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Seeing Like Sophie: Developing Judgment in Rousseau's *Émile*

Abbie LeBlanc

Abstract: Scholars often assume *Émile* seeks to educate readers to become like Émile. However, I suggest that by calling upon his readers to act as judges, Rousseau's aim is not for readers to copy Émile, but to educate them to act as independent judges. The first section of this article argues that Émile's education fails to teach him this kind of judgment. He never learns to navigate the interdependent relationships created by property ownership or family life. Rather, as explored in the second section, Sophie's education offers a better style of judgment. The article concludes with a consideration of the reader's education as distinct from that of either Émile or Sophie. By emulating Sophie readers do not become like her. Rather, through comparing the characters and situations Rousseau presents in *Émile* and "Émile et Sophie," readers learn to judge for themselves.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's stated goal in *Émile* is to detail the education of a "natural man."[1] Unlike civil men, who are torn between their personal desires and their societal duties—a conflict that is the foundation of *amour-propre* in Rousseau's thought—the natural man experiences no internal contradiction within himself. Thus, the natural man is often interpreted as Rousseau's exemplar of "physical and psychological self-sufficiency," or his embodiment of philosophical arguments "in support of the natural unity of the soul."[2] Even critics of Rousseau, who take issue with the mechanics

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[1]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile, or On Education*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 41. All subsequent citations to this translation of *Émile* will be in-text.

[2]David Gauthier, *The Sentiment of Existence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 33; Arthur Melzer, *The Natural Goodness of Man: On the System of Rousseau's Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 21.

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supporting this vision of personal wholeness, view the natural man as representing an ideal of independence which Rousseau genuinely values.[3] According to all these interpretations, the goal of *Émile* is to educate readers so that they become like Émile.

This article contests this common assumption. While Rousseau outlines the education appropriate to the natural man, he addresses his text to a "good mother who knows how to think," and later a "judicious mother" (33, 364). By calling upon his supposed reader like this—moving from a mother predisposed to thinking well to a mother who has become a good judge—I suggest that Rousseau's aim is not to inspire readers to copy Émile, but to educate readers so that they might judge Émile, and the world, for themselves. However, to judge *Émile* one cannot be like Émile. Rousseau's natural man demonstrates little inclination towards thinking, let alone thinking well. When we consider the development of judgment as *Émile*'s central design, the character of Sophie emerges as an important alternative to the natural man. While Émile's judgments are meticulously crafted for him by his tutor, Sophie demonstrates a keen ability to judge the world for herself. She, unlike Émile, can compare dissimilar things, like ideals and reality, and create compromises between them. However, Rousseau explicitly denies Sophie the literal independence and self-sufficiency he seems to value. Women are meant to use their judgment to facilitate their husband's sense of wholeness. While scholars increasingly recognize that Sophie's judgment is superior to Émile's, most analyses remain confined to how she uses her judgment to influence her family and domestic affairs.[4] One notable exception is Lori Jo Marso, who argues that Sophie might serve as a model for democratic citizenship "built on the art of sociability, the value of civil conversations, sensitivity to diversity, and the necessity of engaging with radically different perspectives" (7). Complementing Marso's account of Sophie as a model for citizenship, I explore how Sophie's "art of sociability" requires a distinct kind of judgment, and highlight how her style of judgment might illuminate political problems.[5]

While Rousseau neglects the political insights Sophie's perspective offers, readers need not. The idea that the education *Émile* offers to readers is distinct from the education of its characters has been explored by several scholars. Some, like John R. Reisert and John T. Scott, still take Émile as the central

[3]Paul Thomas, "Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Sexist?," *Feminist Studies* 17, no. 2 (1991): 198–99; Joan Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 69.

[4]See Melzer, *Natural Goodness of Man*; Joel Schwartz, *The Sexual Politics of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); Denise Schaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom, and Judgment* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014).

[5]Lori Jo Marso, *(Un)Manly Citizens: Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Germaine de Staël's Subversive Women* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

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paradigm informing readers' education.[6] However, Denise Schaeffer suggests that Sophie's education is neither inferior nor complementary to Émile's, but a challenge to it.[7] Building on her insight, I argue that when readers emulate Sophie's style of judgment, they learn to judge for themselves. In emphasizing the education of the reader, I am not claiming to have elicited Rousseau's true opinions; rather I join scholars such as Schaeffer, Eileen Hunt Botting, and Mark Cladis in foregrounding the relationship Rousseau's texts create between author and reader.[8] I make a novel contribution to this literature by centering Sophie's education as a model for how this relationship operates. By rereading *Émile* and "Émile et Sophie" as Sophie might, readers do not arrive at the same conclusions as Sophie; they arrive at their own.

This article is broken into three sections, each centering on one of the three educations in *Émile*—those of Émile, Sophie, and the reader. The first section considers, in particular, Émile's lessons on property and family. While Émile is taught to think of himself as a free-standing whole, property ownership and family life enmeshes him in relationships with others. I argue that the education Rousseau details for Émile fails precisely because Émile cannot accept this, as demonstrated by his abandonment of his property and family in "Émile et Sophie." The article's second section argues that Sophie's education better prepares her to navigate such interdependent relationships as property and family. A significant body of scholarship foregrounds the fact that Sophie's education surpasses Émile's in critical respects.[9] I synthesize this literature to support my argument that Sophie's education requires that she think comparatively in a way Émile never does. Learning to weigh different perspectives against each other in turn teaches Sophie to compare parts to wholes, and images to reality. While this reading of Sophie is not itself novel, in the third section, I make an original contribution by extending this argument about Sophie's education to the education *Émile* imparts to readers. By thinking like Sophie, readers learn to evaluate the relationships that underlie the ownership of property or the structure of family life as

[6]John Reisert, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: A Friend of Virtue* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003),169; John T. Scott, "Do You See What I See? The Education of the Reader in Rousseau's *Émile*," *Review of Politics* 74, no. 3 (2012): 444.

[7]Schaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom, and Judgment*, 13.

[8]Schaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom, and Judgment*; Eileen Hunt Botting, *Family Feuds: Wollstonecraft, Burke, and Rousseau and the Transformation of the Family* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006); Mark Cladis, *Public Vision, Private Lives: Rousseau, Religion, and 21st-Century Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[9]Penny A. Weiss, *Gendered Communities: Rousseau, Sex, and Politics* (New York: New York University Press, 1993); Mira Morgenstern, *Rousseau and the Politics of Ambiguity: Self, Culture, and Society* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996); Marso, *(Un)Manly Citizens*; Schaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom, and Judgment*.

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Rousseau presents them and in their own lives, and to judge whether these relationships are just.

1. Educating Émile

When we consider Émile's education on its own, as a self-contained item, it seems Rousseau seeks to teach readers to judge based on a standard of wholeness. As a natural man, Émile certainly presumes himself to be a self-sufficient, independent whole. Likewise, Rousseau asks readers to evaluate Émile using this standard of wholeness. He claims that to judge a natural man, "he would have to be seen wholly formed" (41). Yet, in providing readers with this image of the natural man as a whole, Rousseau draws attention to the artificiality of wholeness. While alive, human beings are not whole since they continue to grow and change until their deaths. Through the character of Émile, Rousseau merely creates the illusion of wholeness. Even within his narrative, Rousseau is continually creating divisions between the different stages of Émile's growth. For example, once Émile has been led "up to the boundaries of childish reason," Rousseau invites readers to "cast [their] eyes back over the [stage] we have just completed" (158). Rousseau needs to create the illusion that Émile's childhood is a completed whole to facilitate the reader's judgment of it. In Schaeffer's words, "judging well is presented as a matter of being moved by a necessarily illusory ideal, combined with awareness that it is an illusion"; the aim is to achieve "a sort of double vision."[10]

It is unclear how readers should navigate the double vision created by the ideal of wholeness Émile represents. Rousseau asks: "What will a man raised uniquely for himself become for others?" (41). Ultimately, Émile's education fails to answer this question. The natural man never learns to navigate his relationships with others because he insists on seeing himself as an independent whole. In particular, this section considers how Émile struggles to understand that his property and family are not merely extensions of him, but items which bind him to a larger community. When the events of "Émile et Sophie" challenge Émile's understanding of himself as a perfect, untethered whole, he attempts to withdraw from political and civil life altogether. However, in seeking such an escape in the name of personal freedom, he risks becoming complicit in systems that curtail not only his freedom, but that of others.

Émile's introduction to property further draws attention to the problem of using wholeness as a standard of judgment. Rousseau frames this lesson as concerning not simply physical property, but "some idea of the relations of man to man and of the morality of human actions" (97). These "primary sentiments are centered on ourselves. . . . Thus, the first sentiment of justice does not come to us from the justice we owe but from that which is owed us" (97). Émile has little inclination or ability to understand justice or property as

[10]Schaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom, and Judgment*, 62.

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abstractions. He can, however, understand that something belongs to him. Thus, the tutor begins his lesson by having Émile plant some bean seeds, so the pupil might feel that "there is in this earth something of himself" (98). The tutor leads Émile to believe that, by investing his labor with the land, he is responsible for the growth of the beans.

Allan Bloom and Judith Shklar observe that this vision of property has the same foundation as that of John Locke: cultivation and labor legitimize ownership.[11] This similarity notwithstanding, the way Rousseau introduces property is a direct criticism of Locke's arguments in *Some Thoughts concerning Education*. Locke suggests that children be taught to respect property "before they have Language and Understanding enough" to grasp the rights given by labor.[12] Thus the first piece of property children possess must be a gift. Rousseau explicitly rejects founding a pupil's understanding of property on such a basis, as "a gift is a convention and . . . the child cannot know yet what convention is" (198). A child raised in a rural area, he claims, will naturally develop some understanding of labor; thus, it is easy to present them with an idea of property that is self-contained. On one hand, this disagreement between Rousseau and Locke is simply a disagreement over what concepts children will understand; however, it belies a deeper dispute concerning how knowledge and instruction should be imparted to children. Locke understands that children are not born with fully developed rational faculties. Hence children should respect the reason of their instructor. If instructors use their reason to create a limited number of rules, the pupil will learn these rules as habits. When these customs are accompanied by explanations, children eventually learn the reasons behind their habits.[13] Locke's recommendation that children read Aesop's fables demonstrates this philosophy in practice. If children commit these stories to memory, they will reflect on their meaning later when the morals, now understood, may instruct their "manly Thought, and serious Business."[14] In short, Locke suggests that children can be instructed to become rational creatures without fully understanding the whole of their initial teachings.

Using the fables of La Fontaine, Rousseau argues that basing a child's knowledge on habitual and partial understanding is dangerous. He warns that children will judge these stories without understanding them in full. For example, when a fable tells of a fox tricking a crow, through flattery, into dropping a piece of cheese, tutors may think they are teaching their

[11]Allan Bloom, introduction to in *Émile, or On Education*, 13; Judith Shklar, *Man and Citizen: A Study of Rousseau's Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 49; cf. John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, ed. C. B. Macpherson (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1980), §§27, 32–34.

[12]John Locke, *Some Thoughts concerning Education*, ed. John W. Yolton and Jean S. Yolton (Oxford: Clarendon, 2003), §110.

[13]Ibid., §§64–81.

[14]Ibid., §156.

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pupils to beware flatterers, but Rousseau suggests that pupils will instead admire the fox. The children are being asked to judge a story about the dangers of trickery, without understanding the social conventions and moral relations that make trickery disadvantageous. Without understanding the story as a whole, Rousseau argues that children will make "the choice of *amour-propre*"—they will choose that which gives them an advantage relative to others, rather than what is virtuous (115). As Jonathan Marks argues, Rousseau uses these fables to levy a criticism of Locke on Locke's terms; teaching children to judge based on partial information will inculcate neither autonomous judgment nor a love of freedom, but a habit of following arbitrary decrees and of manipulating others to satisfy their vanity.[15]

Through Émile's introduction to property, Rousseau ostensibly puts into practice his philosophy of teaching children to judge based on wholes. When Émile initially plants his beans, he believes he owns the beans because he labored over them in their entirety. One day, though, the boy arrives to tend his garden and finds his sprouts uprooted. He cries, in natural indignation, "what has become of my labor, my product, the sweet fruit of my care and my sweat?" (98). After a brief investigation, Émile and his tutor discover the culprit: the gardener Robert. However, Robert explains that it is Émile who has committed an injustice: he uprooted Émile's garden after the boy trampled Robert's melons to plant his beans. By looking at only his beans, Émile fails to see that the land in which they were planted was already claimed by another through cultivation. His sense of injustice was roused, only to be proved unjustified because he did not see the whole picture. Having learned the value of his own labor, Émile now understands that property can only be granted through labor if the land is otherwise uncultivated, further internalizing a definition of property akin to Locke's.

As there is no fallow land left for Émile to claim as his own, it seems he will encounter the inevitable conflict between property owners and the propertyless that Rousseau describes in the *Discourse on Inequality*.[16] However, the episode is resolved by Robert gifting Émile a small piece of the garden at the tutor's behest. Because Émile understands the value of the labor involved in cultivating land, he understands why gifting this land is meaningful. Yet, in agreeing to share the land, Émile and Robert have not truly settled the question of who is the first and rightful occupant; they assume that there are no occupants before themselves. Émile's new understanding of the garden's ownership is based on limits similar to his initial assumption, as he does not consider the possibility of it being owned before Robert. Interestingly, just before this juncture, Rousseau contrasts Émile's possession of his beans

[15]Jonathan Marks, "Rousseau's Critique of Locke's Education for Liberty," *Journal of Politics* 74, no. 3 (2012): 694–706.

[16]See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, in *The First and Second Discourses*, trans. Roger D. Masters and Judith R. Masters (New York: St. Martin's, 1964), 157–60.

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to Núñez de Balboa's colonial possession of South America. Rousseau contrasts Émile with Balboa, since Émile's ownership of the land is derived from the labor he invests in the soil, while Balboa's claim is purely nominal. However, Rousseau's description of justified property ownership, like Locke's, is haunted by the dispossessed colonized subject—the true first occupant and cultivator in many contexts.[17] As Frances Ferguson notes, while Robert and Émile's agreement may seem more legitimate than Balboa's because all parties consent to the arrangement, nonetheless "it resembles Balboa's in that both actions implicitly imagine that legitimate possession of the land can be defined as beginning with them."[18] Through this episode of the beans, Rousseau suggests that property ownership is supported by a tacit agreement to ignore the possibility of other, prior claims. Ferguson describes this move as "the skillful deployment of ignorance," an assessment that coincides with Schaeffer's observation that judgment for Rousseau—whether it be of the legitimacy of property rights or the happiness of the natural man—requires an illusion of knowing the whole.[19]

How to judge based on the whole, particularly as it concerns property, is a problem that continues to trouble Émile. To avoid the vices accompanying property ownership in civil society, Émile declares that the only property he desires is "a little farm in some corner of the world" (457). The tutor praises Émile for his modesty, but highlights that "these treasures . . . are not as common as you think. . . . In what corner of the earth will you be able to say 'Here I am master of myself and of the land which belongs to me?'" (457). Émile forgets that he tried to claim a field—or rather, a bean garden—only to realize he had unjustly taken the land from another. His tutor draws his pupil's attention to this problem again, asking: "Do you believe that it is so easy to find a country where one is always permitted to be a decent man?" (457). In choosing his future home, Émile must be sure that he will not suffer injustice from the laws, nor be coerced into committing injustices. The tutor suggests that no such nation exists. After a two-year tour of Europe, Émile appears to agree. He tells his tutor: "I have found that my very wish was contradictory; for, were I dependent on nothing else, I would at least depend on the land where I had settled. . . . I could withdraw from dependence on man only by returning to dependence on nature" (472). Émile sees that he is not a single and complete whole; by necessity, he must depend on his land and his own human nature.

[17]For further criticism of the colonial logic underlying Locke's account of property, see James Tully, *A Discourse on Property: John Locke and His Adversaries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) and Barbara Arneil, "John Locke, Natural Law, and Colonialism," *History of Political Thought* 13, no. 4 (1992): 587–603.

[18]Frances Ferguson, "Reading Morals: Locke and Rousseau on Education and Inequality," *Representations* 6 (1984): 82.

[19]Ferguson, "Reading Morals," 83; Schaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom, and Judgment*, 61.

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Yet, in an important way, Émile misses his tutor's point. Ostensibly, their tour of Europe is meant to temper the limited, idealized model of land ownership and contract given to Émile by the tutor in the garden through a comparative study of real-world politics. However, rather than having his desires moderated, Émile returns believing he can reject imperfect, real-world politics in favor of maintaining his idealized images of self-sufficiency and independence. Immediately after recognizing his dependence on nature, he boasts, "When my property subjects me, I shall abandon it without effort" (472). As a result, "I will not be free in this or that land, in this or that region; I shall be free everywhere on earth" (472). To be truly free and independent everywhere, Émile must have no roots binding him, be they in the form of debts, friends, or even a particular home. Marianna Papastephanou and Zelia Gregoriou suggest this view endorses a "vernacular cosmopolitanism" which implies that "we should not make so much fuss about land anyway."[20] As they further argue, this cosmopolitanism naturalizes the imperialism practiced by Europeans, as it frames dispossessed anticolonists as ungenerous and overly attached to their land, while their dispossessors are—like Émile in the bean garden—absolved of guilt or even framed as victims.[21]

The tutor also has concerns about Émile's view of property, though of a different nature. When his pupil claims the only constraints he accepts are those he cannot do without—sustenance, shelter, and his wife—his tutor says: "This extravagant disinterestedness does not displease me at your age. It will decrease when you have children, and you will then be precisely what a good father of a family and a wise man ought to be" (473). According to Émile's present attitude, his marriage to Sophie is the only bond tying him to human community, though he views this relationship not as a connection to civil society but as an extension of his natural and inescapable passions. In this sense, Émile views his wife merely as an extension of himself: they are part of the same whole. The tutor claims that the family born from this perceived whole will make Émile wise by changing how he understands his relationships with others.

The tutor's hopes for Émile, however, go unrealized. He abandons his family and society in "Émile et Sophie." Composed of two letters from Émile to his tutor, this unpublished and unfinished sequel calls into question

[20]Marianna Papastephanou and Zelia Gregoriou, "Locke's Children? Rousseau and the Beans (Beings?) of the Colonial Learner," *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 33 (2014): 477.

[21]Ibid., 472, 476; Ferguson, "Reading Morals," 82–83. Papastephanou and Gregoriou track how the bean garden episode moves from framing Émile as the dispossessor of Robert, to assuming "the figure of the dispossessed 'native'" since there is no fallow land for him. This characterization is only possible if one makes use of "the skillful deployment of ignorance," following Ferguson's conclusion, to obfuscate the fact that Emile is child of a rich family, and that the partnership he forges with Robert is the result of a "forced encroachment" not unlike how colonial actors like Balboa imposed themselves on indigenous peoples.

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what it means to judge Émile's life as a whole. What perspective should readers adopt: that of the apparently happy end of *Émile*, or that suggested in the two dismal letters Émile writes? In "Émile et Sophie," readers are more forcefully confronted with the problem of constructing wholes out of narratives, as they are "deprived of Rousseau's running commentary, or the hand of the author."[22] Just as Rousseau no longer constructs wholes for readers to judge, the tutor no longer governs Émile, having departed sometime between the end of *Émile* and the events of the letters. During the tutor's absence, Sophie's parents died, followed by Émile and Sophie's daughter. Grief-stricken, Émile moves his wife and surviving son to Paris. In the first letter, Émile describes how, during their two years in the capital, he becomes detached from his relationships, while Sophie becomes inseparable from a married Parisian couple. Émile is crushed when, some time later, a distraught Sophie informs him that she has become pregnant by another man. He leaves their home in Paris, wanders the streets for three days, and finally decides to leave his family and his country. "Without valet, without money, without crew, and without desires and cares," Émile leaves Paris, "alone and on foot."[23]

Patrick Deneen and Thomas Kavanagh view this decision as consistent with Émile's education, as he frees himself from the misery of human passions and attachments.[24] Shklar also views Émile's education as a success, albeit a tragic one, as Émile chooses to be an individual rather than a husband or citizen, since it is impossible to be all three.[25] However, there is also the possibility that Émile's education fails him. Following Schaeffer and Mary Nichols, I argue that despite his education's emphasis on autonomy Émile is never actually independent.[26] His life is meticulously governed first by his tutor and then by Sophie. Émile never learns to navigate interpersonal relationships for himself. Nurturing this kind of judgment is ostensibly the purpose of the tutor's lesson on property, which he undertakes to give Émile "some idea of the relations of man to man" (97). Likewise, his tour of Europe is intended to make him "consider himself in his civil relations with his fellow citizens" (455). Though Émile was raised uniquely for himself, the tutor still intends for Émile to have some relationships with other human beings and tries to teach him the judgment necessary to maintain

[22]Schaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom, and Judgment*, 161.

[23]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," in *Collection complète des œuvres, Genève, 1780–1789*, vol. 5 (édition en ligne rousseauonline.ch, 2012), 497. This and all subsequent translations are my own.

[24]Patrick Deneen, *The Odyssey of Political Theory* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 158–59; Thomas Kavanagh, *Writing the Truth: Authority and Desire in Rousseau* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 78–101.

[25]Shklar, *Man and Citizen*, 5–9.

[26]Schaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom, and Judgment*, 192; Mary Nichols, "Rousseau's Novel Education in the *Émile*," *Political Theory* 13, no. 4 (1985): 536, 553.

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these relationships. Yet, ultimately, Émile rejects Sophie, his son, and all other commitments of this kind. Instead, he permanently adopts the existence the tutor gently criticizes as "désintéressement outré."[27]

In the second letter, Émile boards a ship for Naples; however, the captain sells him as a slave in Algiers. "What have I lost," Émile reflects, "of my primitive freedom? Am I not born a slave to necessity?"[28] Émile views his situation in relation to himself alone, and concludes that nothing has changed. The work he does is the same as before, and he is just as detached from his interpersonal relationships. The closest he comes to forming a bond with others is inspiring a strike against a cruel overseer. However, the strike does not inspire solidarity between Émile and his fellow slaves; the rebellion is resolved by Émile replacing the overseer. Presumably, Émile improves the working conditions somewhat, though he explicitly declines to detail his work in this role, as "that is not what this [letter] is about."[29]

This second letter demonstrates that Émile cannot distinguish between suffering injustice and perpetrating injustice. In considering himself as a whole that can be understood without reference to others, he erases the differences in power and situation—such as those engendered by race and colonial status—between himself and those around him. Yet, there are meaningful differences between working for oneself and working for a slave master, or working as a slave and working as an overseer, just as there is a difference between an anticolonist's desire for land and an imperialist's. The inability to perceive this difference is the same fault with which Émile struggles in Robert's garden. Émile then measures his claim to the land in relation to himself alone, without considering his potential relationship to the people who may have cultivated the land before him or Robert. As an adult, when he attempts to define the less tangible concept of freedom, Émile continues to use himself as his only point of reference, as though he is an independent whole. He thus makes the same mistake twice: he is complicit in dispossessing others of their liberty, just as he was guilty of dispossessing Robert of his property.

The scene in the bean garden thus prefigures the most significant challenges to Émile's education as a natural man. Émile judges his claim of ownership over the beans as if his labor was an independent and isolated whole, but his tutor was preparing him for the realization that this is false. Despite the tutor's attempts to cure Émile of the chimeras the tutor himself created, Émile fails to thoroughly question the ideal of wholeness as a standard of judgment. That Rousseau expects that his readers will learn to criticize this

[27]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile ou de l'Éducation, Livre V*, ed. Jean-Marie Tremblay (Chicoutimi: Classiques des science sociales, 2001), 107. Bloom translates this as "extravagant disinterestedness" (473). A more literal, though awkward, translation might be "exaggerated or excessive detachment from any personal interest."

[28]Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," 504.

[29]Ibid., 513.

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standard when Émile fails to do so is indicated by his inclusion of an alternative style of judgment: that embodied by Sophie.

2. Educating Sophie

Unlike Émile, Sophie's education teaches her to evaluate wholes while being aware of the illusory quality of their "wholeness." While this arguably makes Sophie a superior judge, Rousseau argues that women ought to use this style of judgment to manage men's passions, thus enabling their husbands' perception of themselves and their families as perfect wholes. Commentators from Mary Wollstonecraft onwards have noted that requiring women to manipulate men in this way leads women to be "educated like a fanciful *half* being."[30] In other words, women are prevented from ever achieving wholeness for themselves. Wollstonecraft argues that the solution is for women to be educated like men; however, Sophie's fractional perspective is not simply a poor substitute for Émile's perceived unity. Rather than abandoning that which constrains her, Sophie's perspective allows her to embrace a kind of independence realized not through wholeness, but through her interdependence. This affords Sophie an autonomy of thought that Émile never develops. However, if Émile cannot also recognize their shared dependence, then Sophie's education also risks failure, as she alone cannot redefine the patriarchal structures of their family life.

As indicated by Book V's subtitle, *Sophie, or The Woman*, Sophie is not merely a particular individual; she also serves as Rousseau's paradigmatic example of womanhood. At a glance, this makes Sophie a feminine mirror to Émile, insofar as he is a model for the "abstract man" (42). In this sense, Émile and Sophie each represent a whole. However, in creating these paradigms, Rousseau uses contrasting methods. To depict abstract man as a whole, he starts with particulars. In looking at Émile as an individual, readers conjecture about natural man in the abstract. By contrast, Sophie's identity emerges from the abstraction of "The Woman." Book V begins with a lengthy discussion of women's education in general, outlining "the spirit in which Sophie has been raised" (393). At the end of this digression, the character of Sophie appears, a fully grown young woman. In the first case, Rousseau moves from particular to general; in the second, from general to particular. Sophie's introduction to Émile fits this pattern of describing women first in universal terms and then in specific ones, as Émile is made to love the idea of Sophie "in advance of his knowing [her]" (329). To prevent Émile from becoming enamored with some vicious

[30]Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, 3rd ed. (London: Johnson, 1796), 77, emphasis in the original. See also Eileen Hunt Botting, "Rousseau and Feminism," in *The Rousseauian Mind*, ed. Eve Grace and Christopher Kelly (London: Routledge, 2019), 463–73, for an overview of criticisms levied at Rousseau by his feminist readers.

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Parisian socialite, the tutor tells his pupil they must find him a companion whose merit equals his own. The tutor constructs a chimerical image of this virtuous woman, and encourages Émile to love this image. To the readers, Rousseau says that "it is unimportant whether the object I depict for him is imaginary; it suffices that it makes him disgusted with those that could tempt him" (329). By constructing this image, the tutor determines the standard by which Émile will judge the world, and thereby controls his judgment. To Émile, the tutor says, "Let us call your future beloved Sophie" (329). From abstraction, Sophie emerges as an individual.

Thus, starting with how Rousseau constructs his male and female characters, there are gendered differences, though not ones that are strictly "natural." He warns readers not to "confound what is natural in the savage state with what is natural in the civil state" (406). To understand gender in Rousseau's "savage state," scholars often turn to the *Discourse on Inequality* wherein Rousseau claims that mates "[leave] each other with the same ease," and mothers nurse their children only as long as necessary, like other predatory animals.[31] While sex brings people together, it creates no social bonds. Beginning with this description of the state of nature, Rousseau appears to claim physical and intellectual equality between the genders, though they will come to occupy different stations in civil society.[32] In the state of nature, a human being is "without industry, without speech, without domicile, without war and without liaisons, with no need for his fellow men, likewise with no desire to harm them, perhaps never even recognizing anyone individually."[33] Noting Rousseau's emphasis on the traits people lack, Tracy Strong argues that "there is literally nothing to human beings in the state of nature."[34] Only once individuals compare themselves to other animals and to other humans are gendered differences imaginable. The kind of comparison that differentiates between "men" and "women" is part of the "new enlightenment," which Rousseau claims leads to *amour-propre* and the vices of civil society.[35] Consequently, gender—"natural" or otherwise—can only be discussed once one enters the realm of civil society, as Rousseau does in *Émile*.

[31]Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality,* 121.

[32]Scholars who arrive at this conclusion include Schwartz, *Sexual Politics*, and Nicole Fermon, *Domesticating Passion: Rousseau, Women, and Nation* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1997).

[33]Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality,* 137.

[34]Tracy Strong, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Politics of the Ordinary* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 44. See also Rosanne Terese Kennedy, *Rousseau in Drag* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 19–23. Compare the emphasis on "without" here to when Émile departs Paris in "Émile et Sophie." There is "nothing to" Émile because he refuses to compare himself to and enter into relationships with others, like humans in Rousseau's state of nature.

[35]Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality,* 144.

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Despite their "common aim," which provides a shared basis for their educations, the roles Rousseau prescribes for men and women differ considerably (358). Instead of being raised uniquely for themselves, Rousseau expects women to center their lives around the opinions of others. While "opinion is the grave of virtue among men . . . it's the throne among women" (365). Women should not exist outside of reputation and opinion—or, in other words, of *amour-propre*.[36] Women must concern themselves with *amour-propre* to this extent because the unity of the family depends on a wife being "judged to be faithful by her husband" (361). The father's place in the family depends on believing that his wife is honest and true. Women do not need to actually be faithful, according to this formulation; Rousseau's emphasis is on the appearance of faithfulness. To maintain this appearance, women must always think of themselves in relation to others and how they appear to others. If a woman manipulates her husband's passion correctly, the family will seem whole to him—a move reminiscent of Émile's tutor's machinations in the bean garden. A wife, like the tutor, presents the illusion of wholeness to her husband. But preoccupied in this way, women cannot aspire to the physical and political independence Rousseau seeks for Émile, nor to the epistemological independence of taking themselves as the sole point of reference in judging the world.

This difference in how they come to know the world is ultimately the most significant difference between Émile and Sophie. Émile looks inward, taking himself to be a free-standing whole which he can understand independently and by which he can independently understand the rest of the world. Sophie, on the other hand, looks outward, developing her sense of self and of the world by comparing disparate things to each other. This difference is most apparent when one considers their initial meeting. Émile takes no notice of Sophie until he hears her name, which is, incidentally, the name the tutor has given his imaginary beloved. Émile is confused when he tries to compare the real Sophie to the tutor's chimerical one: "He does not see exactly the face that he had depicted to himself. He does not know whether the one he sees is better or worse" (414). Instead of comparing his ideals to the real people he encounters, and judging them for himself, Émile looks to his tutor for guidance. Then, he simply accepts that the real Sophie is identical to the one his tutor constructed.

Sophie, meanwhile, "furtively turns her eyes towards him in order to examine his face better" (414). She is evaluating Émile against her ideal model of marital virtue—Fenelon's Telemachus—and she is only satisfied once "she finds nothing there which denies the comparison" (414).

[36]Thomas, "Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Sexist?," 198; Susan Moller Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 131. Okin condemns Rousseau for denying women "the capacity for abstract reason and creativity"; however, Thomas observes it is Okin, not Rousseau, who values reason and creativity. What Rousseau values, and denies to women, is independence.

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Rousseau notes that *The Adventures of Telemachus* "fell into her hands by chance" (410). This may be intended ironically since, as the author, Rousseau is dictating everything that happens to the character of Sophie. At the very least, she is a deliberate foil to Émile, who is instructed by his tutor to read only *Robinson Crusoe*, and only the middle section where Crusoe is stranded, ignoring the "rigmarole" at the beginning and end where he is a participant in civil society and implicated in the slave trade (185). Rather than comparing Crusoe to himself or others, Émile is led "to think he is Robinson himself," and to "judge everything as this man himself ought to judge of it with respect to his own utility" (185). Only alone on his island can Crusoe seem like an independent whole. Yet this whole is, of course, illusory; it is not even taken from the whole of the novel, and even within the narrative Crusoe's independence on the island is facilitated by the subjugation of Friday. Sophie, by contrast, discerns a resemblance between Émile and Telemachus, compares them of her own volition, and develops her own opinion through this act of comparing illusion to reality.

Rousseau expects all women to be such astute judges. "Man says what he knows; woman says what pleases. . . . Useful things ought to be his principal object and pleasing things ought to be hers. The truth ought to be the only element common to their discourse" (376). If truth is present in the discourse of both, women must be capable of knowing truth. Women are not expected to speak pleasant nothings; they must endeavor to make the truth pleasant—a task that requires judgment. Rousseau acknowledges that women will experience tension between their own judgment and the commands of their fathers or husbands. Consequently, he recommends: "As soon as she depends on both her own conscience and the opinions of others, she has to learn to compare these two rules, to reconcile them, and to prefer the former only when the two are in contradiction. She becomes the judge of her judges" (383).As Penny Weiss notes: "Saying she is to prefer the dictates of conscience to those of opinion *only* when the two disagree amounts to saying she is to prefer conscience *whenever* the two conflict."[37] Developing this active and critical personal conscience implies a two-step process: first she must understand the perspectives of others, and then she must transcend them. Understanding someone else's opinion requires assuming their perspective, something Émile, raised to think only for himself, struggles to do. As a woman, Sophie is always thinking from the perspective of others—what they want, and how they perceive her—as well as thinking for herself. The second step requires that she use her understanding of multiple perspectives to create an illusion of seeing the whole situation from a god's-eye perspective. While this perspective is only an illusion, it allows her to arrive at conclusions about the truth and justice of claims contradicting the claims of her conscience.

[37]Weiss, *Gendered Communities*, 26, emphasis in original.

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Such generous interpretations of Sophie imbue Rousseau's women with a significant amount of power, which some scholars interpret as making Rousseau's women equal to—albeit distinct from—his men.[38] The tutor himself eventually tells Émile, "Sophie is your governor from now on" (479). Sympathetic interpretations, however, ignore the negative consequences of all gendered systems. To achieve their own aims, Rousseau's women must act covertly, "always working from a position of vulnerability."[39] Ultimately, Émile and Sophie have "an adversarial relationship, not one of friendship or affection—or of true community."[40] Even when Sophie becomes one of the "tender and foresighted" mothers to whom *Émile* is addressed, she never has power over herself. Rather, she is expected to devote all her energy to the good of others—an extreme as radical as Émile being raised uniquely for himself (37).

If Sophie is to govern her husband and family it must be a collaborative undertaking. She is ill-suited to govern Émile as the tutor would have her do. When the tutor performs this role, he does so at a remove from the pupil for whom he creates illusions to judge.[41] Sophie, by contrast, governs her family, of which she is a member. While she may attempt to judge conflicts from an illusory god's-eye perspective, she knows she is not removed from the situation in reality. The illusions she creates, and the judgments she makes on their basis, affect her. Provided she and Émile understand that they are mutually dependent, they can potentially work together to make their family a whole that fits within a larger political community.

However, so long as Émile sees himself as a whole, Sophie is forced into the position of half being, vying to get Émile to act as she desires through manipulation. "Émile et Sophie" is, as Hunt Botting argues, the "tragic yet realistic account" of how such a marriage ends.[42] Reading Sophie's pregnancy as the result of adultery, Hunt Botting concludes that "the defects in Sophie's moral education rendered her vulnerable to the temptations she faced in Paris."[43] In other words, Sophie judges the patriarchal expectations of fidelity imposed on her and finds them unjust. She acts on this judgment, challenging the societal order that would constrain her, despite knowing it could cause the implosion of her family. Other readings of "Émile et Sophie" suggest Sophie's pregnancy is the result of rape.[44] This reading highlights the limits of Sophie's

[38]See Schwartz, *Sexual Politics*, 143; Melzer, *Natural Goodness of Man*, 248.

[39]Weiss, *Gendered Communities*, 98.

[40]Ibid., 100.

[41]In a sense, the tutor is like the legislator in *On the Social Contract*, who also creates laws for a polity while not being a member of it. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, in *Basic Political Writings*, 2nd ed., trans. Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2011), 180.

[42]Hunt Botting, *Family Feuds*, 18.

[43]Ibid., 201.

[44]For examples, see Schwartz, *Sexual Politics*, 96–97; Wingrove, *Rousseau's Republican Romance*, 88–90; Nancy Senior, "*Les Solitaires* as a Test for Émile and Sophie," *French*

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education more bleakly: so long as she remains a woman embedded in patriarchal structures, an education that provides her independence of thought alone leaves her bodily and materially vulnerable.

3. Educating Readers

While Émile's and Sophie's educations have their faults, there is still another education *Émile* offers: that of the reader. It is reasonable to suggest that Rousseau intends for readers to develop their capacity for judgment through reading *Émile* and "Émile et Sophie." Reisert and Scott pursue this line of thought, though they accept Émile as Rousseau's principal model for readers.[45] Schaeffer, by contrast, takes Sophie as Rousseau's model for judgment, noting his repeated appeals for mothers to act as judges of his work.[46] That said, Schaeffer also notes that it is "difficult to see Sophie as a *political* model," since women are "explicitly absent from political participation" in Rousseau's writings.[47] To apply Sophie's perspective to political matters goes beyond Rousseau's texts. However, if readers take Sophie seriously as a model for their judgment, I suggest they will inevitably move beyond the text. In emulating Sophie, readers learn to compare the figures Rousseau presents to each other and to reality. This exercise does not lead them to arrive at the same conclusions as Sophie; rather, readers are invited to evaluate Sophie against other characters, determining for themselves the best course of action. This, in Hunt Botting's words, is an example of Rousseau teaching readers by using "paradox to build competing cases, tear them down, and then lead readers, through the rubble as it were, to an entirely unexpected conclusion."[48] That readers may use their judgment to arrive at particular conclusions unexpected even by Rousseau does not necessarily contradict his intention as a teacher.

"Émile et Sophie" details the only instance in which Émile emulates Sophie's style of judgment. After Sophie reveals her pregnancy, he resolves to remove his surviving son from her care. He reconsiders only when he

Review 49, no. 4 (1976): 528–35; Charles Wirz, "Note sur *Émile et Sophie, ou Les Solitaires*," *Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, no. 36 (1963–65): 291–301. While sympathetic to interpretations that frame Sophie's affair as adultery, since it affords her agency, I am persuaded by the secondary literature that suggests Rousseau intended for the affair to eventually be revealed to be rape. Wirz discusses Rousseau's intended plot resolution based on statements in his letters, and Wingrove supports this suggested conclusion through her analysis of the extant text.

[45]Reisert, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, 169; Scott, "Do You See What I See?," 444.

[46]Schaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom, and Judgment*, 24.

[47]Denise Schaeffer, "Reconsidering the Role of Sophie in Rousseau's 'Émile,'" *Polity* 30, no. 4 (1998): 626, emphasis in original.

[48]Hunt Botting, *Family Feuds*, 16.

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learns, while in a self-imposed exile from his family, that Sophie and his son visited and observed him from a distance. When she left, she was heard saying to the child, "No, he would never take you from your mother."[49] Hearing Sophie make this claim, even at second hand, forces Émile to evaluate his judgment against hers. He asks himself, "What did she see? Émile at peace, Émile at work. What proof did she draw from this sight but that Émile is not subjugated by his passions and forms only reasonable resolutions?"[50] Émile seeks to compare his conclusion to what he thinks Sophie's opinion of it would be, looking at himself through her eyes. In Schaeffer's words, "Entering into Sophie's perspective pushes Émile to judge not only whether his decision is reasonable but also whether *he* is being reasonable."[51] When he stops seeing Sophie as an extension of himself, Émile begins to account for the differences between his opinion and hers, allowing him to weigh the two perspectives against each other. Whereas the tutor presents judgments for Émile—such as how he resolves the conflict between Émile and Robert by handing down a compromise from an outside perspective—Sophie invites Émile to judge with her. Thinking in this manner creates the possibility not only for mutual deliberation and compromise, but forgiveness. Though he believes Sophie to have betrayed him, Émile acknowledges that she is still virtuous enough to raise their child well. However, this is the limit of Émile's ability to think collaboratively, and he flees Paris rather than build a new life together with Sophie.

Throughout *Émile* and "Émile et Sophie," readers are similarly asked to think about questions from the perspectives of different characters and to evaluate these judgments against their own. For example, while Émile and Sophie present one model of married life, another is introduced in "Émile et Sophie" through the couple Sophie befriends. Their relationship appears regular and decent to onlookers, but Émile claims:

> Their good understanding came less from a true attachment than a shared indifference concerning the duties of their [married] state. . . . May my husband live happily above all else, said the wife; that I have my wife as a friend, I am happy, said the husband. . . . Each does all they can for the happiness of the other. Can we better love those who are dear to us than to want all that they desire? We avoid the cruel necessity of fleeing each other.[52]

What is notable about these "maxims" is that they "are not those of exclusive possession of the other or rights over the other."[53] While the couple lives together, they are more than two halves of a single whole: the wife wishes the individual happiness of her husband, just as the husband wishes the

[49]Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," 491.
[50]Ibid., 493.
[51]Schaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom, and Judgment*, 166, emphasis in original.
[52]Rousseau, "Émile et Sophie," 462–63.
[53]Kennedy, *Rousseau in Drag*, 90.

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individual happiness of his wife. It is up to readers to evaluate the couple's attitudes. On one hand, the couple appears responsible for Sophie's corruption; the husband is likely the father of her unborn child.[54] In pursuing what pleases them, the couple does not consider how they affect others. Yet, there is reciprocity and equality in their marriage, and each maintains their individuality while choosing to build a whole together. There is something in the initial presentation of their principles that seems agreeable to Sophie, leading to her entanglement with them.

Another comparison Rousseau offers is through an allusion. As Émile prepares to start a family, his tutor tells the young man to beware violent states and greedy neighbors. "Keep in mind that everywhere their lands can border on Naboth's vineyard" (457). When Naboth refuses King Ahab's offer to purchase his vineyard—as the land is "the inheritance of [Naboth's] ancestors"—Ahab has Naboth executed and seizes his land (1 Kings 21:3). The tutor, it seems, is warning Émile that even if he is as moral and innocent as Naboth, he must beware the encroachment of civil society. However, there is another sense to the tutor's warning—namely, one may compare Émile to Ahab. Like Émile and Robert, or like Nuñez de Balboa and other colonial figures, Ahab does not care who used the land before him. He seeks to impose a myopic vision of wholeness on the world, one which begins with himself. The danger of such a narrow vision is not simply that others may forcibly encroach on one's rights, but that, in thinking only of oneself, one may encroach on the rights of others. This seems to be what occurs to Émile at the end of "Émile et Sophie," as he becomes a slave and then overseer, insensitive to how his freedom has been curtailed, and how he has become complicit in a regime that curtails the freedom of others.

This allusion also contains a warning for Sophie, embodied in the character of Jezebel. Jezebel orchestrates for Naboth to be stoned to death, upon noticing that her husband, Ahab, is sullen because he cannot have Naboth's vineyard. Contrary to Rousseau's expectations for a virtuous wife, Jezebel encourages Ahab's *amour-propre* by enabling his envy of Naboth's property; however, there is more than a superficial resemblance between Jezebel's actions and what Rousseau expects of a good wife. By monitoring and manipulating her husband's desires she enables Ahab to feel as though he were a free and independent whole. Jezebel is unconcerned with the consequences her actions have for others, though; she seeks to obtain what her husband wants without judging his desires. Similarly, the Parisian couple wishes the happiness of their spouse without judgment. If Sophie is not to become another Jezebel, or another corrupted Parisian, she must think and judge for herself, as Rousseau calls her to do. Sophie compares her husband's desires, her society's desires, and even her own desires, to the standards of morality and justice her conscience holds. In comparing the world to the

[54]See ibid.; Wingrove, *Rousseau's Republican Romance*, 88–90; Senior, "*Les Solitaires* as a Test," 528–35; Wirz, "Note sur *Émile et Sophie*," 291–301.

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chimeras she constructs, she asks that her political community, her family, and herself grow and improve.

If readers adopt this style of judgment, they are also invited to compare the chimeras Rousseau creates to their own lives. Consider again, for example, Rousseau's treatment of the bean garden. Assessing the lesson as Sophie might, Robert's arrival fundamentally disrupts the logic the tutor presents to justify the ownership of the garden. Just as the beans are part of the garden, the garden is itself part of a larger territory. By introducing the figure of Robert in the paragraph following Rousseau's interpolation of Balboa, readers are invited to compare the latter not only to Émile, but to Robert, and to Émile and Robert as a unit. One is led to ask: Who worked the land before Robert? And who before them? These questions, in part, reflect Rousseau's arguments in *Discourse on Inequality* where he criticizes the notion of property ownership altogether. Rousseau infamously claims that the origin of inequality is the same as the origin of civil society: property.[55] The invention of property sets up a clash between "the right of the stronger and the right of the first occupant," whether it be landowners fighting other landowners, exploiting propertyless workers, or dispossessing the original occupants of colonized lands.[56] To end this "perpetual conflict," individuals agree to a set of laws, ostensibly "to protect the weak from oppression, restrain the ambitious, and secure everyone the possession of what belongs to him."[57] However, legalizing the ownership of land does not eliminate the problem. As made evident by colonial contexts, property law serves to exclude racialized and colonized peoples from holding property by narrowing the channels available for settling disputes. In Rousseau's words, "the law of property. . . changed a clever usurpation into an irrevocable right."[58] Thus, he suggests that property law—whether based on the right of the stronger or of the first occupant—is merely a convention.

Recognizing that property is a convention, one might go so far as to dismiss this convention as an absurd abstraction. Any territory is part of an ecosystem and history far larger than a single human can claim to know or control. Accepting this view might even incline one towards Émile's *désintéressement outré* or the "cosmopolitanism" described by Papastephanou, and Gregoriou, as one is led to ask: Why should anyone care so much about property? For Émile, if real items do not align perfectly with one's abstract ideals, then those real things must be discarded; this is why he abandons Sophie in Paris after her pregnancy makes it apparent she is not identical to the ideal wife his tutor once described. Even someone thinking like Sophie might be led to a similar conclusion. In a brief digression, Rousseau discusses a girl like Sophie, who loves the idea of Telemachus so

[55]Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, 141.
[56]Ibid., 157.
[57]Ibid., 157, 159.
[58]Ibid., 160.

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much she cannot bring herself to marry an imperfect but real man (405). This girl is "so acutely aware of the distinction between image and reality that she cannot fall in love."[59] The original Sophie, by contrast, loves both the image of the perfect whole and the imperfect parts that exist in reality. She can compare dissimilar things and arrive at a compromise, while Émile and the girl like her cannot.[60] By living in the middle ground between the ideal and real, Sophie leaves room for growth, as one can strive to be more like one's ideals and one's ideals can change and develop over time. This moderate position leads to the conclusion that, though property is an abstraction, it may have a role to play in ordering our relationships with others in civil society.

Thinking again of Naboth's vineyard, if one dismisses all property rights as abstractions, one might struggle to defend Naboth's possession of the garden, which is predicated on the fact that the garden is "the inheritance of his ancestors." Likewise, recall Papastephanou and Gregoriou's observation that, while certain accounts of property are used to further colonial and imperial projects, dismissing the importance of property altogether can equally undermine anti-colonial and anti-imperial aims. Without upholding some conventions, contests over property would be dominated by the will of the stronger. Sophie —or a reader thinking like her—is capable of evaluating whether the relationships created by abstractions like property or the family are just, because she compares an ideal to reality and the image of a whole to an actually existing part.

4. Conclusion

Because Émile struggles to compare ideals to reality, he cannot live in political society. He insists on seeing himself as an independent and self-sufficient natural man, without recognizing that this image is a fiction his tutor has created. He sees his family and property as extensions of himself—parts of the same self-contained whole. When events demand he recognize that neither he, his property, nor his family are the perfect whole he imagines them to be, Émile rejects reality in favor of preserving this image. As an alternative, Sophie's autonomy of thought appears to be a far more genuine independence. She does not dismiss the radical wholeness Émile idealizes, but accepts that it is an illusion. If Sophie is taken as Rousseau's model for moral judgment, Rousseau can be read as a thinker concerned with independence as it is found in the interdependent reality of life, rather than a theorist of freedom in the abstract.

[59]Schaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom, and Judgment*, 147

[60]See Allan Bloom, *Love and Friendship* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 121–22; Schaeffer, *Rousseau on Education, Freedom, and Judgment*, 148–49. Bloom argues that the girl like Sophie demonstrates that women are more likely to be swept away by their imaginations and illusions, but Schaeffer challenges this view by further elaborating on the similarities between Émile and the girl like Sophie.

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However, Sophie's story, like her husband's, ends in tragedy. Her independence is constrained by unjust, patriarchal structures. The education Rousseau prescribes for her does not change this reality. It is only when the reader's education is seen as distinct from the education of either Émile or Sophie that this kind of transformation becomes possible. By taking Sophie as their model, readers are invited to compare the characters and situations of *Émile* and "Émile et Sophie" to each other and to the real world, and arrive at their own conclusions. These conclusions will not necessarily be uniform, nor reflect Rousseau's opinions. However, if his intent is to teach his readers good judgment, it does not contradict this intention should his readers proceed to judge him. I have argued that thinking like Sophie invites readers to criticize the family structure Rousseau lays out for her by comparing her marriage to that of the Parisian couple's and to that of Ahab and Jezebel. Likewise, readers can critique imperial and colonial definitions of property by comparing the figures and situations Rousseau presents. Reflecting on the text and thinking beyond it hopefully teaches readers to better navigate the interdependent relationships in their own lives; teaching them not only to judge, but to judge well.

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