

This paper is a condensed version of two chapters of my dissertation on the moral education of citizens. My argument for the idea that, for Rousseau, being a “natural” man and being an excellent citizen are fully compatible and indeed necessary in the ideal political arrangement depends on the textual evidence that Rousseau intends his pupil to be both a “natural” man and an excellent citizen, and that his project is to present an ideal of human existence in *Emile*. However, I have condensed my discussion of the text into parts I and II below. In my dissertation, I argue for what one might call a “resolute” reading of Rousseau,¹ showing that we should understand him to be characterizing his own overall philosophical project when he says, in *Emile*, that the political and the moral are to be part of the same philosophical investigation.² The political and the moral are entangled, in Rousseau’s view, and it follows that the political life of the citizen and the moral life of the good man are similarly inseparable, in the ideal human existence. Part III of this paper investigates the conceptual viability of this ideal.

Rousseau’s Ideal: the Happy, “Natural” Citizen

--“...what good can an excellent being attain other than
to exist according to its nature?” (284)³
--“Our unhappiness consists ... in the disproportion
between our desires and our faculties.” (80)

I. Emile’s Moral Education.

In *Emile*, Rousseau writes, “Those who want to treat politics and morals separately will never understand anything of either of the two” (235). Understood as an opinion Rousseau endorses about the philosophical understanding of the excellent society and the excellent man (the subjects of political and moral philosophy), this remark indicates that Rousseau’s own investigations of and normative claims about the best political and moral frameworks should constitute a single, unified project – and furthermore that the structure of the excellent society and of the excellent human life should be justified together or in the same way. However, in *Emile*, Rousseau imagines educating a man from birth to adulthood and paints a picture of the good moral life for Emile that at first blush appears quite different from the ideal lifestyles he sketches in his most straightforwardly political works (*The Social*

¹ I do not intend to give a whole-hearted endorsement of Rousseau’s view, nor to be required to give a solution to all the problems his texts present (individually and considered as a whole).

² “Those who want to treat politics and morals separately will never understand anything of either of the two” (235).

³ *Emile* 284. Parenthetical citations given as page numbers refer to *Emile, or On Education*, trans. by Allan Bloom. New York: Basic Books, 1979, while those given as Book.chapter.paragraph (e.g. II.11.4), following Gourevitch’s notation, refer to *The Social Contract and other later political writings*, ed. and trans. by Victor Gourevitch, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. All other citations will be footnoted.

Contract and *On the Government of Poland*). Is he, as most commentators have insisted, presenting the reader with different ideal lifestyles in these several works, depending on whether the aim is to be a good citizen or a good man, and thus treating politics and morals separately?⁴ My primary aim is to investigate, through a textual and conceptual analysis, whether Rousseau heeds his own warning against treating politics and morals separately and presents a coherent portrait of a political and moral man in *Emile* and the other works – a single ideal, a single notion of the good life in the good society. Because I am interested in how well the *Emile* program of education can facilitate the ideal human existence, the other guiding question will be whether Emile, the happy, good, “natural” man, can simultaneously be a good citizen.

In *Emile*, Rousseau speaks of all the aspects of a human life – pragmatic, epistemological, social, moral, and civic – and Emile learns how to excel in all of these. However, despite having learned his duties, Emile cannot fulfill them within the civic context and flees to the countryside, and this has led some prominent Rousseau commentators to read *Emile* as a treatise solely on how one can become a good man and live a life that brings human nature to its fullest fruition, isolated from corrupt, “unnatural” society. Why Emile cannot be a citizen within the context of *Emile* is fairly straightforward, or so it seems to me, so my analysis of the text is going to focus on the instruction Emile receives which is designed to make him an excellent man *and* an excellent citizen (and then will conclude by pointing out why Emile cannot be a citizen within the historical context of *Emile*, though his education prepares him to be both an excellent man and an excellent citizen).

Emile’s “natural” education trains him to be self-reliant, to follow his natural inclinations (253), and to avoid acquiring a love for dominion over others (and thus never to develop an “inflamed”

⁴ Victor Gourevitch, in his introduction to *The Social Contract and other later political writings*, claims that the various modes of life Rousseau presents in his various works are “largely irreconcilable” (*op. cit.*, p. x). Gourevitch writes that Rousseau “did not think it possible to combine all human goods and avoid all ‘inconveniences’ in some one comprehensive way of life, and each one of the major works explores a distinctive way of viewing and resolving the human problem” (*ibid.*). There are many other interpretations of Rousseau (for instance, Judith Shklar’s *Men and Citizens*) that also take the ideals of man and citizen to be incompatible.

amour-propre). Rousseau says outright that he is “persuaded that all the natural inclinations are good and right in themselves” (370). The child is to be raised in a village, where “a governor will be much more the master of the objects he wants to present the child” (95). There will be no showy strolling in the Tuilleries for this pupil. The governor is to allow Emile to discover the world and the human condition instead of presenting him with precepts, as the traditional education approach would have him do (52). The child (and the governor) are to strive to put the child’s “power and will in perfect equality,” and Rousseau says that this equilibrium between man’s faculties and desires is how “nature, which does everything for the best, constituted him in the beginning” (80). Being strong and trained to be self-sufficient, Emile does not expect help from others. He is to learn to want to do only the things that he can achieve on his own, and he becomes practically, epistemologically, and morally self-reliant. The “active principle” that guides all men, of all ages, is wanting to “change the condition of things” (67), and this desire to effect noticeable change in the world is the same desire (*amour-propre*) that drives older human beings to seek recognition from others for what they do or say, to want to be chosen, preferred, noticed by others, to exert power over others and see their desires fulfilled by others. Building his strength and ability and thus ensuring a life of self-sufficiency in fulfilling one’s desires is one method Rousseau uses to prevent Emile from developing a love of dominion, which would set the child on the path towards a rampant *amour-propre* as an adult.⁵ Emile furthermore keeps at bay the desire for and understanding of dominion (and consequent ills, such as resentment of the will of another) by avoiding dependence on men and tolerating only a dependence on things, remaining “patient, steady, resigned, calm, even when he has not got what he wanted, for it is in the nature of man to endure patiently the necessity of things but not the ill will of others” (91).

The only kind of self-sufficiency Emile does not possess is the emotional kind. He needs the love and friendship of others, and thus he cannot be solitary but must be social (221). (In this, he is no different from other men, for in the “Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar,” Rousseau writes

⁵ 67, 68, 81, 92.

explicitly that, “as cannot be doubted, man is by his nature sociable, or at least made to become so” (290).) Rousseau speaks of “transforming” Emile’s fledgling *amour-propre* into a virtue by “extending” it to other beings, by which he means that Emile will not be obsessed with his self-interest and his *amour-propre* will be channeled into his “love of mankind” and his active attempts to ensure the happiness of those around him.⁶ The notion of self-interest is connected both to self-love (a function of self-preservation) and to *amour-propre*, since self-interest is tied to personal advantage, and that is tied to the desire for dominion (a function of *amour-propre*). But dominion is not Emile’s goal, as a result of his upbringing which sought to discourage the development of competitive, distinction-seeking relations with others. Rousseau’s “natural” man comes from within himself and follows his conscience in all matters. His sense of self-worth does not originate in the assessment of others. However, he has great concern for others: in addition to the previously mentioned motivating factors (the utility of hard work and the happiness secured for others by Emile’s virtuous pursuit of the common good), there is the further motivation for acting according to his conscience – namely, that God requires certain virtues of men, such as justice and beneficence.⁷

Emile is also to learn to be an excellent citizen. He works toward the goals of common happiness and good by being virtuous – for instance, by being just, “because of all the virtues justice is the one that contributes most to the common good of men,” and by being beneficent “for the profit of others” as well as for his own “inner enjoyment” (253), which has the further effect of stifling *amour-propre* and the other “petty passions.” Rousseau makes clear that being virtuous and humane is pleasant for Emile, and furthermore that Emile’s entire education, including his moral education in pity, justice, beneficence, and hard work (or utility), has been a “cultivation of his inclinations” (253).⁸ One might say that his justice therefore has both self- and other-regarding effects. This is fitting, since

⁶ This channeled, tempered *amour-propre* is what Nicholas Dent calls “benign” (as opposed to “inflamed”) *amour-propre* (among other places, in *Rousseau*, ch. 4; London: Routledge, 2005).

⁷ 282, 289, 314. In adding the religious element to Emile’s education, Rousseau says it is “simple to rise from the study of nature to the quest for its Author” (314). The recourse to God’s role in one’s moral life is a way of explaining nature as the guide of the “natural” man’s life, since God is the source of that nature.

⁸ For instance, the sentiments of pity and commiseration are pleasant (229), and justice brings happiness (282).

Rousseau's education plan is designed to be best both for the educated person and for those around him: "having done with them what I propose, what is best both for themselves and for others will have been done" (35). Rousseau's method of education is, besides yielding happiness for Emile, also designed to allow Emile to become an excellent citizen. Rousseau brings up citizenship as a significant concept throughout the text: having considered his physical and moral relations with other men, Emile must consider "his civil relations with his fellow citizens" (455). However, the characterization of the good citizen in *Emile* differs in its emphasis from the characterization given in *The Social Contract*. Having instilled in Emile an appreciation of the useful, the hard-working, the independent, and the natural, Rousseau defends his teaching with the following principle:

Outside of society isolated man, owing nothing to anyone, has a right to live as he pleases. But in society, where he necessarily lives at the expense of others [⁹], he owes them the price of his keep in work. ... To work is therefore an indispensable duty for social man. Rich or poor, powerful or weak, every idle citizen is a rascal (195).

Whereas in *The Social Contract*, the underscored element of citizenship is participation in law-making (what I think of as "civic service"), for the citizen in *Emile* the emphasis is on being hard-working and useful (alongside the other social virtues of justice and beneficence). Emile must choose a useful trade in order to be a citizen, as we see in Rousseau's praise of the priest who fulfills his civic duty of giving more citizens to his country by fathering children whom he raises to be useful artisans (198). And however unlike the other men Emile turns out to be, Rousseau says that "Emile is not a savage to be relegated to the desert. He is a savage made to inhabit cities, to be a "natural man living in the state of society" (205). He has to know how ... to live, if not like [city-dwellers], at least with them" (*ibid.*). As we see when Rousseau introduces Emile into society at age twenty, Emile is raised "among his fellows for a life in society" (333), and "the most necessary art for a man and a citizen ... is knowing

⁹ Rousseau does not explain what he means when he says that men in society "necessarily live at the expense of others." The preceding text (195) suggests that the rich man, in order to have his property, prevents others from enjoying it, so Rousseau does not subscribe to the Lockean thought that one can justify private ownership of natural resources by leaving "enough and as good" of whatever one takes out of uncultivated nature. Perhaps Rousseau is suggesting that any private appropriation of resources necessarily deprives another, and thus creates a debt.

how to live with his fellows” (328). Thus it is the duties of a citizen that constitute the “only science” Emile must learn, and thus there can be no puzzle about whether Emile is intended to become a citizen.

One of the key aspects of citizenship, which Rousseau identifies in *The Social Contract* as well as in *Emile*,¹⁰ is (1) civic service – participation in the legislative tasks of the state and in the determination of the general will. Representation is not a valid option for a citizen. Another aspect of citizenship is (2) striving towards the common good by acting in accordance with the social virtues of justice and beneficence and by being hard-working, useful, and self-reliant. Yet another is (3) undergoing a moral education in the social virtues and a love of order, both effected by a government through its laws.¹¹ (Despite having focussed on Emile’s “natural” education, at the end of *Emile* Rousseau insists that Emile has also received a moral education from the state (473). I will explore the different sources of Emile’s moral education in part III.1 of this paper.)

At the end of *Emile*, Emile cannot be an excellent citizen. Emile discovers during his travels that there is no place in Europe that fits the framework of politics and good government that he, with Jean-Jacques’s help, has constructed in reasoning (and that one can glean from Rousseau’s *The Social Contract*). He confirms what Rousseau writes in despair at the beginning of *Emile*: there is no love of the fatherland, no citizens who enact the general will, no laws that are respected (473). Emile therefore cannot hope to be a citizen as a citizen is defined in *The Social Contract* because there is no context for citizenship and therefore no possibility of serving as a citizen in legislating the general will – and thus no possibility of fulfilling the first criterion of citizenship. And given that the ideal in *Emile* is a man who practices both the civic and the social virtues, Emile fails to fulfill this ideal. He is the paragon of virtue for the villagers in his hamlet, but he is specifically instructed not to live in a city and the compulsory nature of participating in legislative affairs goes unmentioned in the final words of advice

¹⁰ The most important argument in favor of the necessary compatibility of *Emile* and *The Social Contract* is the fact that the section of *Emile* in which Jean-Jacques speaks of Emile’s instruction in politics is nothing less than a summary of *The Social Contract* (462 fn.).

¹¹ These three requirements of citizenship constitute civic virtue, but we must note right away that the second criterion, the social virtues of justice and beneficence, is not peculiar to citizens and can be exercised outside the civic context by the good man.

from Jean-Jacques. However, there is no moral failure on Emile's part in his failing to be a good citizen – the reasons for this failure are only the circumstances of Emile's political context that prevent him from complying with the full set of requirements of citizenship and thus leading the ideal human life.

The reason we should endorse and implement (albeit in a modified version, since the one-on-one tutorial system cannot be implemented on a large scale) Rousseau's program of education is that it solves a major social problem – the problem of envy, *amour-propre*, and an obsession with one's relative rank. Rousseau rightly focusses on moral education, and presents us with a set of educational principles or guidelines that would solve the social problems brought on by inflamed *amour-propre*. Daniel Brudney, in "Two Vices: *Amour-Propre* and Envy, Rousseau and Rawls,"¹² points out that the reading of Rousseau given by Joshua Cohen and Fred Neuhouser¹³ proposes that equal standing under the law for all citizens, along with "substantial economic equality," will provide a quieting of *amour-propre* which would otherwise become inflamed when citizens enviously seek higher ranking. The problem he notes is that, roughly, this equal standing under the law is not enough (both in the sense that formal equality under the law is not enough – the law must provide some substantive rights that affirm human value¹⁴ – and in the sense that one's identity qua citizen is not one's entire identity and thus one's standing as a citizen is not sufficient to affirm one's value in the eyes of others¹⁵). However, in *Emile* Rousseau points to a solution of the *amour-propre* problem that is intended to take place earlier in one's life – namely, during one's childhood. It is by means of avoiding comparative, competitive relations with others that one's *amour-propre* is quieted and distilled into a different kind of attitude toward others, as I mentioned earlier. Rather than seeking the preference of others and

¹² Unpublished. My great thanks to Daniel Brudney for providing me with a copy of this illuminating paper.

¹³ Joshua Cohen, "The Natural Goodness of Humanity." In *Reclaiming the History of Ethics: Essays for John Rawls*, ed. Andrews Reath, Barbara Herman, and Christine M. Korsgaard. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Frederick Neuhouser, "Freedom, Dependence, and the General Will." *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 102, No. 3 (Jul., 1993): 363-395.

¹⁴ 23-24, *op. cit.*

¹⁵ 24, 27, *op. cit.*

desiring to be ranked or viewed to be better than they, Emile is guided to seek excellence purely in his own eyes.¹⁶ However, Rousseau argues that cultivating Emile's natural inclinations with respect to the social virtues will end up crafting an individual who is both an excellent, virtuous, happy person and a contributing member of society. Emile just does not need others to prefer him to themselves, a terrible aspect of a rampant *amour-propre*. His desire "to be in the first position" amounts to a desire to prefer himself to others, to be in first position in his own eyes (although, he is to prefer himself and to value his own strengths and talents, but without vanity (245); he is to think that he is "right" to "prefer his way of being, of seeing, and of feeling to that of other men," but he is not to think he is better than they (*ibid.*)). He need not be in first position in the eyes of others – since he has cultivated a profound respect for his own opinion.

The absence of competition in the world of Emiles need not worry us: it will not take away Emile's drive for excellence (typically manifested as ambition). Ambition is the natural consequence of a desire to be preferred, chosen, admired by others; it is, when it leads to successes and intellectual progress, quite good, and its absence seems to lead to satisfaction with intellectual and practical mediocrity. However, it also produces, concomitantly, envy of others' successes and a supremely powerful obsession with oneself and one's interests, to the point of selfishness that does not seem compatible with excellent citizenship. Also, when it is unsuccessful and one does not achieve a state of admiration or honor that one desires, it produces misery for the individual. This is an issue of self-worth.¹⁷ However, Rousseau shows that Emile does strive for excellence – only not for the sake of impressing others or appearing to be better than they. Competition does push people to excel in, say, intellectual pursuits, but Rousseau shows that it is not necessary for excellence – a person can wish for

¹⁶ Brudney characterizes the Cohen/Neuhouser position as the contention that "Rousseau insists on the psychological thesis that if one has an adequate sense of one's worth, one will not be motivated to demand acknowledgment as a superior: there will be no prompting to inflamed *amour-propre*; acknowledgment as an equal will be psychologically sufficient" (*op. cit.*, 19). But seems to me that Emile would not seek any acknowledgment of his worth from others.

¹⁷ For a helpful discussion of the relation between self-respect, self-esteem, and self-worth, see Daniel Brudney's "Two Vices," *op. cit.*, p. 6, and Stephen Darwall's paper, "Two Kinds of Respect," *Ethics*, Vol. 88, No. 1. (Oct., 1977): 36-49.

excellence for his own sake, if excellence has been properly inculcated as an aim.¹⁸ Excellence or virtue is available to all and not aristocratic or elitist¹⁹; excellence need not inspire envy and being virtuous is not a zero-sum enterprise – despite the fact that the designation “excellence” implies a comparative scheme, the comparison is made only with respect to a standard of excellence in character – and beneficence could still be deemed a virtue even if it were a universal attribute.²⁰

II. Rousseau’s normative project: the ideal human existence.

At the beginning of *Emile*, Rousseau argues for a distinction between “domestic” (individual) and “public” (citizen) education, and suggests that the “natural” education he will propose for Emile will be the domestic kind. This choice of education is supported by Rousseau’s very pessimistic note regarding citizenship:

Public instruction no longer exists and can no longer exist, because where there is no longer a fatherland, there can no longer be citizens. These two words, *fatherland* and *citizen*, should be effaced from modern languages (40).

Rousseau does not merely deny the possibility of a citizenry in the current political state of Europe.

He sets up a straightforward opposition between man and citizen: he calls the goals of becoming a good man and becoming a good citizen “necessarily opposed objects,” and says that the man who can

¹⁸ I think here of phrases from my own childhood: “Why can’t you be more like so-and-so? You know, she practices three hours a day...” My parents need not have used other children in their urging me to do better in playing the piano, school work, etc. They could have merely urged me to try to do better than I had previously done – for the sake of excellence, but not comparative excellence. This seems akin to Rousseau’s example of Emile trying to outdo his own prior running records rather than competing with other boys.

¹⁹ This point is inspired by Leon Kass’s comment that dignity, conceived of as human excellence or flourishing, is “only accidentally invidious” (“Defending Human Dignity,” in *Human Dignity and Bioethics: Essays Commissioned by the President’s Council on Bioethics*. Washington, D.C.: President’s Council on Bioethics, 2008, p. 310).

²⁰ Taking away the competitive drive for being preferred by others also has the benefit of taking away a worry I have about Martha Nussbaum’s capabilities approach: that even if the basic minimum justice is fulfilled by granting every citizen’s right to develop certain central human capabilities, citizens will still differ too much from one another to enter the public square with equal dignity, or with the sense of having equal standing. (The notion of citizens’ equal standing in the public domain and entering the public square on equal conditions comes up often in MN’s writing on political entitlements; see her Foreword to the 2006 Term of the Supreme Court, “Constitutions and Capabilities: ‘Perception’ Against Lofty Formalism,” *Harvard Law Review* Vol. 121, No. 1, Nov. 2007; *Liberty of Conscience: in Defense of America’s Tradition of Religious Equality*, New York: Basic Books, 2008, pp. 9, 19.) Basically, the worry is that with competition guiding our lives, the capabilities approach will not provide enough to make us *feel* adequately worthy, even if we are granted the basic minimum rights and respect, because being respected as citizens and having secured certain minimum conditions of welfare and entitlements will not suffice for an adequate sense of self-worth if we are still engaging in our obsession with competitive comparisons.

simultaneously be both is a “marvel” that he, Rousseau, would like to meet (*ibid.*). He presents a rigid conceptual separation between “natural man,” who is “entirely for himself” (39), and citizen, a fractional part of the whole social body (40), and goes as far as to say that “good social institutions are those that best know how to denature man ... with the result that each individual believes himself no longer one but a part of the unity and no longer feels except within the whole” (*ibid.*).

Rousseau views all men as fluctuating between the two goals (good man and good citizen) and becoming neither; according to him, not only do we not know of any “natural” men, but also men who are citizens first no longer exist. He says, while citing ancient Roman examples of citizens, that these citizens have “little relation ... to the men we know” (40). The paradigmatic citizen he features is Pedareus, who, having lost the election for a council seat, comes home “delighted that there were three hundred men worthier than he to be found in Sparta” (*ibid.*). This image of a man more concerned with the good of the state than with his own pride and political success is clearly the opposite of “natural” man, who “is entirely for himself” (39). Rousseau’s insistence on a distinction between “domestic” and “public” education is grounded in this opposition between becoming man and becoming citizen. In choosing the “domestic” education for Emile, he maintains that Emile will be “raised uniquely for himself” (41), and that he will not suffer the kind of internal contradiction that plagues every man who “floats” between his inclinations and his duties, succeeding in being neither a good “natural” man nor a good citizen. He characterizes his project in *Emile* as coming to know natural man through raising one, and given the dichotomy between being a good man and a good citizen, it seems the reader should assume that Emile will not be a good citizen or be concerned with becoming one. However, this impression, given by some of the opening passages, is falsified by Rousseau’s focus on teaching Emile a love of citizenship and duty further along in the text.

As he sets out his project in the opening paragraphs of Book I, Rousseau speaks of what man needs “in the present state of things” (37). This phrase may be the key to determining how we ought to read Rousseau’s ensuing pessimistic and categorical remarks on citizenship (that I quoted above). The

reason I find these despairing remarks on citizenship puzzling is that Emile, under Jean-Jacques's tutelage, spends a great deal of time learning the civic and social virtues that a true citizen must exercise – and he learns these virtues *because* he must learn to be a good citizen (when introducing Emile to the notion of utility and hard work, Rousseau says “every idle citizen is a rascal,” 195). This citizenship aspect of the young man's education is interwoven through the program of “natural” education Emile undergoes, thus puzzling the reader who remembers Rousseau's initial categorical dismissal of the possibility of citizenship. However, one way to understand this dismissal and the remarks on the opposition between man and citizen is by understanding them to be remarks about the present state of things in his contemporary Europe.

Rousseau's program of “natural” education is intended as a remedy for the “present state of things” – that is, for the present state of man in society. This way of underscoring the phrase “in the present state of things” allows us to explain why Rousseau's pupil is educated to be a citizen despite Rousseau's initial remarks on the impossibility of citizenship. Furthermore, it allows us to view Rousseau's project as raising a man for whom inclinations and duties will not, as they are “in the present state of things,” be in opposition and will not cause internal contradiction. Rather, this man will be able to satisfy both his inclinations and his duties and be both a good man and a good citizen. As I will demonstrate in Part III of this paper, the fact that ensures a harmony of inclinations and duties is that the inclinations towards justice and beneficence, the natural inclinations that are cultivated in the “natural” education and the main social virtues Emile develops, are the very same virtues that best guide legislation. Thus, the important opposition for Rousseau in *Emile* is not between man and citizen, but between “the present state of things” and the ideal human existence (and the ideal political arrangement) that Rousseau's method of education is designed to make possible.

Having said, despairingly, that the “two words, *fatherland* and *citizen*, should be effaced from modern languages” since their referents no longer exist, Rousseau reminds us of the purpose of his project: to find out how to undo the contradiction within modern man, how to bring about the

possibility of a harmonious human existence. He returns to the distinction that he has claimed currently exists – being “for oneself” and being “for others,” or being a man and being a citizen – and says, hopefully, that “if perchance the double object we set for ourselves could be joined in a single one by removing the contradictions of man, a great obstacle to his happiness would be removed” (41). The only way to understand this language of “the double object” and “the contradictions of man” is to think that Emile learns the civic duties of *The Social Contract* precisely because the aim of his overall “natural” education is to bring into harmony being “for oneself” and being “for others” – or being a man and being a citizen. This harmony will be the main topic of the next section of this paper.

The pessimistic passages on the impossibility of citizenship are to be viewed as comments on the state of things up until now – and they must be understood as being undercut by the above passage on uniting the two objectives. The opposition Rousseau initially brings up only underscores the need for a unification of the two roles (man and citizen) people can play– to make his solution seem all the more appealing, he must make drastic characterizations of what the roles look like if they are not united. Given his aim of “natural” man, he cannot possibly be endorsing or making a positive mention of social institutions that “denature.” He is presenting an alternative to this denaturing. And given his clearly stated admiration for the citizens of the ancient world (along with his focus on Emile’s civic education and relations with others), he cannot possibly be choosing solely the “natural man” from within the apparent “natural man”/“denatured citizen” dichotomy. My reading of his passages on his own project is that the education program he proposes is intended to do away with such a dichotomy.

There are several indications in the opening pages of *Emile* that Rousseau plans to present the reader with an ideal education, intended to guarantee the ideal human existence – virtuous, happy, and free, man and citizen. When he defends his project against possible opponents in the Preface, he indicates his refusal to give recommendations that could be immediately implemented in the present circumstances. He prefers to propose an ideal to proposing a half-way good measure – prefers to present a good proposal that is fundamentally at odds with the current state of affairs rather than

proposing, in his words, “some good which can be allied with the existing evil” (34) – for “in this alliance the good is spoiled, and the evil is not cured” (*ibid.*).

Rousseau does not explicitly explore the possibility of a world with more than one Emile in it, but in theory, a society composed of beneficent Emiles seems possible (and seems compatible with the ideal political arrangement portrayed in *The Social Contract*). A world of Emiles (“natural” men who are also excellent citizens) would be the necessary context for any ideal human existence – such a world is what is missing from Emile’s 18th-century Europe and its absence necessitates his seclusion in a far-away village. Such a world could be the result of a wide-spread implementation of the education that Emile receives,²¹ and Rousseau at least mentions such an implementation in the “Preface” to *Emile*, where he addresses the goodness and practicability of his educational scheme. It is crucial to him to note at the very outset of his project that his method of education is “suitable for man,” “wherever men are born” (35). Particular applications of this educational “method” can be taken up differently in different countries, and Rousseau recommends that others engage in these applications. His aim is to demonstrate to the educators of pupils (including “fathers and mothers”) that the education he proposes is good and feasible for men everywhere. He writes about *Emile*, “I have shown in very extensive detail how what I have established could be put into practice” (51). The goodness of his education program derives from the fact that this mode of education echoes and supports the nature of man²², and the feasibility of the education program in various countries and contexts is the responsibility of the “fathers and mothers” (as well as other educators) that Rousseau addresses in his Preface, placing the feasibility constraints in their hands²³. He tells the fathers that their “holy duties” are to raise men and citizens: a father “owes to his species men; he owes to society sociable men; he owes to the state citizens” (49). Thus, given Rousseau’s concern with a wide practicability of his

²¹ As I have said earlier, the program cannot be implemented precisely as it is outlined in *Emile*, but elsewhere in my dissertation I work out the content of an education that is true to the spirit and principles of Rousseau’s recommendations without being tied to the specific practical details of his program.

²² To determine the goodness of a project, Rousseau says, “it suffices ... that what is good in [the project] be in the nature of the thing, here, for example, that the proposed education be suitable for man and well adapted to the human heart” (34).

²³ “Fathers and mothers, what can be done is what you want to do” (*ibid.*).

education methods, it seems reasonable to assume that he would not have thought impossible a society of Emiles – happy, virtuous, “natural” men who are also excellent citizens.

One more indication of Rousseau’s intention to present the reader with an ideal is that he speaks of the “perfect” education before introducing his program of education. More accurately, he speaks of the conjunction of the three kinds of education – a conjunction that is “necessary to their perfection” (38-39). Thus, if the aim is the perfection of all three kinds of education, then they must be sought in conjunction. The three kinds of education are as follows:

[Our] education comes to us from nature or from men or from things. The internal development of our faculties and our organs is the education of nature. The use that we are taught to make of this development is the education of men. And what we acquire from our own experience about the objects which affect us is the education of things. (38)

Rousseau argues that the three modes of education must be in harmony, and that the education “of nature” is the one that we cannot control. The idea here is that we will necessarily be subject to the education of nature because the development of our faculties and inclinations will be, at least in part, dictated from within. Thus, the education “of nature” must be the one to which the other two kinds of education must be tailored, if there is to be harmony. When “education becomes an art,” its goal must be the same as that of nature – though here “art” and “nature” are clearly opposed, and Rousseau says that it takes luck for an education to reach the same goal as nature would, since the educator has no control over our “internal development” (*ibid.*). Still, he indicates that an education of men (or of things) can approximate that of nature, “by dint of care” (*ibid.*). Emile receives an education “of things” in learning to have dependence only on things and coming to terms with natural (or physical) necessity (rather than learning to submit to the will or whims of others), and an education “of men” in the part of his moral education that comes from legal and social institutions.

Noting this talk of the perfect education, and having already emphasized the distinction between “the present state of things” and the ideal human existence that Rousseau envisions, it becomes easier to understand Rousseau’s initial claim that the notions of “man” and “citizen” are

firmly opposed to each other. Rousseau asks “what is to be done” when “our three educations” are “opposed” (39) – “When, instead of raising a man for himself, one wants to raise him for others? ... Forced to combat nature or the social institutions, one must choose between making a man or a citizen, for one cannot make both at the same time” (*ibid.*). The “education of men” is, in “the present state of things,” accomplished by social institutions. Only if the social institutions were in tune with nature could the education of men be in tune with the education of nature – and thus a person who is properly educated would live in harmony of inclinations and duties. Rousseau is here underscoring that the different educations are presently opposed, thus accounting for the constant contradiction between man’s various desires and duties. But, as I have argued, his project is to remove the contradictions of man.

Rousseau makes a variety of negative remarks about society throughout *Emile*, and the reader might get the impression that, for Rousseau, the social state is only second-best, since the purest human happiness exists in the state of nature. For instance, the tutor is instructed to let his pupil “know that man is naturally good ... [but also to] let him see that society depraves and perverts men” (237). However, given Rousseau’s optimistic discussion of the possibility of a good man who is also a good citizen, living and participating fully in society, it is clear that he does not take his task to be to dissolve society and isolate the individual in order to allow him the greatest human happiness²⁴. Man has left the state of nature, and we live on an Earth “covered with thine and mine” (193). Rousseau takes his task to be to reform society, not to dissolve it. He seems to take society as a given element of the modern human experience, and furthermore comments that human beings need one another and desire one another’s companionship – at least because of human psychology. However, given his disaffection with the modern state of society, his education project is intended to make a better society than that which currently “depraves and perverts men.”

²⁴ See 193, 195, 406.

Emile fails to achieve the ideal human existence as it is sketched in *Emile* – the life of social and civic virtues. My contention is that it is precisely in sketching the ideal human existence that Rousseau is true to his own warning – that the political and the moral must be understood (and lived) in conjunction, and that the ideal includes both. The fact that, at the end of the book, Emile is deemed a good man without being a good citizen should not be taken to mean that Rousseau has painted a portrait of a morally virtuous person whose happy life is incompatible with citizenship. Rousseau suggests that, in fact, Emile could not be the morally virtuous person that he becomes were it not for the fact that he has, as all citizens do, received part of his moral education from the state. Otherwise put, the fact that being a good man and being a good citizen are separable does not mean that these two modes or elements of a human life are incompatible in a single life, that they cannot coexist in an ideal human existence, or that an ideal human existence could be a life of virtue without citizenship. In Emile’s case, his “citizen” obligations have been fulfilled to the extent that he exercises the right “citizen” virtues (utility, a love of mankind, justice, beneficence, and the concern for the common good) and has been educated in part by the state’s laws and order. However, he cannot fulfill a crucial requirement of citizenship – the civic service emphasized in *The Social Contract* (and mentioned in *Emile*). Thus, he fails to achieve the ideal of human excellence. But the ideal that Rousseau presents in *Emile* is not made useless by the circumstances that make it impracticable because they make it impossible for Emile to fulfill his civic duties. Nor, crucially, do Rousseau (in the guise of the tutor) or Emile reject the ideal.²⁵ The ideal that Rousseau presents in *Emile* is what the reader should take away from the book – and the fact that Emile cannot achieve this ideal should only make us hasten to alter our own political circumstances (if they remind us of those of Emile’s contemporary Europe) so that an Emile would be able to achieve the ideal in our context.

²⁵ Thanks to Greg Freeman for a spirited conversation about *Emile* that sparked this thought about the significance of the ideal presented in *Emile*.

III. Rousseau's Emile as a Happy Citizen

So, Emile cannot be a citizen within the corrupt society of 18th-century Europe. The next question is whether Emile could, in a different political and social milieu, serve as a full-fledged, city-dwelling citizen while remaining as independent, happy, and “natural” as he has been raised to be. It is my contention that the aim of Rousseau’s program of “natural” education is to create a world in which one does not have to seek solitude or a remote location (and thus abdicate one’s citizenship) in order to live the good life as man and citizen. It is precisely by following one’s natural inclinations, as Emile learns to, that one becomes the ideal citizen for whom being “for oneself” and being “for others” are in harmony, and one need not be “denatured” but instead a “natural” man, living in society (205).

In *Emile*, we have seen how the ideal human existence includes both the social and the civic virtues, and Rousseau takes himself to have shown that Emile’s education prepares him to live a life guided by the social as well as the civic virtues. The social virtues are justice and beneficence, and Rousseau shows two sources of those – the internal source (one’s natural inclinations) and an external source (the state, with its role in one’s moral education) – thus showing two of the different kinds of education he outlines at the beginning of the book, the education “from nature” and the education “from men” (or by means of social institutions). The state also plays a significant role in the training of one’s civic virtue – namely, in inculcating in the citizen a love of order and of the laws. Thus, Rousseau presents more than one source of the virtues, but does not explain the compatibility of the “natural” education that stems from within Emile himself (with the watchful help of the tutor, of course) and the several aspects of his education that are external in origin (the education by men). Furthermore, there is a tension between being a “natural” man and being a citizen (being “for oneself” and being “for others”) that I have mentioned earlier – the two modes of life, as a good man and as a good citizen, seem to require different ways of being, different ways of conceiving of one’s life, and different ways of being free. Rousseau does not justify his move from initially stating an opposition between being “for oneself” and being “for others” (the distinction between being a “natural” man and

being an excellent citizen) to eventually training Emile to be both. I have suggested (in part II of this paper) that this move can be justified by understanding *Emile* to present Rousseau's educational program as an ideal meant to reconcile being "for oneself" and being "for others," and I will now further defend this suggestion.

To begin to understand the possibility of a harmony of all these elements of the education that prepares one for the excellent life, and thus a harmony within Emile, I want first to explore the question of the origins of the virtues that Emile exercises and how these virtues serve Emile in private and public contexts (in III.1 below); then, I will turn to the question of Emile's freedom under civic laws (III.2). Earlier, I focussed on the elements of Emile's education that are designed to ensure an ideal human existence, which includes citizenship. We have seen that some of the characteristics of a good man (justice and beneficence, usefulness, a concern for the common good) are also those of a good citizen. Now we have to make sure that the two sets of characteristics are fully compatible, that being an excellent citizen does not require the good "natural" man to give up any of his goodness or "naturalness" – and this will require demonstrating that fulfilling the characteristics of the citizen in *The Social Contract* will not require Emile to compromise his freedom and happiness.

III.1 The "natural" virtues.

We have seen the three aspects of Emile's "natural" education (namely, the cultivation of his natural talents and inclinations, the civic indoctrination, and the religious reinforcement of the social virtues), but the mechanics of moral education deserve more attention. Are the social virtues of justice and beneficence nothing more than our natural inclinations, cultivated? Are all three aspects of Emile's moral education "natural"? The answers to these questions and, most importantly, the resolution of the dichotomy between being "for oneself" and being "for others" – or being a good man and being a good citizen – lie within Rousseau's sketch of Emile's moral education.

In *Emile*, we see no fewer than four of Rousseau's answers to the question of how one becomes virtuous –

- (1) by considering historical examples of men's virtues and vices and discovering how they measure up to one's natural inclinations of justice and beneficence
- (2) by doing virtuous acts, which are natural and useful, and which implement one's natural inclinations toward the virtues
- (3) by heeding the dictates of one's conscience, which is "an innate principle of justice and virtue" (289), supported by one's belief in what God requires of the virtuous man
- (4) by being attentive to morally educative laws legislated by the sovereign, and thus learning the virtues (as well as learning to love the laws and order).

Here are three more of Rousseau's suggestions of how one acquires virtue:

- (5) on one hand, virtue (in the First Discourse) and "morals, customs, and above all opinion" are "graven ... in the hearts of the Citizens" (*The Social Contract*, II.12.5) – and on this point these two texts echo *Emile* and the notion of the natural inclinations
- (6) but, on the other hand, virtue and morals can be taught to the citizens by the genius advisers of the state, or "learned men of the first rank"²⁶ of the First Discourse.
- (7) in *The Social Contract*, a set of "purely civil" religious dictates is necessary to make every citizen love his legislative duties, the laws, and justice – a love that constitutes the "sentiments of sociability" required of any citizen (IV.8.31-32).

Are these seven modes of acquiring virtue compatible? We should notice that only (4) (partially) and (7) deal with civic virtue, while (1)-(6) are primarily concerned with social virtues (including (3), which also deals with religion's role in the moral education, and (4), which makes clear the civic context of learning the virtues). (1), (2), and (3) are all part of learning the social virtues according to the "natural" education program. It is important that (4) is not an aspect of *Emile*'s "natural" education, since Rousseau indicates that *Emile* learns both social and civic components of the good life in part through the laws, and thus (4) is an aspect of his "education by men" or "by institutions" (which, as I sketched out in Part II, is one of the three kinds of education that Rousseau says all men should undergo in conjunction in order to ensure their individual perfection). The laws teach him a

²⁶ "Discourse on the Sciences and Arts" (II.59), in *The Discourses and other early political writings*, ed. and trans. by Victor Gourevitch. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997; p. 27.

work ethic and a love of order, and while working in a useful trade is something Emile is naturally disposed towards, the love of the laws and of order is an external element imposed on Emile, not one of his developed natural inclinations.

The other interesting fact about (4) is that it seems, at first blush, to be a redundant part of Emile's moral education, since its focus is learning the social virtues, just as is that of (1), (2), and (3). Perhaps (6), learning virtue from the genius advisers in the First Discourse, is the kind of teaching of virtue that Rousseau has in mind in *Emile* when he speaks of (4), a moral education through the laws: the moral teaching of these genius state advisers and lawgivers comes in the form of legislation, which the citizens do not craft but do vote for (and which is thus considered self-legislation). Given that Rousseau has indicated that the laws of Emile's country are good (473) but the people are not proper citizens, he may be suggesting that the only way that (4) and (6) can work to instill virtue in citizens is if the citizens are already primed for this "civic" mode of moral education by having inculcated their natural inclinations for virtue from an early age (in modes (1), (2), and (3)). After all, the other residents of Emile's country have been raised in the civic context of the same laws, but those laws have only had an educative effect on Emile, who is also the only one who has undergone the "natural" education. We are reminded here of Rousseau's conception of the "perfect" education – it combines the education "from nature" with the education "from men" (or from institutions), and only if these two modes are in sync (which is to say that the latter is in sync with the former) can the "natural" man also be an excellent citizen.

A further thought with respect to the question of redundancy in teaching Emile the social virtues both by means of the "natural" education ((1), (2), and (3) above) and by means of the laws ((4) and (6) above): one explanation is that (4) and (6) occur in the context where positive laws exist and command justice and order, while (1), (2), and (3) can exist both under positive law and in a state of nature, where nothing but natural law obligates one to be just and beneficent. One of the virtues taught via the laws is the love of order and the pursuit of justice according to the laws – a virtue that cannot

exist in the natural state, where there are no positive laws to be respected. Furthermore, the virtue of beneficence is not something typically championed by positive law as such (though this sentiment can and perhaps should implicitly inform positive laws), and thus it must be addressed in one's "natural" education rather than in the law-guided education. But perhaps the most convincing reason for providing these two sources of moral education – nature and the state – is that it is crucial that Emile learn a love of a particular country's order through its particular laws, something that cannot be taught in a relatively isolated social context by merely focussing, as the "natural" education does, on the love of mankind, justice, and beneficence. Once again, we must remember that Rousseau does not take up the task of raising hermits or dissolving society; the civic state is a given that his program of education must accommodate, and in the voice of the Savoyard Vicar, Rousseau says that "it is an evil thing to disobey the laws" and that "natural" man must "protect public order, ... respect the laws, ... not lead the citizens to disobedience" (310).²⁷

Returning to the question of the various sources of virtue, (2), (3), and (5) seem compatible in that all three indicate that virtue is somehow inherent and natural (especially since (3) suggests that the cause of our "natural" inclinations towards justice and beneficence is the God who created us). But (1), (4), (6), and (7) all suggest that virtue can (and must) be taught. Are (1), (4), (6), and (7) compatible with (2), (3), and (5)? How can one fit together Rousseau's metaphor for inherent virtue (virtue being "graven" in men's hearts) and his insistence on having Emile learn virtue and habituating him to do virtuous acts? One way to harmonize these two sets of stories Rousseau tells about how virtue arises and is practiced is by resorting to another metaphor: virtue may be written in Emile's heart, but he has to learn to *read* what is written there before he can be virtuous. Rousseau says that we are born capable of learning, but knowing nothing (61), and perhaps this general thought about potential knowledge applies to virtue too. In the "Profession of Faith," Rousseau insists (in the voice

²⁷ Similarly, in *The Social Contract*, Rousseau writes that "the social order is a sacred right, which provides the basis for all the others ... [and is] founded on conventions" (I.1.2).

of the Savoyard Vicar) that it is not enough that our innate conscience exists and sounds the call to virtuous action – “one must know how to recognize [the dictates of conscience] and to follow [conscience]” (290-1). Thus, one cannot rely on the child to follow conscience, that “divine instinct, immortal and celestial voice, certain guide” (290) that directs us towards virtue. One must teach the child to listen to or “read” one’s conscience. Thus, despite there seeming to be several sources of the virtues, the virtuous life originates within one’s natural inclinations. The external sources act merely to facilitate the proper attention to one’s inherent virtues, and the good life is the life “according to one’s nature,” as the Vicar insists (284).

Rousseau provides further evidence for thinking that he views the virtues as both natural and inculcated, though he curtails his discussion by saying that he is not in the business of “producing treatises on metaphysics and morals” (235). He sketches his view thus: “the first notions of good and bad are born of the sentiments of love and hate. ... justice and goodness ... are true affections of the soul enlightened by reason, are hence only an ordered development of our primitive affections” (*ibid.*). Thus our primitive, natural affections of love and hate become affections of the soul and are called “justice” and “goodness” once we enter the realm of reason.

This quick sketch of Rousseau’s view of virtue as both natural and inculcated (or potential and developed) suggests that the seven modes of the “natural” education can be harmonized, and that the virtuous life is ultimately “natural” in that it has its origin in our natural inclinations. The fact that Emile accepts both internal and external sources of moral education depends on the fact that it is his natural inclinations towards justice, beneficence, and the love of mankind that fuel his virtuous actions both in the private and public (civic) contexts. In (4) we see precisely the compatibility of one’s natural inclinations and the demands of one’s civic duty: a love of civic order, which I take to mean a state in which the citizens abide by the laws, is a civic manifestation of the natural benevolence toward mankind and attempting to further the common good. Furthermore, it is crucial to note that the moral virtues and the love of the laws and of civic order are both elements of the moral education that Emile

receives from the state, according to Rousseau, thus underscoring that Rousseau does not think of the moral and the civic virtues as separate or incompatible.

Emile's moral education is precisely what is intended to resolve the various versions of the fundamental contradiction Rousseau sees within man – the conflict between being a “natural” man and being an excellent citizen, between one's inclinations and one's duties, between being “for oneself” and being “for others,” between self-interest and the common good. Human nature, properly cultivated, is the foundation of the excellent human life. In part I of this paper, I mentioned that justice and beneficence are man's natural inclinations and bring pleasure and happiness. Furthermore, we saw that Emile's naturally arising *amour-propre* is channeled into a concern for mankind, which has the benefit of leaving Emile himself happier and freer, since he does not seek dominion over others or their admiration and honors. In the “Profession of Faith,” the Savoyard Vicar urges that being just, beneficent, and self-reliant brings happiness, and that it is possible to overcome one's temptations and vices and to live the virtuous life.²⁸ We have also seen that the citizen must be hard-working and work in a trade that is useful to others – and that practical self-reliance is equally pleasurable for the worker himself and beneficial for others. The “natural” education has left Emile without a clear separation of what is his good and what is the community's good. Emile can be the quintessential Roman citizen (whom Rousseau mentions at the beginning of *Emile* (40)), Pedarethus, who loses his election seat but rejoices for the state's success because he is more concerned with the good of the state than with his

²⁸ The question of virtue as an over-coming is a vexing question that I discuss elsewhere. Here, I will merely note that throughout most of *Emile*, Rousseau insists that Emile is naturally good and that all it takes for him to lead a virtuous life is to follow his natural inclinations, properly cultivated. It seems rather easy for Emile to be virtuous. However, there are several places in the text where Rousseau speaks of “overcoming” one's passions and vices in order to be virtuous, and while such overcoming would not necessarily be incompatible with the notion that the virtues are natural (after all, both the vices and the virtues could be natural), it makes the virtuous life seem more difficult than Rousseau has made it seem to be for his pupil. Emile's *amour-propre* has never been allowed to develop in a rampant way, and so Rousseau's account of Emile's burgeoning concern for the common good does not strike me as an instance of “overcoming” or “conquering” himself (473). The quiet guidance of the tutor has made it seem unnecessary for Emile to have to conquer his passions – though Rousseau indicates that because Emile is virtuous, he must have had to do so. The *Emile* passages on overcoming echo Rousseau's letter to M. de Franquières, where he writes even more explicitly that “There is no virtue without struggle ... Virtue consists not only in being just, but in being so by triumphing over one's passions, by ruling over one's own heart” (“Letter to M. de Franquières,” §20-21, in *The Social Contract and other later political writings*, ed. and trans. by Victor Gourevitch. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 281).

own pride and political success. Emile has been taught to see his good and the community's good as the same because both are achieved through justice and beneficence, through a life "according to nature." For Emile, there is no conflict between the second and third criteria of citizenship, as I outlined them in part I of this paper – i.e. (2) being just, beneficent, hard-working, and useful to others, and (3) undergoing the moral education of the state that teaches him the love of order and of the laws. We must now consider whether he could fulfill the first criterion of citizenship – i.e. (1) serving his civic duty by legislating the general will. In the next section (III.2), I will further discuss the conceptual compatibility between Emile's self-reliance and other "natural" virtues and living as a citizen under the laws in a *Social-Contract* world.

III.2 Freedom.

In describing Emile's "natural" education, Rousseau characterizes the natural education as the prerequisite of human happiness, for in cultivating one's natural inclinations, one ensures for oneself a life according to nature, a life enjoyed by our ancestors who lived in the happiest of epochs. However, another name of this happiness is "freedom." From the earliest recommendations for Emile, when he is a very young child, Rousseau insists that "true freedom" means the ability to do what one wants by nature (as opposed to whims or desires that correspond to unnatural needs) without the aid of others and wanting only what one can attain on one's own (68) – "The truly free man wants only what he can do and does what he pleases" (84). We have seen that Emile's natural education teaches him the skills and the mindset prerequisite for self-reliance and self-sufficiency, for an equilibrium between desires and abilities, and thus for freedom. Furthermore, in his discussion of *amour-propre* and dominion over others, from infancy on, Rousseau makes clear that the earliest of the child's interactions with others must prepare him for a life of freedom from dependence on others, whether for help or for affirmation. But Emile is also to fulfill the duties of a citizen, and the citizen, at least as he is sketched in *The Social Contract*, is not independent because he is inextricably connected to them by being part of the

sovereign and legislating laws together with them. How are these two characteristics that Emile is to have – independence and dependence – to be brought into harmony? I will now cite two passages in which Rousseau outlines the dilemma and the solution to the problem of freedom in the civic state.

Dilemma: “Whoever does what he wants is happy if he is self-sufficient; this is the case of the man living in the state of nature... an imperfect freedom [is] enjoyed by men in the civil state. No longer able to do without others, each of us becomes in this respect weak and miserable again” (85).

Solution: “These considerations are important and serve to resolve all the contradictions of the social system. There are two sorts of dependence: dependence on things, which is from nature; dependence on men, which is from society. Dependence on things ... is in no way detrimental to freedom and engenders no vices... If there is any means of remedying [the] ill [of dependence on men] in society, it is to substitute law for man and to arm the general wills with a real strength superior to the action of every particular will. If the laws of nations could, like those of nature, have an inflexibility that no human force could ever conquer, dependence on men would then become dependence on things again; in the republic all of the advantages of the natural state would be united with those of the civil state, and freedom which keeps man exempt from vices would be joined to morality which raises him to virtue.” (*ibid.*)

It is important that Rousseau mentions “imperfect freedom” in the “dilemma” passage where he outlines the current state of affairs in the civil state – the freedom of citizens who depend morally upon one another is imperfect (at best). They are like children, he says, in that their desires surpass their abilities and they cannot be self-sufficient. However, there is a way to be retain moral independence even in the civic state, where one cannot be perfectly self-sufficient in terms of providing for one’s needs and self-preservation. In the “solution” passage, we see that there is a way to achieve a dependence only on things as opposed to, as currently, a dependence on men (i.e. on the wills, opinions, whims and preferences of others). While Jean-Jacques initially teaches Emile a “dependence on things” as a dependence only on nature and the various kinds of necessity it presents, such as the forces of nature and scarcity, Rousseau characterizes the “dependence on things” in the republic as a dependence only on the general will. The republic and its social and political arrangements of wills present no obstacle to natural freedom, and the republic combines the best of the natural state with the best of the civil state. The crucial point is that Emile is educated precisely so as to have no moral dependence on men and thus to be an excellent citizen of the republic that Rousseau sketches in what I

have called his “solution” to the freedom problem of the civil state. This republic is precisely the political ideal that a world of Emile-type citizens would constitute. Emile’s governor has taken great care to protect Emile from feeling subject to the will of others, and rather to make him feel subject only to the inanimate things and forces of the world around him. A dependence only on things is precisely what Emile has been taught from a young age. And the kind of mutual inter-dependence that Rousseau says holds among citizens in *The Social Contract* – i.e. a dependence only on the general will and not on the particular wills of individuals – is the same kind of dependence that Rousseau sketches in his “solution” passage above.

An “inflexibility” of the laws is what allows for the republic that Rousseau recommends, and I take his recommendation to mean that the laws made by the sovereign will be equitably applied to all, as the laws of nature (e.g. the laws of physics) are equally applicable to all. Each citizen, having had a hand in crafting the laws, conceives of his dependence on the general will as the dependence on things – the laws are stable, and they are applied as predictably as the laws of physics, without the possibility of being bent at the whim of a magistrate (or applied differently to individuals of different social, economic, or political standing). Furthermore, if ever one’s opinion is at odds with the general will in voting for particular laws, one does not conceive of this conflict as a struggle of individual wills in which one loses (and therefore loses face). Rather, he conceives of the general will (typically channeled by the assembly vote²⁹) as the manifestation of the way things must be for the sake of the common good.

It seems important to note that this inflexibility of the general will and of the laws does not amount to a de-humanizing rigidity.³⁰ The laws passed by the sovereign will be sensitive to the needs of the republic and to the common good, as perceived by the general will. Rousseau’s “solution” does away with the detrimental sort of human interactions, in that it forbids the kind of dependence on

²⁹ Citation.

³⁰ Thanks to Jennifer Pitts for posing this important question.

particular wills of individuals that might exist in unequal relations of power – e.g. of a rich citizen over a poorer one, of a minister over his constituents. However, the positive aspects of human interactions remain and are encouraged by the “natural” education and the political structure – Emile the citizen pursues his natural inclinations of justice and beneficence and makes positive contributions to his fellow men without being negatively affected (i.e. made dependent) by these interactions. The civil state preserves the citizen’s concern for self-preservation, so crucial to the natural freedom in the state of nature, but adds the concern for the common good (in the form of legislating the general will).

Rousseau’s discussion of the general will in the “solution” paragraph I quoted above brings up the institutions of *The Social Contract* early on in *Emile* and thus raises the issue of the state’s involvement in the formation of the citizens. Earlier, in III.1, I discussed the compatibility of one’s natural inclinations and the demands of one’s civic duty, and concluded that there is no conflict between the different sources of Emile’s moral education (nature and the state). However, Rousseau says rather little in *Emile* about the way the laws and civic order of his country have affected his moral conduct. He merely says that because Emile has “lived tranquilly under a government and the simulacra of laws” (473), he feels and performs his duty to his country and to the common interest (despite the fact that he may be the only one doing so). I would like to give a more thorough characterization of the didactic impact of government on individuals, an aspect of the political ideal which Rousseau outlines more extensively in *The Social Contract* and elsewhere in his political writings.

The Social Contract is concerned with discovering the legitimacy of government in a civil state. The convention of the social contract occurs out of necessity, because the state of nature “can no longer subsist” and man must secure self-preservation by other, “conventional” means (I.6.1). While Rousseau places many restrictions on government to prevent illegitimate uses of power in legislation and administration, he demonstrates great faith in the capacity of the wisest to rule (and in the probability of their being elected, III.6.8) and says that an elective aristocracy is the best possible

government structure: “the best and most natural order is to have the wisest govern the multitude” (III.5.7).³¹ However, we see not only the role the government plays in deciding what is best for a nation, but also the role it plays in shaping people. In the “Political Economy” essay and in *The Social Contract*, we get a picture of how governments change individuals and peoples through laws: “Certain it is that in the long run peoples are what government makes them be. Warriors, citizens, men, when it wants...”³² In *The Social Contract*, Rousseau claims to be speaking of “men as they are” (introductory §1), though he goes on to speak of “a most remarkable change in man” (I.8.1) that takes place upon the founding of the social order through the social contract, and furthermore says that the Lawgiver must “feel capable of, so to speak, changing human nature” (II.7.3) when he institutes a people and creates laws for them.³³ This change in human nature consists in surrendering one’s natural freedom and exchanging it for conventional freedom (I.6.5, I.8.2), i.e. a freedom that stems from the convention of the social contract, in which one alienates part of oneself to the whole one joins and is free because of one’s adherence to the laws one has enacted.

Rousseau suggests that it is part of legislation, written by the Lawgiver, to direct a people’s lifestyles, commerce, activity, and livelihood, in accordance with what the Lawgiver views as the particular strengths of a people and their country’s natural terrain (II.11.4). But the government is portrayed as having a large educative role in the moral lives of individuals rather than merely directing the most effective course of industry. Rousseau writes that

One always loves what is fine or what one finds to be so, but it is in this judgment that one is mistaken; hence it is this judgment that has to be regulated ... A people’s opinions arise from its constitution; although law does not regulate morals, legislation does give

³¹ In his remarks about Sophie and the woman’s role in *Emile*, Rousseau hints at the somewhat duplicitous nature of a government that does what it deems best: “[a woman] ought to reign in the home as a minister does in a state – by getting herself commanded to do what she wants to do” (408).

³² §24, “Discourse on Political Economy,” in *The Social Contract and other later political writings*, ed. and trans. by Victor Gourevitch. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

³³ Rousseau cannot be understood to be suggesting here that there is a single, uniform human nature, given his emphasis on the need for the governor to discern and observe the inherent character and form of the mind of the particular pupil (192, 199, 226). He certainly does say that people have certain natural inclinations and dispositions, but one should not assume they are the same for all people. He speaks of different “ineffaceable characters,” “printed by nature” (194), and so the alterations in human nature that the Lawgiver can effect must be different from changes in character, but Rousseau does not shed light on this distinction between human nature and human character.

rise to them (IV.7.3-4).

Through the laws it enacts (with the approval of the citizens), government is able to provide a moral education, to enable its people to learn to act virtuously and to judge what is good. Rousseau also says that “We work in collaboration with nature, and while it forms the physical man, we try to form the moral man” (314). The “we” in this sentence lacks a clear referent, but Rousseau may be referring not only to the governors like Jean-Jacques but also to anyone trying to inculcate moral values, e.g. the government.

How does Emile fit into this picture of how the government forms men?³⁴ He has received a moral education that only partially stems from the government, though Rousseau mentions no conflict between the moral inclinations that arise within Emile himself and the moral lessons and love of order he learns from his country’s laws. The impression Rousseau (sometimes, though not consistently) gives in *Emile* is that the government and the laws of Emile’s country are good, though the people are corrupt and ignore their civic duties. Thus, Emile is able to derive an aspect of his moral education from the laws. But if we are meant to think that Emile has received the same moral education as the citizens of *The Social Contract* – and has been similarly “denatured” by the Lawgiver – it is unclear how we are to conceive of Emile’s freedom. There seems to be a tension between Emile’s moral self-reliance and autonomy and his being a potential citizen of *The Social Contract*, since the conjunction presents a portrait of a man who lives by the tenets of his conscience while also having been “denatured” and given his freedom by the Lawgiver.

However, the only kind of “denaturing” that the Lawgiver must impose on individuals is the kind that brings them out of the state of nature and into the social state, in which one is concerned with the common good (II.7.3), and in which one surrenders the ability (and the necessity) of having to defend oneself and also the “unlimited right to everything that tempts [one] and that [one] can reach” (I.8.2). It is thus that man gains his moral freedom in the moment of entering the social contract – he is

³⁴ *Equivocating/slipping in terminology here: government, state, Lawgiver, genius advisers.*

no longer governed by his every whim and urge, but instead follows the laws he gives himself and others for the sake of the good political life (*ibid.*). Emile, in having been raised to be a natural man living in society (406), needs no such “denaturing.” We have seen in *Emile* that Rousseau’s “natural” pupil is not raised in the “natural freedom” of the state of nature. Rousseau says, on multiple occasions,³⁵ that he is raising a natural man who will live in society, who will possess the kind of freedom that is possible when one is self-reliant and dependent on no particular others, but who is not a savage living a perfectly solitary and self-sustaining life in the state of nature. In having his natural inclinations cultivated (and cemented as his moral code by his religious education), Emile possesses a great concern for the common good. And in *The Social Contract*, Rousseau clearly connects the common good and the general will: “the general will alone can direct the forces of the State according to the end of its institution, which is the common good ...” (II.1.1).

The general will is just the specifically civic manifestation of seeking the common good.³⁶ Rousseau characterizes the general will as something akin to the common denominator of the particular wills of the citizens (II.1.1, II.3.2), manifested at the level of general laws. If in legislating, citizens are guided by their conscience, as Emile is, and thus by their natural inclinations toward justice and beneficence, then there should be no conflict between conscience and civic order. Justice and beneficence are excellent guiding values for legislation. Voting for laws with an aim towards the general will is voting for what one thinks is in the common interest and for the common good, for what all the particular interests have in common. The central thought here is that if justice and beneficence are the virtues that aim at and ensure the common good, and legislating the general will is the civic mode of ensuring the common good, then the laws legislated by the citizens will be nothing other than a formal guarantee of justice and beneficence, and the citizens who have been raised “according to

³⁵ 205, 333, 406. Rousseau also echoes a thought from *The Social Contract* in *Emile*: that “one is more free under the social pact than in the state of nature” (461). He sees the man who is governed by the laws he helps to legislate as morally free, for he is free from an instinctual following of his desires. Emile, just as the citizens of *The Social Contract*, follows the moral law and is guided by his concern for the common good (or, in the *Social Contract*-world, the general will).

³⁶ Thanks to Rafeeq Hasan for a very helpful conversation on this topic.

nature” will see nothing but their natural virtues embodied in the laws they help implement.

Furthermore, the citizens lose none of their self-reliance and freedom in legislating the general will, since being guided by the general will is a dependence on the sovereign and not on particular others.

Human nature, it turns out, is not merely the foundation of the excellent human life for an individual – properly cultivated, human nature is also the foundation of the excellent political society. The political structure in which citizens legislate the general will is precisely the sort of institution that Rousseau discusses at the beginning of *Emile*, when he speaks of the need to have a harmony between the “education of nature” and the “education of men” (as I discussed in part II). Emile would experience no dissonance between his civic duties and his natural inclinations in this republic, since its social institutions are in tune with nature. If justice and beneficence are the guiding principles for legislation, then the legal and political arrangements will be in accord with nature – but Rousseau’s discussion of how different kinds of labor ought to be rewarded, if one aims for an accord with nature,³⁷ suggests that the “natural” men like Emile would construct “natural” social institutions as well as legal and political ones.

Here, finally, we can fully see the harmony of being a “natural” man and an excellent citizen. Harmony of being “for oneself” and being “for others” is possible only where the social institutions, including the legislature, are in harmony with one’s nature, one’s “original dispositions” (39) toward the virtues, self-sufficiency, etc. Accordingly, Emile would not be required to make a choice between his role as a “natural” man and an excellent citizen – he can be as excellent a citizen as Pedareus, but without the requirement that he be a “citizen first,” for in following his natural inclinations, he would experience no distinction between being a good man and being an excellent citizen. For a properly educated “natural” man, there is no opposition between his natural inclinations and his civic (or social) duties – in fact, the former dictate the latter. There is no difference, therefore, between being “for oneself” and being “for others,” and the strict distinction between man and citizen on which Rousseau

³⁷ Citation.

insists in the introductory paragraphs of *Emile* melts away by the end of Emile's education, when he is ready to enter the state of *The Social Contract*. We have seen, at the end of *Emile*, that he has learned about the requirements of citizenship in *The Social Contract* – civic participation and a concern for the common good. Together, these two civic virtues make Emile a perfect candidate to be a citizen in the *Social Contract* republic, ready to legislate the general will. We also know that he has “perfected” his reason, and thus the service the Lawgiver performs for individuals – namely, obligating them to “conform their wills to their reason” (II.6.10) – is unnecessary in Emile's case. He is free because he is self-sufficient, because he does not seek distinction or dominion over others, and because he knows how to defeat his passions and to be virtuous in spite of them – but also because he, like other *Social Contract* citizens, legislates the general will and is dependent on no one but the sovereign of which he is a part.

There is a political (conventional) freedom that Emile would take on as a member of the sovereign in *The Social Contract*, and the conceptual point is that one takes on a role as a part of a whole and is no longer an independent atom as one is in the state of nature. But Emile has not been raised in the atomistic state of nature, and becoming a citizen in the *Social Contract* world would merely formalize or institutionalize what he already practices in his pursuit of the common good. His epistemological, practical, and moral self-sufficiency remains, and he gives up none of his “naturalness” in fulfilling his role as a citizen. Emile easily fits into the political structure of *The Social Contract*, even though he does not undergo the founding moment of transformation from the state of nature to the civil state under the guidance of the Lawgiver. Emile needs no Lawgiver, for the natural education takes the place of the Lawgiver's guidance. The transformation that would occur over time with a wide-spread “natural” education would be from pathological-social to natural-social,³⁸ and this is a very different sort of transformation than the one that the Lawgiver effects in the men who enter the social contract.

³⁸ I owe the formulation of this distinction to J.J. McFadden.

A further benefit of my reading of these two central texts, *Emile* and *The Social Contract*, is that the discussion of citizenship in the former sheds light on the citizens of the latter. Having seen the kind of moral preparation for citizenship that Rousseau constructs for Emile, the reader is likely to find the portrait of the citizen in *The Social Contract* incomplete. While the *Social Contract* citizen fulfills the civic participation requirement of citizenship, we know nothing of his relations with other citizens apart from the fact that his reasoning about public, legislative matters is governed by his attempt to act in accordance with the general will. Rousseau tells us nothing of his social virtues or how he chooses how to act in ordinary moral interactions with others, outside of the legislative context. He merely says, rather vaguely, that one of the advantages of the civil state over the state of nature is that men exchange instinct for justice in their actions (I.8.1), and that the love of the laws and of one's civic duties must be aided by a civil religion (IV.8.31-32). These comments, by no means central to Rousseau's topic in *The Social Contract*, all seem to be oriented towards civic virtue, ignoring the social virtues of citizens. Given the kind of detail about the would-be citizen we get in *Emile*, the *Social Contract* account of citizenship seems rather thin.

The crucial point to make, having made the claim of the compatibility of *Emile* and *The Social Contract*, is that the connection between these two works does not end with mere compatibility. If Emile is to lead the best life, he *must* live in a political society like that described in *The Social Contract* in order to be able to exercise his civic virtue, an essential component of the good life, according to *Emile*. And if the *Social Contract* world is to be the ideal world in civic and moral terms, it *must* be a world of Emiles – that is, a world of individuals who are both politically and morally excellent men, men who practice both the civic and the social virtues. If the citizens of *The Social Contract* are morally excellent in their non-legislative social interactions, Rousseau gives no indication of it. Conceiving of the citizens of *The Social Contract* as Emiles allows us to understand how they interact with one another outside of the assembly hall or outside of the voting booth – that they uphold justice and beneficence as rules of conduct in every morally significant scenario, that their *amour-*

propre is properly muted in the course of their “natural” education so that they can act on their concern for others. Indeed, only if we conceive of the individuals in *The Social Contract* as Emiles can we genuinely understand how the general will is implemented in that political structure. Furthermore, insisting that the citizens of *The Social Contract* must be Emiles allows us to ensure that they constitute the truly excellent society of men who are civically and socially virtuous.³⁹ The reason the *Social Contract* model of changing the sociopolitical culture of human society does not work is that human beings remain fundamentally flawed by the unmitigated development of *amour-propre*, which the social contract does not prevent from coming into existence in its “inflamed” fullness. The *Emile* model of education (at least the central principles of it) must be put into effect in order to achieve a stable, flourishing society.

Raising Emile to follow his natural inclinations and thus be just and beneficent amounts to transforming the man of the state of nature into a civil man who is concerned with the general will and the common good. Justice and beneficence do not appear in *The Social Contract* because their effect – the common good – is achieved by the legislation of the general will. In a way, speaking of these natural inclinations would be out of place in *The Social Contract* because its focus is not the natural motivation from within to pursue the common good. Instead, the external figure of the Lawgiver is posited. Instead of a moral education, Rousseau is, broadly speaking, trying to find an alternative mode of shared human life to the structure he sees around himself in 18th-century Europe – one driven by *amour-propre* and a moral dependence on others. The tempering of *amour-propre* and dependence

³⁹ There are some worries about moral independence and reliance in a world of Emiles, and I consider them in my dissertation, but I can only gesture at these worries here. Having spoken in *The Social Contract* of the “total alienation of each associate with all of his rights to the whole community” (I.6.6), Rousseau later tempers this statement and suggests something like a private sphere of action and opinion. He concedes that “each man alienates by the social pact only that portion of his power, his goods, his freedom, which it is important for the community to be able to use... [and] everyone may fully dispose of such of his goods and freedom as are left him by these conventions [i.e. the social pact]” (II.4.3, II.4.9). There is thus something like a private sphere and the individual does not surrender (or alienate) his entire self and being to the community. However, outside of this private sphere, however it is to be sketched (and it is up to the Sovereign to decide how it will be delineated, as Rousseau writes in II.4.3), one is to have and state “opinions as a Citizen” (IV.1.5). But could Emile be happy if there is a conflict between his obligation to the state and his natural inclinations – for instance, if the state requires him to go to war, while his conscience guides him towards a “love of mankind”?

is most successfully accomplished by the natural education – and less successfully, if at all, by the transformation of human nature effected by the Lawgiver. The political structure of *The Social Contract* ends up being unstable precisely because, as Rousseau the non-cognitivist insists, it is not enough to propose a contract and set up obligations that people have to follow.⁴⁰ What is necessary for the successful political state is for citizens to have the internal motivation to follow the contract they set up and to pursue the common good. This internal motivation is the result of the natural education which cultivates one's natural inclinations towards justice and beneficence.

⁴⁰ This point is due to another helpful conversation with Rafeeq Hasan.

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