloïse, p.581.
  2. De l'Homme, Vol.II, p.35.
  3. Emile, p.230.

1. Emile, p.230.
2. Idem.

"très sûrement il y a plus d'erreurs dans l'Académie des sciences que dans tout un peuple de Hurons",<sup>1</sup> since the Hurons have little knowledge to submit to their judgements. Helvétius combats this with arguments concerning and even misrepresentation involved in them. The possibility of cruelty caused by ignorance, but fails to notice Rousseau's concluding remark. Total ignorance, he argues, is now impossible. Since man has lost his primitive independence and innocence, and is forced to live in a state of dependence where he needs to know how to choose and judge, he must be educated for this:

"Puisque au milieu de tant de rapports nouveaux dont il va dépendre il faudra malgré lui qu'il juge, apprenons-lui donc à bien juger."<sup>2</sup>

Helvétius' remarks on these various aspects of Emile are interesting in themselves, in that they illustrate the opposition of basically different philosophical concepts to some of Rousseau's arguments. It is also interesting for us to see the very different conclusions reached by the two thinkers, despite their initial acceptance of the interaction of senses and mind. Helvétius' comments in fact represent the only important reaction to Rousseau's psychological theories during the period studied. Moreover, Helvétius is one of the first writers to give a detailed analysis of

1. Emile, p.230.

2. Idem.

Rousseau's alleged contradictions in Emile, and it is important for us to see from this the extent to which his accusations are valid, and the amount of misinterpretation and even misrepresentation contained in them. The inability on the part of another philosopher to fully comprehend Rousseau's arguments (always supposing that Helvétius' misinterpretations are for the most part involuntary) gives us some idea of what the reading public could have understood of them. Considerable silence on the part of pedagogical writers on these aspects strengthens the impression that Rousseau's ideas on psychology in Emile were of little general interest, and that the early reputation of the book depended very little on their impact. It would be interesting to see how much attention is paid to them at a later date, and to what extent this, if any, is subject to earlier misinterpretation and the spreading of ideas like Helvétius' that Rousseau, though on all these points he contradicts himself, condemns education, supports ignorance, thinks the child totally incapable of judgement etc. etc.

1. Forney, op. cit., pp. 70-71.

2. Ibid., p. 73.

Apart from Helvétius' detailed analysis, very little attention seems to have been paid to Rousseau's psychological theories in Emile. Although Forney refers to a number of concrete, physical examples which intimately concern his own well-being.



points, for the most part his comments are concerned with the practical application of Rousseau's theories to education, rather than the theories themselves.

In the first place, Formey does not accept Rousseau's idea of an a-moral period. At a superficial level, he considers the attempt to keep the child in complete ignorance of social morality<sup>(a)</sup> as likely to be interpreted as deceit on the part of the tutor, who will subsequently lose his pupil's confidence, once the latter realises he has been misled.<sup>1</sup> At a more serious level, he places the child who chooses good, or even the child who chooses evil, because he has knowledge of good and evil, above the child who cannot commit evil because he has no knowledge of social morality.<sup>2</sup> Here he overlooks the fact that Rousseau makes a similar distinction between innocence and goodness through ignorance, and the conscious achievement of virtue through knowledge of moral relationships, but that he only renders possible the conscious achievement of virtue after the development of the rational faculties.

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1. Formey, *op.cit.*, pp.70-71.

2. *Ibid.*, p.73.

(a) Formey does not discuss the fact that Emile acquires some elementary notions of social morality during his early education (the gardener episode etc.), but that these are all notions which he can learn through concrete, physical examples which intimately concern his own well-being.

(a) This of course means the faculties for abstract reasoning. Rousseau encourages reasoning from concrete, physical examples from an early age.



However, Formey's main reason for not accepting the a-moral period is that, unlike Rousseau, he does not suppose that the child is naturally innocent, but accepts the opposing belief that man possesses inherently bad characteristics which must be quashed as soon as possible. Consequently, he believes that it is only by punishing the child when he does wrong that he can be expected to achieve virtue at a later age. The more he is taught what is right and wrong, the greater the chances of his bad characteristics being successfully eliminated, and to do this one should not wait, as Rousseau suggests, for the child's rational faculties to develop, but, instead, encourage him to acquire behavioural habits, which his reason will accept at a later stage. Hence Formey's remark:

"Si vous attendez à les former, à les dresser, qu'on puisse leur parler raison, comptez que vous ne leur ferez jamais entendre raison. L'enfant est d'abord un automate, un petit animal; il faut vaincre, et s'il est possible, détruire en lui toutes les répugnances qui seroient dans la suite préjudiciables à sa santé, à son éducation, aux moeurs qu'on veut lui donner."<sup>1</sup>

Although, like Rousseau, Formey believes that the rational faculties are slow to develop, he does not, however, accept Rousseau's subsequent decision not to anticipate their development in any way.<sup>(a)</sup> For him, the tutor should encourage

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1. Formey, op.cit., p.32.

(a) This of course means the faculties for abstract reasoning. Rousseau encourages reasoning from concrete, physical examples from an early age.

the child to reason as soon as possible, simply because the rational faculties are slow to develop:

"Vouloir qu'un enfant raisonne tout d'un coup, et sur des choses qui ne sont pas encore à sa portée, c'est forcer la nature, au lieu de l'aider. Mais rien de plus salubre aux enfans que d'avoir quelque accoucheur de leurs premiers raisonnemens, qui, faute de ce secours, demeureroient ensevelis dans leur cerveau."<sup>1</sup>

Because of this, he recommends that if one does not actually reason with the child, one should, at least, reason in his presence.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, since, like Helvétius, Formey believes that virtue is based, not on conscience, but on the knowledge of right and wrong,<sup>3</sup> he also believes that this early training of the reason will effectively help to destroy any undesirable characteristics which the child may possess.

Rousseau's greatest mistake according to Formey is that he fails to see that, although Emile is not in full possession of his rational faculties, he is, nevertheless, a rational being. He interprets Rousseau's "negative" education as a complete lack of exercise of the intellect until the age of ten or twelve, and maintains that this will cause more harm than if the body were kept in swaddling-bands until the same age.<sup>4</sup> He fails to see the distinction Rousseau makes between "raison sensitive" and

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1. Formey: op.cit., p.65.
  2. Ibid., p.66.
  3. Ibid., p.49.
  4. Ibid., p.69.

"raison intellectuelle",<sup>1</sup> and interprets the system of education through the senses as an exaggerated exercise of the sensory organs, which he considers is superfluous.<sup>2</sup> He also rejects Rousseau's belief that a weak body will produce a weak mind, maintaining that the weakest bodies have, in fact, produced the greatest minds.<sup>3</sup>

Formey's main criticism of Rousseau's system is that he seems to suggest that the rational faculties will develop naturally at a certain age. Although the advent of intellectual reason in Emile is brought in somewhat ex machina, it is, nevertheless, preceded by the training of the child's judgement through, what Rousseau terms, the formation of simple ideas. Consequently, Formey's insistence that the child is capable of judging and reasoning before the age of ten and twelve,<sup>4</sup> is based partly on a misunderstanding of Rousseau's definitions, and also on Formey's own conventional belief in the existence of the rational faculties in the child from an early age. Formey, himself, believes that the rational faculties are present from birth, and can be encouraged to develop more or less rapidly according to the education the child receives:

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1. Emile, p.121.
  2. Formey, op.cit., p.47.
  3. Ibid., p.40.
  4. Ibid., p.78.



"Ne diroit-on pas (according to Rousseau's statement that the child's spiritual nature should be left untouched until the child is in full possession of all his faculties) que les facultés viennent à l'ame à un certain age, à tel jour de tel mois et de telle année? Ces facultés existent dans l'ame dès que l'enfant ouvre les yeux à la lumiere; il s'agit de l'aider à les développer; et le plutôt, dès que d'ailleurs on s'y prend bien, est toujours le meilleur."<sup>1</sup>

It is Rousseau's insistence on the late development of intellectual reason and its sequence of a long negative education based on the training of the senses and the formation of simple ideas acquired from these, that seems to have attracted most attention during the pre-Revolutionary period. Like Formey, most of those who comment on this aspect of Emile fail to discuss Rousseau's distinction between sensitive and intellectual reason. Most writers simply disagree with the idea that the child cannot reason until the age of fifteen, and consequently return to a more conventional system of education based on intellectual studies.

De Beauvieu, however, follows Rousseau's pattern of development by placing the birth of reason at fifteen. However, as he does with other aspects, he carries this idea to extremes by interpreting the period prior to the development of reason as a time when the child should

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1. Formey: op.cit., p.68.



receive no education whatsoever. As we have already seen, in order to safeguard him from vice and error, Ariste's father keeps him in a cage until the age of fifteen, when he is shipped off to his desert island and allowed to learn from environmental nature. As he is being transported to this island, Ariste reasons to himself about the movement, he feels:

"en un certain langage intérieur qu'ont tous les hommes, et que les animaux mêmes me paroissent avoir jusqu'à un certain point".<sup>1</sup>

Despite this capacity for internal reflection, which seems to exist independently of the senses, Ariste, like Emile, receives his knowledge, which is restricted to the physical world, through the senses, although this is his only education at a time when Emile is studying history and human relationships. Even as early as his existence in the cage, Ariste is portrayed as being naturally curious.

"Mon ame, avide de sçavoir, envoyoit continuellement mes sens à la découverte de tout ce qui arrivoit dans l'étroite enceinte où j'étois enfermé ..."<sup>2</sup>

an idea very similar to Rousseau's insistence on the natural development of curiosity,<sup>3</sup> which would enable the child to profit from his first lessons, even if he had been kept, as in fact Ariste is, as a complete automaton for the first

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1. De Beaurieu: op.cit., Vol.I, p.11.

2. Ibid., Vol.I, p.13.

3. Emile, p.178.

twelve years of his life. De Beaurieu, however, unlike Rousseau, leaves this aptitude for learning as a completely unexplained phenomenon.

Although De Beaurieu continues, in his plans for education of Book III, to believe in the need for the child to vegetate until the development of his reason at fifteen, he nevertheless changes this considerably in his proposals for a syllabus. Consequently, we find him saying, on the one hand, that the precocious exercise of the mind exhausts the body, (which is somewhat different to Rousseau's insistence that the health and perfection of the body will serve to improve the quality of the mind), and, on the other, that since man is destined to perfect himself by the acquisition of knowledge, he should start to learn little by little during his early years. Ariste's children do, in fact, receive most of their education by the age of fifteen, at which time they are considered to be old enough to marry.<sup>1</sup>

Despite his alleged concern for the intellectual faculties of the child, De Beaurieu departs quite considerably from Rousseau by teaching the child about God, religion and morality from an early age:

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1. See De Beaurieu, op.cit., Vol.III, pp.101-143.

"ne craignez pas d'apprendre trop tôt à votre fils, à connoître Dieu, à se connoître lui-même, à connoître les hommes, et ses principaux devoirs ..."<sup>1</sup>

This, of course, is closely connected with his desire to form the child for society rather than for himself.<sup>(a)</sup>

De Beaurieu's point of view coincides with Rousseau on various other points. He accepts the idea that the child should be left in ignorance concerning ideas of right and wrong, and, like Rousseau, teaches him elementary morality

1. De Beaurieu: op.cit., Vol.III, p.105.

(a) Bernardin de Saint-Pierre also rejected Rousseau's belief that the child should not be taught religion before the age of fourteen or fifteen. In his book on Rousseau, he writes:

"Pour moi je voudrois qu'on leur parle de Dieu des qu'ils comencent a jouir de la vie; que, cette verite etant dans le coeur avant de l'être dans l'esprit, des qu'ils sont capables d'aimer, de distinguer ce qui leur nuit, qu'on en joignit l'idée avec tout ce qui peut être agréable ...."  
 (Bernardin de Saint-Pierre: La Vie et les ouvrages de Jean-Jacques Rousseau, ed. Maurice Souriau. Paris 1907, p.158)

In contrast, he warmly supports Rousseau's criticisms of the evils of contemporary education:

"Toutes ses reflexions sur le danger des colleges, sur l'émulation, les vaines jalousies, sur les fausses, dangereuses, et vaines lumieres qu'à cet âge on nous met dans l'esprit, sur le vice qu'on nous plante dans le coeur, sur tout cela ... ses observations sont de la plus grande vérité." (Ibid., p.157).

by means of concrete examples which affect his physical well-being:

"Voulez-vous qu'un enfant soit ni voleur ni menteur, laissez-lui ignorer ce que c'est que vol et mensonge; ..."1

but, if by any chance he steals, for example, sweet-meats, then he should be deprived of lunch, etc., until he understands. De Beaurieu acknowledges that his examples on this point are inspired by Emile.<sup>2</sup>

De Beaurieu also coincides with Rousseau on the question of the naturalness of compassion. When Ariste attempts to kill a rabbit he is overcome by emotion at the sight of the suffering he has caused:

"je fus d'abord assez insensible pour le voir tranquillement se débattre et lutter contre la mort. La colère éteint l'humanité: celle-ci reprit bientôt le dessus. Je fus touché de voir ce pauvre animal souffrir, ... me reprocher par ses mouvemens, par ses regards, que je détruisois, avant le temps et sans l'aveu de la nature".<sup>3</sup>

However, despite similarities to, and departures from Emile, it would be difficult to assess the extent to which De Beaurieu is actually following Rousseau. He himself says merely:

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1. De Beaurieu: op.cit., Vol.III, p.112.

2. Ibid., Vol.III, Note pp.113-114.

3. Ibid., Vol.I, p.113., Vol.III, Note pp.113-4.

2. Coyer, op.cit., pp.112-116.

3. Emile, p.121.



"je prends pour maître l'Auteur d'Emile ... dans tous les endroits où de grands motifs ne m'obligent pas de l'abandonner".<sup>1</sup>

The most we can do is to point to these similarities and differences, and point out that it is quite possible that these ideas were popularly interpreted as being based on Emile.

The Abbé Coyer also follows Rousseau's pattern of development to some extent and precedes intellectual learning by learning through the senses. However, he refers to Aristotle, Gassendi, Montaigne, Locke, and, above all, Condillac on the development of the thought process, and makes no direct reference to Rousseau. Nevertheless, his support of Rousseau elsewhere, and the obvious similarity of his statement:

"La première raison de l'homme est donc une raison sensitive. Ses premiers Maîtres de Science sont ses pieds, ses mains, ses yeux, ses oreilles."<sup>2</sup>

In 1776, Borelly suggests that children should not to Rousseau's:

"Comme tout ce qui entre dans l'entendement humain y vient par les sens, la première raison de l'homme est une raison sensitive; c'est elle qui sert de base à la raison intellectuelle: nos premiers maîtres de philosophie sont nos pieds, nos mains, nos yeux",<sup>3</sup>

1. Coyer, op.cit., p.191.

2. Auger, Abbé Athanase: Discours sur l'éducation, Rouen & Paris, 1775, p.130.

3. De Beaurieu: op.cit., Vol.III, Note pp.113-4. 1775,

2. Coyer, op.cit., pp.115-116.

3. Emile, p.121.

indicates clearly that he is following Rousseau closely on this point. However, Coyer brings the whole development of the child's faculties considerably further forward in time than Rousseau, and is able to teach his pupils moral notions by the time they are seven or eight and Latin by the time they are ten.<sup>1</sup>

In 1775, the Abbé Auger suggested that the plan of education in Emile should be adopted, but with modifications concerning the teaching of religion and the slowness of the early education. This he bases on his conviction that one can reason with the child from the age of ten.<sup>2</sup>

Carpentier, too, in his book published the same year,<sup>3</sup> suggests that the physical organs should be allowed to gain some consistency before the child is required to study. His approval of Emile elsewhere suggests that here he may well be supporting the progressing stages in Emile's education.

In 1776, Borelly suggests that children should not enter the national colleges until the age of ten:

"pour laisser leur tempéramment et leur esprit se fortifier peu-à-peu, et pour ne pas nuire l'un à l'autre par des études, une contrainte

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1. Coyer: op.cit., p.191.
  2. Auger, Abbé Athanase: Discours sur l'éducation, Rouen & Paris, 1775, p.130.
  3. Carpentier: Nouveau plan d'Education, Paris, 1775, p.120.

in to "et des efforts qu'ils seroient incapables de supporter".<sup>1</sup>

Rousseau as having pointed out the two important moral and physical revolutions which occur at adolescence, and for However, they are not to be left entirely without education until that time, but are to be prepared for the later instruction they are to receive.<sup>2</sup> Although Borelly does not attribute his method to Rousseau, this delaying of formal education till a time when the child is physically and intellectually capable of it, would suggest that he has Emile in mind.

In 1782 Cavilhon<sup>2</sup> points out that Rousseau's negative education is not to be taken seriously, and that, in fact, a positive education of the senses is possible from birth. Unlike Helvétius, he realises that in delaying instruction until a seemingly late age, Rousseau is merely trying to exclude:

"cette méthode dogmatissante et pédantesque, dont place il a rendu ailleurs l'absurdité si palpable".<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Tash notes that in the same year, Bouillon recognises Rousseau as the first to have realised that childhood is the time for the formation of the body and has encouraged (though he adds, perhaps a little too much), moderation in teaching through precepts, and an increase

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1. Borelly: Plan de Réformation des études élémentaires, La Haye, 1766, pp.12-13.

2. Ibid., p.13.

3. Cavilhon: Vues sur l'éducation de la première enfance, Paris, 1782, p.2.

in teaching through facts and examples.<sup>1</sup> He also recognises Rousseau as having pointed out the two important moral and physical revolutions which occur at adolescence, and for having shown how to slow down the development of the passions.<sup>2</sup>

In 1783, Joly de Saint Vallier advocates a negative education, maintaining that education is simply a matter of following nature until the age of about twelve or fourteen. He does not, however, mention Rousseau as the originator of this idea.<sup>3</sup>

In 1789, Daunou declares that negative education is Rousseau's best point, but that he makes it last too long.<sup>4</sup>

Apart from Joly de Saint Vallier's proposal of a long negative education, this seems to be the usual sort of criticism which Rousseau's attempt to delay formal education encounters. Most of his successors, in fact, place the development of the rational faculties at an earlier age and subsequently curtail the period of negative education. It is this practical result of Rousseau's theory of the late development of the rational faculties, and not

1. Bouillon: Considérations générales sur l'éducation, Quoted by R. Tash, op.cit., p.95.
2. Idem.
3. Joly de Saint Vallier: Traité sur l'éducation des deux sexes, Londres, 1783, p.33.
4. Daunou (P-Cl.F.): Lettres sur l'éducation, quoted by R. Tash, op.cit., pp.106-107.



the psychological theories themselves, which seems to have attracted most attention during the pre-Revolutionary period. That Rousseau's system of "negative" education achieved success in the practical field, although this was understood to be a system of laissez-faire, implying a complete lack of training even through the senses, is attested by Madame de Genlis in her Mémoires which were first published in 1825:

"depuis 50 ans, elles (l'éducation publique et l'éducation particulière) ont été soumises à une infinité de systèmes opposés les uns aux autres. D'abord on éleva à la Jean-Jacques; point de maîtres, point de leçons; les enfans de la première jeunesse furent livrés à la nature; et comme la nature n'apprend pas l'orthographe et encore moins le latin, on vit paroître tout d'un coup dans le monde des jeunes gens de l'ignorance la plus surprenante".<sup>1</sup>

She herself correctly interprets Rousseau's method in her essay: La Religion considérée comme l'unique base du bonheur, and this is reproduced in her Discours sur l'éducation publique des femmes. Here she comments again on those who have misunderstood various aspects of Emile, and who have consequently put into practice ideas which are exactly the opposite of what Rousseau intended. She agrees that he was right not to encourage the teaching of Latin and geometry

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1. Genlis (Stéphanie Félicité Ducrest de Saint-Aubin, Comtesse de: Works, Paris 1785-1828. Mémoires: Vol.VI, pp.11-12.

to children, but criticises his proscription of formal lessons. She hastens to add, however, that although Rousseau does not intend the tutor to teach the child conventionally, he, nevertheless, intends him to teach him constantly:

"Voilà", she goes on to say, "ce qu'en général on n'a pas compris, parce qu'il étoit plus commode de simplifier, ce système et de le réduire à ceci: "Ne point payer de maîtres, ne point enseigner de catéchisme, ne point contrarier les enfans, ne point s'occuper d'eux; voilà tous les principes de J-J. Rousseau, et la meilleure éducation qu'on puisse donner." Il a résulté de cet extrait d'Emile, des éducations qui ne doivent pas encourager à suivre cette méthode, mais qu'on auroit grand tort d'attribuer entièrement aux principes de Rousseau."<sup>1</sup>

This evidence of extremism on the part of the general public, can be placed alongside our earlier examples of extremism in physical education.

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1. Genlis: op.cit., La religion considérée comme l'unique base du bonheur et de la véritable philosophie, Note 8, pp.389-390 (1st edition 1787) and Discours moraux: No.III, Discours sur la suppression des couvens de religieuses, et sur l'éducation publique des femmes, pp.114-115.

(a) See p. 33.

CONCLUSION

The conclusions drawn are necessarily limited to the three issues discussed in the thesis, and do not claim to give a complete assessment of the reputation of Emile during the period studied.

The popular reputation of Emile during the period 1762 to 1790 can, to some extent, be kept distinct from its professional reputation, although the two are, ultimately, closely linked and must also be considered in their relationship to one another.

The popular success of Emile seems to have depended to a very large extent on the enthusiasm it provoked among women readers, especially on the subject of maternal breast-feeding. Madame de Créqui's early regrets<sup>(a)</sup> for not having breast-fed her son and for having used swaddling-bands, ~~is~~<sup>are</sup> indicative of the "crise de conscience" which Emile seems to have provoked. The letter published by De Beaurieu in his De l'allaitement et de la première éducation des enfans of 1782 stresses the impact of Emile on women readers:

"Les femmes sur-tout, furent frappées de la lumière que répandirent les Ecrits de J.J. Rousseau ... Elles virent avec effroi la

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(a) See p. 33.

This "multitude de maux qu'elles attiraient et sur leurs enfans et sur elles-mêmes, elles voulurent s'acquitter des devoirs délicieux et sacrés que la Nature impose aux meres, et dont elle les récompense si bien",<sup>1</sup>

and this is confirmed by Madame de Genlis in her Adèle et Théodore, also of 1782:

"C'est aux Femmes qu'Emile a dû ses plus grands succès; toutes les femmes en général ne louent Rousseau qu'avec enthousiasme, quoiqu'aucun Auteur ne les ait traitées avec moins de ménagemens."<sup>2</sup>

This popularity with women readers and the subsequent return to maternal breast-feeding was undoubtedly accompanied by the kind of emotional fervour which Monglond<sup>3</sup> and Buffenoir<sup>4</sup> have described in their accounts of Rousseau's prestige, and which is manifest in the numerous letters and visits to Rousseau during his life-time and pilgrimages to Ermenonville etc. after his death in 1778. The letter quoted above in particular gives the impression of an emotional uplifting, which was, however, of short duration:

"Il nous pénétra d'un trait de flamme: nous eûmes le courage de regarder un moment la vérité, et nous allions voler dans son sein; ..." <sup>5</sup>

*De Beauvieux*

1. Fourcroy de Guillerville, op.cit., p.64.
2. Genlis, op.cit., Pt.I, p.190.
3. A. Monglond: Le Prérromantisme Français, Grenoble 1930 (especially Vol.II, pp.34-72).
4. H. Buffenoir: Le prestige de J.-J. Rousseau, Paris 1900.
5. De Beauvieux: op.cit., p.63.

*Tableau de Paris, Anvaries 1783, Vol.VI, p.43.*



This reaction to the impact of Emile is very similar to, for example, Madame Roland's later appreciation of the spiritual inspiration occasioned by Rousseau's works:

"Son génie a échauffé mon âme; je l'ai senti  
m'enflammer, m'élever et m'ennoblir."<sup>1</sup>

Reports of this return to maternal breast-feeding first appear in the late 1760s (Anel Lerebours), but Rousseau is only acknowledged as the leader of the reform in 1774 (Fourcroy de Guillerville). This seems to have reached its peak between 1775 and 1780 (suggested by the different reactions of Fourcroy and Landais to the importance of the reform) and to have acquired a fashionable quality (described by Madame de Genlis) which condemned its hopes of effecting a deep spiritual re-birth and obtaining lasting results<sup>(a)</sup> (regretted by De l'Epinoÿ in 1785). From 1779 onwards, however, Rousseau's reputation as leader of the reform is generally acknowledged (Landais, De Beaurieu's letter, Roze de l'Epinoÿ) and his success attested where others had failed. That his reputation was extremely great at this time is obvious from the theorists' attempts to help

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1. H. Buffenoir: op.cit., p.123.

(a) That maternal breast-feeding was noticeably waning during the early 1780s is further attested by L.S. Mercier:

"Pendant un temps, les femmes ont nourri elles-mêmes; mais ce n'était qu'une mode, elle a passé."  
Tableau de Paris, Amsterdam 1783, Vol.VI, p.42).

their readers to put his influence into perspective (Landais, De Beaurieu's letter). Although the fashion for maternal breast-feeding obviously drops during the early 1780s, and is also discouraged by the theorists, who now begin to attack the abuses it has entailed (De l'Épinoÿ, the official approbation signed by Desbois de Rochefort), the principles of the reform, and Rousseau's reputation as an authority on physical education do not decline along with it, but, in fact, become more firmly established, although they are now more open to criticism. (a)

The other aspects of physical education which attracted attention during the period and which were subsequently attributed to the influence of Emile, regardless of whether this was so or not, (see Landais' remark page 96) are very much subordinated to the new enthusiasm for maternal breast-feeding. However, the topic which attracted most interest after maternal breast-feeding seems to have been the controversial subject of the cold bath. This seems to have been popularly attributed to Rousseau even before 1770 (Fourcroy de Guillerville), although the misunderstanding that Rousseau advocated cold baths right from birth and without any preliminary preparations only spread to the

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(a) cf. pp. 116-117.

(v) See p. 91.

theorists and became inextricably linked with Rousseau's name around 1783 (Philipon de la Madeleine). Throughout the period of excitement concerning physical education (mainly 1770 to 1780) the question of the cold bath remains as much a subject for popular disapproval as approval. The main advocates of the cold bath seem to have been the theorists themselves (Tissot, Fourcroy, Grivel), but examples of popular, though minority attempts to introduce the cold bath are attested by Leroy as early as 1772.<sup>(a)</sup> Although Leroy does not refer to Rousseau on this point, Grivel's assumption<sup>(b)</sup> that the idea of the cold bath will be automatically associated with Rousseau's name, suggests that he may well have been held responsible for any unfortunate effects caused by the practice of cold baths from birth.

The disappearance of swaddling-bands begins before 1767 (Anel Lerebours), but does not seem to have been attributed to the success of Emile until after Rousseau's death, when his reputation as an authority on physical education was already established. In 1772 Leroy mentions the change and so does Sancerotte in 1777. Coyer recommends Rousseau's ideas on the subject as early as 1770, but he

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(a) See p. 86.

(b) See p. 91.

does not suggest that Rousseau had obtained any success in this field by that date. However, we know from Landais that all the reforms of physical education were being popularly attributed to Emile by 1779, and it is probable that Rousseau's arguments did, in fact, encourage an already initiated reform, and were then interpreted as the original impulse behind the reform. At all events, the destruction of swaddling-bands was one of the themes chosen for the tombstone at Ermenonville, to illustrate the importance of Rousseau's work<sup>(a)</sup> and his rôle in achieving both the physical and moral freedom of the child seems to have been the aspect most closely associated to his name by Louis-Sébastien Mercier in 1791.<sup>(b)</sup>

On the other hand, a closely associated reform, that of the whale-bone corset, was attributed to Rousseau's influence as early as 1772 (Leroy), and without any previous references to reform independently of Rousseau. Sancerotte confirms Rousseau's influence on this subject in 1777,<sup>(c)</sup> but after this date, this particular reform seems to have been absorbed in recognition of Rousseau's general advocacy<sup>cy</sup> of physical freedom. De Beaurieu in fact does not recommend Rousseau, but Macquart and Winslow,

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(a) See Note p. 107.

(b) See Note p. 106.

(c) See p. 94.



on the subject of swaddling-bands and corsets in 1782.<sup>(a)</sup> Popular enthusiasm for Emile also seems to have led to extremism on a number of points other than cold baths. Leroy reports the use of a badly placed belt and the cutting of the child's hair (or probably even the shaving of the head) as elements of educational programmes allegedly "à la Jean-Jacques".<sup>(a)</sup> Isolated examples of an extreme naturalistic education have long been well-known,<sup>(b)</sup> but all these reports suggest that this was very much the work of a minority group. However, it seems that less extreme versions of educational programmes supposedly "à l'Emile" acquired a certain degree of fashionable popularity during the pre-Revolutionary period. Proyart<sup>(c)</sup> maintains that some teachers tried to introduce various elements from Emile into the school curriculum (his main example is not giving the child religious instruction until the age of about fifteen), and Madame de Genlis, looking back on the education of the previous fifty years, reports (and this must refer to the 1770s approximately, since her Mémoires date from the 1820s) that educations "à l'Emile" were fashionable for a short time. She also tells us that Emile's

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(a) See p. 84.

(b) Cf. Mornet: "L'influence de J.-J. Rousseau au dix-huitième Siècle", p. 47.

(c) See p. 176.

education was popularly interpreted as a system of laissez-faire in which the pupil received no training whatsoever. (a)

The popular reputation of Emile was, then, restricted to a handful of topics concerned with child care and "natural" education, and depended mainly on the issues in which Rousseau appeared to gain most success in the practical field and which were, in fact, the questions which most interested his contemporaries. Emile certainly seems to have been instrumental in sparking off the various reforms which had, until then, obtained little success. Evidence of early popular acclaim and success in the practical field certainly implies that at least certain elements of the reform were a direct result of the popularity of Emile, but it would be difficult to prove that Emile is, in fact, the decisive factor in the campaign. More important from our point of view, however, is that Emile is believed to be the focal point of the movement towards reform, and that, as a result of the popularity of Emile, Rousseau is acknowledged both as the leader of the reform, and as an established authority on physical education.

Popularity of Rousseau's ideas on physical education among the general public certainly precedes recognition by

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(a) See p. 254.

the theorists, the majority of whom, with the notable exceptions of De Beaurieu and the Abbé Coyer, remain silent or criticise Emile until the early 1770s when they are forced to notice Rousseau's success and recognise him as the leader of the reform. Though they support his advocacy of maternal breast-feeding and the abolition of swaddling-bands, and acknowledge the rôle he has played, many of them, nevertheless, show a certain reluctance to praise him unreservedly even by the time his reputation as an authority on physical education is well established. Landais and De Beaurieu's letter both try to put Rousseau's influence into perspective, while Roze de l'Épinoy criticises the fashionable element in the reform, which he believes to have been directly provoked by Emile. Much earlier, Leroy had also criticised Rousseau for having concentrated attention on boys' education at the expense of girls', at the same time as he was congratulating him for having obtained some positive results in the campaign against the use of corsets. The theorists themselves are interested in rather more aspects of Emile than the general public. Nevertheless, the topics which they choose to discuss are also very limited, and, on the whole, do not reveal a very deep understanding of Emile.

The aspects of Emile which appear to obtain most success with the educational theorists are also concerned with physical education, but refer to the education of the young child as well as to the infant. Many of the theorists do not acknowledge their debt to Emile, and the details they use may well be independent of it, but their obvious similarity to the educational programme of Emile cannot be ignored, especially since, by the time of the Revolution, they figure prominently in educational treatises allegedly inspired by Emile, and are obviously closely associated with Rousseau's name.

In 1770, for example, the Abbé Coyer recommends Rousseau's ideas on physical exercise through suitable games, and includes in his essay many details (education in the country, fresh air, walks, hard beds, healthy diet etc.) which may well be inspired by Emile. Grivel, in 1775, also recommends Rousseau's ideas on physical exercise through suitable games, and his suggestion of the use of cold baths. Although he often disagrees with Rousseau, his educational programme also contains many elements common to both Coyer and Rousseau. De la Madeleine's essay of 1783 also contains these same details of physical education, while De Beaurieu remarks in 1782 that the subject of education as distinct from child care has already been sufficiently well-discussed



by Locke, Rousseau and Baileys so as not to need any further comments on his part. In 1789 Villier recommends a school in the country so that the curriculum can include long walks, while Fèvre du Grandvaux's Emile réalisé recommends a school in the country, physical freedom, a vegetarian diet etc. etc. Moreover, all these essays recommend ideas from Emile or Rousseau's other works, and it is more than probable that these details of physical education, even when unacknowledged, owe their popularity to Emile, since it was quite obviously the most well-known and most highly discussed book on education of the period.

The popularity of "naturalistic" educations finds its theoretical counterpart in the growing popularity of the theme of nature as opposed to art among the physical educationalists of the 1770s. It has already been suggested (pages 115-117) that this growing popularity is closely connected with the practical results of the campaign for maternal breast-feeding, and the development of Rousseau's prestige, and that this declines in favour of the possible introduction of the artificial once the basic principles of the reform are established.

The question of private and public education is quite obviously a subject of interest to the theorists rather than the general reading public. Right from the

start Emile is interpreted as a treatise of private education and criticised as such (Poncelet, Formey), and this continues throughout the pre-Revolutionary period. Little attention is paid to the subject at the time when interest in physical education is at its height, and most of the comments which do exist do not attain a very high level of criticism.

De Beaurieu and Debry alone seem to understand the dual nature of Emile's education and that he is ultimately destined for society, but, when they themselves adopt the dual formation of Emile, they entirely subordinate the formation of natural man to social man and sacrifice the synthetic quality of Rousseau's system to an education in two consecutive stages. Like all their contemporaries, they are primarily interested in the formation of social man, and consequently attempt to "correct" the individualism which features so highly in Emile.

Despite their hostility to Emile in that it is understood to represent an anti-social system of education, the theorists do not hesitate to incorporate details from Emile into their own treatises of public education (Coyer is the first example of this in 1770), and by the time of the Revolution this has become the normal practice (see pp. 181-182). Moreover, from 1789 onwards Rousseau's position on private and public education ceases to arouse

interest. J.-F. Major is the only writer to criticise <sup>theless,</sup> Rousseau's choice of private education and this is purely on practical issues (see page 179).

The question of isolation from society during the educational period is difficult to place. This may owe much to Emile, but, on the other hand, may arise independently of Emile. The question of the need for parallel and political reform certainly seems to develop independently of Emile, and to crystallise only as the result of political events at the Revolution.

The psychological aspects of Emile play an even smaller rôle in the growth of Rousseau's reputation as an educationalist. Discussed at length only by Helvétius, they attract attention only as a result of their consequence of a long "negative" education. In the practical field this inspires a fashion for not educating children at all, and, at a theoretical level, stimulates discussion concerning the development of the rational faculties, and the age at which formal education should begin.

The type of adverse criticism which we noticed among the early reactions to Emile (cf. pp.35-36), based on Rousseau's alleged "paradoxical" approach to the questions of the moment and his desire to shock and attract attention, <sup>is</sup> ~~is~~ much less common to the educational theorists than to

those intent on refuting the Profession de Foi. Nevertheless, Fourcroy's information of 1771 suggests that Rousseau was considered at that date, at least by one section of the public, as the originator of extremist ideas in education (see page 81), and Grivel's report of 1775 confirms this. He expects the public's reaction to his recommendation of the cold bath to be:

"Eh quoi! vous adoptez les paradoxes de l'Auteur d'Emile? De pareilles nouveautés ne sont recommandables que par leur bizarrerie ...."<sup>1</sup>

Even when the return to maternal breast-feeding is at its height, an article in the Correspondance secrète de Métra accuses Rousseau of being a "Sophiste adroit",<sup>2</sup> and Madame de Genlis' appreciation of 1782 (which, even if it does not represent her own point of view, certainly represents a point of view common at the time) renews all the elements of the earlier attacks:

"Son ouvrage [i.e. Emile], rempli de morceaux d'une éloquence sublime, de déclamations de mauvais goût, et de principes dangereux, manque d'intérêt, et offre, presque à chaque page, les inconséquences les plus révoltantes."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Grivel: Théorie de l'éducation, p.271, cf. p.91 of thesis.
  2. Correspondance de Métra, 25 February 1779, quoted by P-P. Plan, op.cit., p.182.
  3. Genlis: Adèle et Théodore, Pt.I, p.190.



All this is counterbalanced by recognition of the existence of good points in Emile and admiration for Rousseau's eloquence and style. Two articles in the Correspondance secrète de Métra of 1778 refer to "l'immortel auteur d'Emile"<sup>1</sup> and "son immortel ouvrage d'Emile"<sup>2</sup> respectively. Another in 1777 had said:

"Son Emile n'est pas un livre excellent, mais il est rempli d'admirables morceaux ...."<sup>3</sup>

while Madame de Genlis counterbalances her attack with:

"Mais on devoit, sans doute, en oublier les défauts, en faveur des beautés supérieures qui s'y trouvent."<sup>4</sup>

By the Revolution adverse comment has completely disappeared, while Rousseau's style is ranked as one of the finest examples of the beauties of the French language (Villier).

Rousseau's reputation as an educationalist (though this is based on only a few aspects of Emile) seems to have been established by about 1780, and to have acquired an assured air of authority during the years which follow.

1. Correspondance secrète de Métra, 12 July 1778, quoted by P.-P. Plan, op.cit., p.140.
2. Ibid., 14 November 1778, quoted by P.-P. Plan, op.cit., p.157.
3. Ibid., 23 March 1777, quoted by P.-P. Plan, op.cit., p.129.
4. Genlis: op.cit., Pt.I, p.190.

This is particularly obvious from the way in which his name becomes linked with other reformers (especially Locke) and his ideas confused with theirs. It is especially interesting to note the way in which his ideas obtain a more general interpretation by the theorists as the years go by and how misinterpretations which had been popularly attributed to him remain and form the later image of Emile.

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