BYRON'S HOMAGE TO ROUSSEAU: CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE, CANTO III, AND LA NOUVELLE HELOISE

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ABSTRACT

Little detailed study has been made of the similarity in thought between Byron and Rousseau. At first glance, the men and their works ostensibly appear too different to warrant investigation. Analysis of the third Canto of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage and La Nouvelle Héloïse, however, suggests that Byron and Rousseau had very similar views of nature, society and the individual. Furthermore, Byron was intensely aware of Rousseau while composing the third Canto of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.

Throughout his life, Byron vehemently denied any resemblance between himself and Rousseau. La Nouvelle Héloïse and Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Canto III, however, reveal that their authors viewed nature as beneficent, society as corrupt and imagination as a liberating force for the individual. During the summer of 1816 when Byron completed Canto III, he was drawn into an imaginative communion with Rousseau. Visiting Rousseau's Swiss homeland, Byron deepened his appreciation of the eighteenth-century Genevan. Like Rousseau, Byron was profoundly affected by the natural beauty of the Alpine landscape. Reading La Nouvelle Héloïse and using it as a guide book for his boat tour with Shelley of Lake Geneva, Byron was imaginatively stimulated into a Rousseauistic reverie. Seeing first-hand the places vividly depicted in La Nouvelle Héloïse, Byron was frequently led into reflection on Rousseau's fictional characters

and often related their experiences to his own.

In this thesis, I examine Childe Harold, Canto III, with emphasis on the biographical facts of Byron's Swiss experience in 1816. I discuss the similarities between Canto III and Rousseau's novel and conclude that Byron's intense awareness of Rousseau's ideas helped significantly in shaping the poetry of Canto III. Byron's viewpoint while in Switzerland and the ideas expressed in Canto III prove that his Swiss experience amounted to an imaginative journey into the world of Rousseau's novel.

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NOTE

For the convenience of readers, I have attached an APPENDIX which contains the original French versions of excerpts quoted from La Nouvelle Héloïse. Readers should note that throughout the novel Rousseau occasionally uses various spellings for the same word. Within the body of the thesis, quotations from Judith H. McDowell's edition of La Nouvelle Héloïse are identified parenthetically and indicate from which part of the novel the quotation is taken, the letter which contains the passage, and the page number.

For those passages which are not contained within McDowell's abridged edition, I have provided my own translations. The French version of Rousseau's La Nouvelle Héloïse referred to is contained within Oeuvres Complètes, Vol. II, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade. All references to Childe Harold's Pilgrimage are found in Jerome McGann's edition, Byron: The Complete Poetical Works, Vol. III, Clarendon Press, 1980-86.

Throughout the letters and/or journals of Byron, Shelley and John Cam Hobhouse there is an absence of accents in their use of French words; I have chosen not to insert accents when providing such excerpts.

INTRODUCTION

Byron is best known for his lengthy satirical work, Don Juan, which exhibits his sophisticated skills of wit and humour aimed at the religious, political, and social institutions of his time. His earlier work, including Cantos I and II of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, was greatly appreciated by the contemporary reading public, but has not stood the test of time as well as Don Juan. In terms of Byron's growth as a poet, 1816 was an important year because it marks the shift from Byron's youthful attempts at various forms of poetic expression to the beginning of his evolution into a great satirist.

Canto III of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, composed during the summer of 1816, is superior to earlier works such as "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers". The latter is tainted by Byron's exuberant tendency to attack arbitrarily persons and institutions with little thought to the consequences of such outbursts. By the time he reached Switzerland in May of 1816, Byron had become the recipient of the kind of social condemnation which he had previously heaped upon others. His brief parliamentary career was characterized by emotional speeches which were considered by fellow Lords to be unsuited to the parliamentary forum. He had married Annabella Milbanke in the hope of escaping unhappiness on two fronts: he wanted to avoid the wrath of

Lady Caroline Lamb who refused to accept rejection; and he wished to prevent complete public exposure of his sexual relationship with his half-sister, Mrs. Augusta Leigh. Byron's confidante, immediately before his marriage, was Lady Melbourne who urged him to marry as a means of ending his escapades with Augusta and consequently of assuming a respectable position in London society. Marriage, however, proved to be a futile attempt at molding Byron into conformity. The open sexual mores of the continent which Byron had discovered when he travelled with John Cam Hobhouse in 1809-11 again appealed to him as a stark contrast to the condemnation with which homosexuality was viewed in England.

After his failed marriage to Annabella and the apparent impossibility of an open liaison with Augusta, Byron was particularly vulnerable when he arrived in Switzerland in May, 1816. His confused state of mind and his desire to find a more calming environment than the one he had left behind made him receptive to the Swiss natural environment and Rousseau's La Nouvelle Héloïse.

A work as sentimental as La Nouvelle Héloïse would probably have been particularly disgusting to Byron at another time in his life. But in 1816, with his own life in shambles, Byron was apparently less critical of others than was usual for him. Surrounded by the Alpine setting and delighting in Shelley's company, Byron took pleasure in

reading the fairytale-like La Nouvelle Héloïse - a welcome diversion from daily life. While reading Rousseau's novel amidst the author's homeland, Byron cultivated an appreciation of both the novel and its author. Struck by the accuracy of Rousseau's descriptions of Switzerland, Byron became less critical and more admiring of Rousseau than he was at any time in his life. As a result, Byron's pilgrimage through Switzerland drew him into frequent remembrances of Rousseau, while his reading of La Nouvelle Héloïse made him even more fascinated with its author. As a result, Byron's enjoyment of both Switzerland and Rousseau's novel culminated in a homage to Rousseau which found expression in Canto III of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.

CHAPTER I

LA NOUVELLE HELOISE AND THE BEGINNINGS OF CANTO III

Byron and Rousseau

In many ways Byron's sojourn in Switzerland during the summer of 1816 was a symbolic celebration of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and his literary legacy. Byron had been aware of Rousseau's work as early as 1807, but it was at this time that Rousseau's La Nouvelle Héloïse guided Byron through both a physical and spiritual pilgrimage of the Swiss landscape.

By means of his Swiss sojourn and his detailed reading of La Nouvelle Héloïse, Byron acquired a sympathetic view of Rousseau. Prior to and after 1816, Byron had a cynical view of Rousseau and vehemently denied any resemblance between his aristocratic self and the eighteenth-century Genevan commoner. That Byron was aware of Rousseau's novel as early as 1807 appears to be a reasonable conjecture.[1] In 1808 Byron's mother had suggested that he reminded her of Rousseau; a remark to which he took strong exception:

> I do not know that I resemble Jean Jacques Rousseau, I have no ambition to be like so illustrious a madman...[2]

Byron's early knowledge of La Nouvelle Héloïse is also verified by a letter he wrote to Lady Melbourne on October 21, 1813. He refers to a note which Rousseau appends to letter LV from St. Preux to Julie in Part I of his novel:

> Do you remember what Rousseau says to somebody - "if you would know that you are beloved - watch your lover when he leaves you - ["] to me the most pleasing moments have generally been - when there is nothing more to be required - in short the subsequent repose without satiety...[3]

Byron's respect for Rousseau in Childe Harold does not support the conclusion that Byron continued to be permanently impressed by the man. In the postscript to a letter, dated August 30, 1820, to Teresa Guiccioli, Byron is flippant about Rousseau:

> P.S. - I am sending you a French book in which you will find a lot about Rousseau and his relations with Mme. Epinay. That man was mad - and not well treated by his friends.[4]

From this remark, it appears that Byron was aware that Rousseau's Parisian friends dismissed his adoption of a solitary existence on the estate of Mme. d'Epinay as a mere ploy to distinguish himself as unique. Byron's belief that Rousseau was "mad" is likely a reference to Rousseau's paranoia which worsened once he had rejected the high life in Paris.

In 1823 Byron alludes to Rousseau's banishment from France and forced exit from Switzerland:

> - As to popularity - Voltaire was reduced to live in a corner - and Rousseau stoned out of Switzerland - and banished France. - I should never have thought myself good for any thing - if I had not been detested by the English.[5]

Through Emile and The Social Contract, Rousseau had offended the establishment, both church and state. Rousseau's belief in a deistic system of natural religion was based on his

idea that one could best praise God by praising His work as displayed in nature. Such an argument was perceived as blasphemous and offended both Calvinist Geneva and Catholic France. Furthermore, the political ideas contained in The Social Contract were in direct opposition to the current mode of government in Geneva which was based on a hereditary system. In 1762 the French "parlement" ordered Emile burned and Rousseau arrested. Immediately Rousseau fled the country to escape arrest. In the same year, an infuriated Genevan government went a step further by burning copies of both Emile and The Social Contract. Unable to go to Geneva, Rousseau ultimately found refuge in the village of Motiers in Neuchâtel which was ruled by Frederick II of Prussia. Even at Motiers, Rousseau was not safe. Motivated by the oratory of the local Calvinist pastor, the people of Motiers attacked and stoned Rousseau's house in September 1765, again causing him to flee.

Byron's reference to Rousseau's being banished from France and "stoned out of Switzerland" is a reflection of his own radicalism. Priding himself on being an exile, Byron sees himself, like Voltaire and Rousseau, as defiantly at odds with the rest of his society. The reference to Rousseau's ostracism by his countrymen is the means whereby Byron emphasizes his own rebelliousness and contempt for the British.

Five years after travelling through Rousseau's

homeland, Byron makes a hostile denial of any resemblance between himself and Rousseau. In a journal entry, in "Detached Thoughts", Byron lists a number of people with whom he has been compared, Rousseau among them. He gives a lengthy defence of why he is not like Rousseau, despite the comparison having been made by his mother, Mme. de Stael and the Edinburgh Review:

> - My Mother before I was twenty - would have it that I was like Rousseau - and Madame de Stael used to say so too in 1813 - and the Edin[burgh] Review has something of ye sort in it's critique on the 4th Canto of Ch[ild]e Ha[rold]e. - I can't see any point of resemblance - he wrote prose - I verse - he was of the people - I of the Aristocracy - he was a philosopher - I am none - he published his first work at forty - I mine at eighteen, - his first essay brought him universal applause - mine the contrary - he married his housekeeper - I could not keep house with my wife - he thought all the world in a plot against him; my little world seems to think me in a plot against it - if I may judge by their abuse in print and coterié - he liked Botany - I like flowers and herbs and trees but know nothing of their pedigrees - he wrote Music - I limit my knowledge of it to what I catch by Ear - I never could learn any thing by study - not even a language - it was all by rote and ear and memory. - He had a bad memory - I had at least an excellent one (ask Hodgson the poet - a good judge for he has an astonishing one) he wrote with hesitation and care - I with rapidity - & rarely with pains - he could never ride nor swim "nor was cunning of fence" - I was an excellent swimmer - a decent though not at all a dashing rider - (having staved in a rib at eighteen in the course of scampering) & was sufficient of fence - particularly of the Highland broadsword - not a bad boxer - when I could keep my temper - which was difficult...
>
> Besides Rousseau's way of life - his country - his manners - his whole character - were so very different - that I am at a loss to conceive how such a comparison could have arisen - as it has done three several times and all in rather a

> remarkable manner. I forgot to say - that he was also short-sighted - and that hitherto my eyes have been the contrary ... - Altogether, I think myself justified in thinking the comparison not well founded. I don't say this out of pique - for Rousseau was a great man - and the thing if true were flattering enough - but I have no idea of being pleased with a chimera.[6]

The differences which Byron focusses on are superficial. He emphasizes as a strong difference the fact that Rousseau wrote prose while he wrote verse but he declines to say anything of ideas. He points out the different positions held by Rousseau and himself within a class-structured society but says nothing of discomfort in society. He emphasizes minor aspects of their differences such as the fact that Rousseau stayed with Thérèse and he did not remain with Lady Byron. Byron continues with a list of weak arguments. He emphasizes Rousseau's love of music and botany and suggests his own lack of knowledge in these fields; he points to Rousseau's lack of physical prowess and brags of his own mastery of riding, swimming, fencing and boxing; he even suggests that Rousseau's eyesight was not as good as his own. Byron concludes that the Swiss temperament, being unlike the English, is another point of difference. He claims to see no basis for comparison and ends by simply acknowledging Rousseau as a great man. But, most important, Byron fails to acknowledge the true basis of his similarity to Rousseau - imagination.

Rousseau and Byron were imaginatively drawn to the same

aspects of nature and produced similar responses. The fact that Byron wrote poetry and Rousseau prose is of minor significance. The ideas expressed through either medium stemmed from their romantic imaginations. A summary of their interests and behaviour indicates the extent to which they are similar.

Both sought, received, and rejected fame as illusory, ultimately rejecting society for the solitude of nature which strongly stimulated their imaginations. Neither was able to sustain lasting relationships with women. Both found refuge from failure with society, women and family by retreating into the inner life of the imagination. Sexual disorientation made each a misfit by the standards of their respective societies. Their insatiable egos led them to see themselves as unique, as having a greater intensity of feeling than the rest of humanity. Neither was able to find a sustaining occupation. Exiled from their homelands, both felt rootless. The pilgrimage was a way of life that reflected their philosophy of non-conformity. Rejecting and rejected by society, both saw a benevolent force in nature. The austerity of Calvinism was unappealing; they rejected organized religion and opted for deism.

Byron's powerful imaginative response to Rousseau was greatly enhanced by the actual pilgrimages the exiled poet made in the company of Shelley through the homeland of Rousseau. In fact, the well-known friendship between Byron

and Shelley was born out of their daily outings on Lake Geneva in 1816 when Byron introduced Shelley to Rousseau's La Nouvelle Héloïse and they used the novel as a guide book during their boat tour of Lake Geneva from June 22 to July 1. Reading Rousseau, while observing the locations so vividly depicted as settings in La Nouvelle Héloïse, prompted Byron into an imaginative awareness of St. Preux and Julie, the hero and heroine, of La Nouvelle Héloïse. In this way Shelley's verbal references to Wordsworth's vision of nature, combined with La Nouvelle Héloïse and the Swiss landscape, helped to bring about a reawakening to nature in Byron.

The imaginative response of Byron to the Switzerland he saw during the boat tour of Lake Geneva is consistent with his celebration of Rousseau and places associated with him in Canto III, Childe Harold's Pilgrimage. During the boat trip Byron read into each scene that he encountered various aspects of La Nouvelle Héloïse. Full of images from Rousseau's book, Byron's mind became immersed in the setting of La Nouvelle Héloïse and its creator.

This is not to say that stanzas 76-81 on Rousseau resulted from the boat tour of Lake Geneva. As Byron's biographer, Leslie Marchand, points out, it is highly probable that Byron had completed these stanzas before actually touring the Lake.[7] So, one cannot rightly conclude that Canto III shows a direct influence of Rousseau on

Byron. More precisely, the Alpine setting, the boat tour of Lake Geneva, the September tour of the Bernese Alps with John Cam Hobhouse and his correspondence at the time all indicate that Byron felt the same about the Swiss environment as Rousseau had in the previous century. It is fair to suggest, however, that Byron found verification of his own views in Rousseau's thoughts and descriptions.

Canto III of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage shows that the awe-inspiring aspects of specific natural scenes which so profoundly affected Byron had also produced Rousseau's imaginative reflections in La Nouvelle Héloïse. Thus Byron, like Rousseau, found himself stimulated by natural phenomena into the contemplation of nature, solitude and the predicament of man. The stanzas on Clarens, the major location in Rousseau's fiction, on the other hand, stemmed from the tour of Lake Geneva.[8] The common aspects of Rousseau's and Byron's romantic vision of the universe is apparent in Canto III of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage. But reading La Nouvelle Héloïse while touring Lake Geneva with Shelley from June 22 to July 1, 1816 drew Byron into an intense familiarity with Rousseau and his fictional characters. Shelley's admiration for Wordsworth undoubtedly added another layer to Byron's impressions of nature. Finally, Byron's tour of the Bernese Oberland with Hobhouse confirms his reawakening to the sublimity of nature which Rousseau too had found so imaginatively stimulating.

The panorama of the Swiss landscape revealed during his boat tour of Lake Geneva combined with his simultaneous reading of La Nouvelle Héloïse to ensure that Byron was inevitably drawn into an imaginative communion with his invisible guide, Rousseau. It is no wonder, therefore, that Byron's intellectual response to Switzerland resembles Rousseau's. Intensely aware of Rousseau and the geography of his homeland, Byron was drawn into reflection upon some of Rousseau's favourite themes - nature, solitude, and the individuality of man. Immersed in the Swiss setting from May to October, 1816, Byron found a soulmate in Rousseau by sharing in the latter's fascination with nature and the way it interacts with man. Inundated with a barrage of Rousseauistic impressions, Byron's poetry as well as his letters and journals include factual and fictional elements of Rousseau's life and work respectively.

What Happened to Julie and St. Preux

In order to understand the Rousseauean view of nature, society and solitary man depicted in La Nouvelle Héloïse, one must have a sense of the novel's context and the time of its composition. Rousseau wrote La Nouvelle Héloïse between 1757-58 when he was living at the Hermitage on the estate of Mme. d'Epinay. He had already enjoyed celebrity with the "beau monde" in Paris and was well-known for his philosophical thought in the First Discourse on the Arts and

Sciences (1750) and the Second Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality Among Men (1755). La Nouvelle Héloïse (1761) was published before Rousseau's famous works: The Social Contract (1762), Emile (1762), and The Confessions (1782).

The novel, modelled on Richardson's Clarissa, consists of a series of letters, which focus on the lives of its two young protagonists, Julie and St. Preux. In particular, it depicts Julie's fall from innocence and subsequent restoration to virtue through a respectable marriage and motherhood. La Nouvelle Héloïse is set in the idyllic village of Clarens in the foothills of the Alps. The aristocratic Julie and her lowly-born tutor, St. Preux, engage in two extramarital sexual encounters. Julie's subsequent pregnancy ends in a miscarriage. Vehemently opposed to the idea of a marriage between his daughter and St. Preux, the archly conservative Baron d'Etange shows his lack of respect for the poor, untitled tutor. But Julie's cousin, Claire, and her fiance, as well as a visiting English peer, Lord Bomston, support the distracted lovers through their difficulties.

Conscious that loss of virtue is a social taboo, Julie banishes St. Preux to the Alpine region of the haut-Valais. During his exile, St. Preux finds the mountain scenery to be a comforting distraction. St. Preux, though imaginatively stimulated by his surroundings, still longs for Julie. He

moves to the lower region of Meillerie from where he can at least gaze towards Julie across Lake Geneva. Once Baron d'Etange realizes that Julie had established a liaison with St. Preux, Lord Bomston and Claire promptly whisk St. Preux off to Paris - far from the woman he loves and whom he will never be permitted to marry. Julie is soon wed to Wolmar, an older man and friend of her father; the pair establish an ideal household in the idyllic setting of Clarens. Julie's guilt over her unwise encounter with St. Preux, coupled with anxiety over the death of her mother and a determination not to add further disgrace to her father, prompts her to live an orthodox life of reclaimed virtue. Performing the role of dedicated wife and mother, Julie assists Wolmar in creating an harmonious family.

St. Preux travels extensively throughout the world for several years as part of a naval squadron on a warship. Returning to Switzerland, he is invited by Wolmar, as a sign of his implicit trust, to live with Julie and the entire family at Clarens as tutor to the Wolmar children. But this is shortlived as the novel concludes when Julie dies as a result of rescuing her son from a fall into the water while the family is en route to Chillon.

The appeal of this highly sentimental, melodramatic novel for the reading public of Rousseau's time was extraordinary. For the aristocracy, it was enlightening because it introduced them to the rural life of the

peasantry with which they were totally unfamiliar; for the common people, it had an intriguing aristocratic element and offered hope for the fallen woman to regain a respectable place in society. The accurate and beautiful descriptions of the Swiss villages around Lake Geneva and those of the magnificent surrounding mountains appealed greatly to Rousseau's public. Visitors, being cognizant of Rousseau's novel and making the pilgrimage around Lake Geneva, often sense the presence of St. Preux and Julie as if they were real rather than fictional characters.

In 1816, two such pilgrims were Byron and Shelley who, while conscious of the fictional nature of Rousseau's hero and heroine, found themselves caught up in the euphoria of romping through the places familiar to Rousseau's characters. Moreover, Byron's imaginative pilgrimage in honour of Rousseau had begun before he met Shelley. Byron's recollections of Rousseau were animated from the moment he crossed the Rhine river and found himself in Switzerland in May of 1816.

Byron's Search for Oblivion

Having left England on April 25, 1816 in the wake of a ruined marriage and rumours of incest with his half-sister Augusta Leigh, Byron was profoundly depressed. He was growing more conscious of the implications of his youthful homosexual activities at Cambridge and on the Continent.

His anxiety was deepened by a sexual relationship with Augusta which very likely lasted into his brief marriage to Annabella Milbanke. His inability to love his wife was in strong contrast to his haunting love for Augusta. Byron knew that he could not share in the traditional joys of paternity with his daughter, five-week-old Ada, whom he never saw again. His brief acquaintance with the House of Lords failed to stimulate any long term political aspirations. Dissatisfied with poetry as a possible lifelong occupation, he sought but found no activity into which he could channel his pent-up energy and ambition. At the age of twenty-eight, he felt aged and alone, facing unknown prospects in an escape to the Continent which, nevertheless, he felt could only be better than the circumstances he had left behind in England.

The extent to which Byron was consumed with guilt and anxiety is evident in the opening stanza of Canto III of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, in which he addresses his daughter: "Is thy face like thy mother's, my fair child! / Ada! sole daughter of my house and heart?"(1;1-2). Separated from Ada by an ocean, Byron senses the permanence of the recent breakdown of his marriage. The autobiographical element is undisguised in Canto III. The protagonist, no longer Harold, has all but vanished to be replaced by Byron - "The wandering outlaw of his own dark mind"(3;20). Byron is "grown aged in this world of woe, /

In deeds, not years,"(5;37-38) but finds no escape from the "images, and shapes which dwell ... in the soul's haunted cell"(5;44-45).

The very act of self-expression through poetry offers Byron a temporary respite from the ghosts haunting his imagination:

> 'Tis to create, and in creating live
> A being more intense, that we endow
> With form our fancy, gaining as we give
> The life we image, even as I do now.
> What am I? Nothing; but not so art thou,
> Soul of my thought!...
>
> (6;46-51)

In creating Harold, Byron made an outlet through which to vent the anxieties plaguing his mind. Filled with feelings of worthlessness, Byron carries the remembrance of incest as an overpowering burden of guilt, shame and anxiety. Combined with feelings of inadequacy for other failed personal endeavours, Byron makes his guilty mind a shrine for self-persecution:

> Still round him clung invisibly a chain
> Which gall'd for ever, fettering though unseen,
> And heavy though it clank'd not; worn with pain,
> Which pined although it spoke not, and grew
> keen,
> Entering with every step, he took, through many a
> scene.
>
> (9;77-81)

Byron's depression upon disembarking on the Continent forced him to seek a mental outlet in poetry. What he really strives for is forgetfulness. He demands of poetry the spiritual self-obliteration which no other activity

affords him:

> So that it wean me from the weary dream
> Of selfish grief or gladness - so it fling
> Forgetfulness around me - it shall seem
> To me, though to none else, a not ungrateful
> theme.
>
> (4;33-36)

CHAPTER II

STANZAS IN PRAISE OF ROUSSEAU AND CLARENS

"Self-torturing sophist, wild Rousseau"

Having described the battlefield at Waterloo, Byron focusses on the natural magnificence of the Rhine and the Alps before presenting his eulogy to Rousseau. Thus he uses his own descriptions of the Alpine setting as an appropriate prelude to his reflections on the man who had made it famous through his La Nouvelle Héloïse. Stanzas 76-81 verify Byron's deep knowledge of Rousseau and his work. Thinking on Rousseau becomes for Byron an introspective consideration of his own successes and failures so that his examination of Rousseau becomes a mirror-image of his own life and work. In this way, Byron sees the futility of his own bout with fame in the image of Rousseau

> ... whose desire
> Was to be glorious; 'twas a foolish quest,
> The which to gain and keep, he sacrificed all
> rest.
>
> (76;722-24)

Byron, in his youthful enthusiasm, desired fame and glory; in time he learned its cost. The unwarranted attacks he made on people of whom he knew little, such as Lord and Lady Holland, had caused him to regret the publication of English Bards and Scotch Reviewers. Having realized that egotism was at the root of his love of being different, Byron was embarrassed by this work. He longed for the kind

of fame he ultimately achieved with the publication of the first two Cantos of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage; but having achieved it, he soon found it illusory. Finding himself suddenly propelled to fame in 1812, Byron quickly realized that the ostentation of London salons held a limited appeal.

Similarly, Rousseau had shrewdly insinuated his way into the drawing rooms of Paris as a talented musician. The Genevan commoner, lacking the social credibility of the nobility, was intimidated by the formality of Paris salons. Rousseau's first encounter with fame was the result of his Discourse on the Sciences and Arts which in 1750 won a prize from the Academy of Dijon. He would again enjoy praise in 1752 for his operetta Le Devin du Village which was an immediate favourite of Louis XV of France and his court. When the operetta was publicly performed in 1753, it earned immediate acclaim and brought financial security to Rousseau.

But once Rousseau had won public acclaim and private friendship with celebrities such as Grimm, Diderot and the Paris elite, he promptly set about alienating them. His philosophical views did not correspond with those of the Enlightenment philosophers nor those of the Roman Catholic Church so that he succeeded in arousing the ire of both the "philosophes" and clergy.

While walking on the road to Vincennes in 1749, Rousseau first saw, in a newspaper article, the question

posed by the Academy of Dijon: "Has the revival of the arts and sciences done more to corrupt or to purify morals?". Rousseau claims that at that moment he was overwhelmed by inspiration so that his life was never the same afterwards. As a result of his experience, he changed his mode of dress and began thinking of himself as a person able to resist the corruption of society. In 1756 he broke away from Parisian society and moved into the Hermitage of Mme. d'Epinay, thus fortifying his rejection of society and urban values.

Rousseau, "the self-torturing sophist", vowed to devote his life to the pursuit of virtue. He rejected his previous desire for fame and money. Ironically, he would soon find himself famous and financially comfortable. Abandoning the material pleasures of worldly gain, he set out to make himself an example for all men; but he succeeded only in becoming the "apostle of affliction" to whom Byron alludes. Undoubtedly, Rousseau was deluded in thinking that he could attract people to his philosophy of emulating virtue. His unrealistic expectations of his fellow-man caused him to become frustrated to the point that he made a cult of his own anxiety.

Since La Nouvelle Hélöise is a love story and not an educational or political treatise, as were Rousseau's other works, it is most likely that Byron is thinking of Rousseau as the author of La Nouvelle Héloïse when he refers to him as the writer "who threw / Enchantment over passion, and

from woe / Wrung overwhelming eloquence"(77;726-28). Rousseau's choice of Clarens as the setting of the novel, and a nearby protected wooded area as the locale where Julie and St. Preux make love, gives a mythical or fairytale quality to the story. While the first half of the novel concerns itself with Julie's fall from virtue, the remainder is a celebration of virtue depicted in the rural harmony of the rustics of Clarens. Clarens and its inhabitants are the embodiment of love and solace. Thus there is an idealistic quality to life at Clarens.

The language of La Nouvelle Héloïse is the sentimental language of passionate lovers. The conflicts experienced by the characters are articulated in ornate language indicative of their innermost feelings. Their love letters, which are full of outpourings of personal feelings, were particularly captivating to eighteenth-century readers who were unfamiliar with such emotional epistolary indulgence. Such readers were more familiar with letters resembling discourses or treatises on philosophical issues. Rousseau's sentimental letters provided a bridge from the Enlightenment to the Romantic period. He made St. Preux's, and his own, all-consuming "madness beautiful." Over everything that St. Preux and Julie did and thought, Rousseau painted an expression of intoxicating passion, or, as Byron writes:

> ... cast
> O'er erring deeds and thoughts, a heavenly hue

> Of words, like sunbeams, dazzling as they past
> The eyes, which o'er them shed tears feelingly and fast.
>
> (77;730-33)

The folly of the lovers' intrusion upon traditional social norms is portrayed by Rousseau as a transcendent spiritual union. Such overblown expressions of love tended to trigger a response of compassion and sentimental tearfulness in the captivated reader of the time.

Aware of Rousseau's passionate rendering of the love story of Julie and St. Preux, Byron uses fire imagery to suggest the power of Rousseau's enlivened mind. Such imagery is reminiscent of the doomed Prometheus. At the beginning of the stanzas on Rousseau, Byron calls him, "One, whose dust was once all fire"(76;719). The power of Rousseau's ability to love intensely is both appealing and destructive, as Byron indicates:

> His love was passion's essence - as a tree
> On fire by lightning; with ethereal flame
> Kindled he was, and blasted; for to be
> Thus, and enamoured, were in him the same.
>
> (78;734-37)

Rousseau made a cult of passion and extinguished part of the "ethereal flame" to which Byron refers, by creating St. Preux and Julie. Imbued with the ideas of love and virtue, Rousseau found, in the creation of La Nouvelle Héloïse, an escape from the real world where love and virtue do not always triumph. Early unsolicited homosexual encounters, a sense of guilt resulting from his mother's

death at his birth, a fetish for masturbation compounded by the physical malfunction of his bladder, convinced Rousseau that he himself would never physically achieve the sexual intimacy represented by St. Preux and Julie. This outpouring of passion through his pen was a catharsis for Rousseau whose ardor was not only physically constrained by medical problems, but also mentally restricted by sexual disorientation. La Nouvelle Héloïse, as Byron hints, is Rousseau's manifestation of ideal love:

> But his was not the love of living dame,
> Nor of the dead who rise upon our dreams,
> But of ideal beauty, which became
> In him existence, and o'erflowing teems
> Along his burning page, distempered though it seems.
>
> (78;738-42)

The "love of ideal beauty" is central to La Nouvelle Héloïse. St. Preux and Julie aspire to transcend the bounds of carnal love thereby attaining a love that needs no earthly expression. Julie is virtue personified since she represents moral superiority and benevolence in mankind. Through St. Preux, Rousseau praises Julie as the epitome of virtue.

Like Harold, who looked upon the stars and "peopled them with beings bright"(14;118), Rousseau filled his imagination with the characters of La Nouvelle Héloïse. The love affair of St. Preux and Julie was, for Rousseau, an imaginative escape from the troubles of real life. Rousseau's imagination was powerful enough to create and

sustain a situation which appears to have been derived from his own experience:

> Everybody was convinced that it was impossible to express feelings so vividly unless one had felt them, or so to depict the raptures of love except with one's own heart as model. In that they were right, and it is true that I wrote the novel in a state of burning ecstasy. But they were wrong in supposing that I had required real objects to produce that condition. They were far from imagining how enraptured I could be by creatures of the imagination. But for some reminiscences of my youth and of Mme d'Houdetot, the loves I have felt and described might have been no more than the nymphs of the air.[9]

In stanza 79, Byron indicates his awareness of the passion Rousseau felt for Sophie d'Houdetot whom he met while living at the Hermitage and writing La Nouvelle Héloïse:

> ... the memorable kiss
> Which every morn his fevered lip would greet,
> From hers, who but with friendship his would meet;
> But to that gentle touch, through brain and breast
> Flash'd the thrill'd spirit's love-devouring heat;
> In that absorbing sigh perchance more blest,
> Than vulgar minds may be with all they seek possest.
>
> (79;745-51)

In his desire to be passionately loved by a woman, Rousseau chose to ignore the gap distinguishing the real Sophie d'Houdetot from the imagined Julie d'Etange. Through his highly charged imagination, he superimposes the attributes of the ideal Julie on the real Sophie. Mme. D'Houdetot was not the stimulus for Rousseau's imagined

Julie; rather she was a physical form into which Rousseau imaginatively forced Julie's virtues. In fact, Rousseau had already begun La Nouvelle Héloïse when he met Sophie d'Houdetot. Physically, morally and intellectually, Sophie fell far short of the essence of virtue symbolized by Julie. Byron gives his understanding of Rousseau's passion for Sophie in a note to stanza 79:

> This refers to the account in his 'Confessions' of his passion for the Comtesse d'Houdetot (the mistress of St. Lambert) and his long walk every morning for the sake of the single kiss which was the common salutation of French acquaintance. - Rousseau's description of his feelings on this occasion may be considered as the most passionate, yet not impure description and expression of love that ever kindled into words; which after all must be felt, from their very force, to be inadequate to the delineation: a painting can give no sufficient idea of the ocean.[10]

Although Byron does not specifically identify Rousseau's remark within the context of The Confessions, it is obvious that it refers to a passage in Book IX where Rousseau describes his obsessive love for Sophie, or, more accurately, for the ideal Julie she came to represent:

> As I have already said, this time it was love, love with all its strength and all its violence. I will not describe the agitation, the tremblings,the palpitations, the convulsive movements, or the faintings of the heart which I continually experienced; the effect her image had on my heart is sufficient evidence. I have said that it was some distance from the Hermitage to Eaubonne; I went by the hills of Andilly, which are delightful; and as I walked I dreamt of her I was about to see, of the affectionate welcome she would give me, and of the kiss, that fatal kiss, even before I received it. It so fired my blood that my head was dizzy, my eyes were dazzled and blind, and my trembling knees would no longer

> support me. I had to stop and sit down; my whole bodily mechanism was in utter disorder; I was on the point of fainting. Aware of my danger I tried as I set out again to distract myself and think of something else. But before I had gone twenty yards the same thoughts and everything that followed upon them assailed me once more, and I could not shake them off. Whatever efforts I made, I do not think that I ever succeeded in making this journey alone without suffering.[11]

Byron was intimately familiar with Rousseau's La Nouvelle Héloïse and sufficiently familiar with The Confessions and The Discourses to be able to provide accurate allusions spontaneously while composing. He probably found the ideas for stanza 80 through his reading of The Confessions.

Byron laments the agony of the self-destructive instinct in Rousseau:

> His life was one long war with self-sought foes,
> Or friends by him self-banish'd; for his mind
> Had grown Suspicion's sanctuary...
> (80;752-54)

Having enjoyed celebrity in Paris, Rousseau accumulated a large circle of friends and admirers. It was almost as if in adopting a philosophy of virtue he set about not only to rid himself of material goods and worldly tendencies but to turn all his friends into enemies. He changed his mode of dress from that of a dandy to one of a virtual derelict by acquiring a short wig and shabby clothes. In The Confessions, he admits his deliberate rudeness and lack of manners toward others as an outward sign that he opposed the falseness and artificiality of a society which emphasized

the importance of manners. Such unorthodox conduct toward his friends led them to see Rousseau's behaviour as a cruel and unwarranted pose, breaking the rules of decorum and reasonableness which were the norm of the day. Eventually, Rousseau's non-conformist conduct alienated virtually all of his friends. His supposed foes were surely "self-sought" and "self-banish'd" as Byron suggests.

The idea that Rousseau's mind was "Suspicion's sanctuary"(80;754) and that he was "phrenzied by disease or woe"(80;759) is acutely obvious to readers of The Confessions. Despite his seeming normality, Rousseau suffered from a persecution complex and at times was consumed with paranoia as to the motives of all around him. While the possibility exists that Rousseau's physical ailments were taking their toll on him mentally, the most credible arguments point to his self-imposed ostracism. Having consciously set out to separate himself in appearance and manner from the rest of society, he further succeeded in taking a suspicious view of people who had no intention of harming him. His paranoia knew no limitations, to the point that he believed his mistress, Thérèse Le Vasseur, her mother, and the whole world were plotting against him.

Byron calls Rousseau's Discourses and The Social Contract "oracles which set the world in flame"(81;763). Undoubtedly, the course of Western political and philosophical thought was strongly influenced by these

documents. What Byron is most interested in, however, is the effect these works had upon the opponents of the Ancien Regime in 1789:

> Did he not this for France? which lay before
> Bowed to the inborn tyranny of years?
> Broken and trembling, to the yoke she bore,
> Till by the voice of him and his compeers,
> Roused up to too much wrath which follows
> o'ergrown fears?
>
> (81;765-69)

The political writings of Rousseau were perceived by the French Revolutionaries as a call to arms, a beckoning toward insurrection, anarchy, and revolutionary victory. Rousseau has long been referred to as the Father of the French Revolution. Excerpts from his works were quoted by anti-monarchists as their strongest political message. Using powerful phrases to incite the masses, propagandists applied Rousseau's complex political thinking to their cause. Rousseau's words were bandied about by the organizers of the Revolution; taken out of context, Rousseau's phrases became Revolutionary slogans. Because of their appeal to the mob, phrases such as the following, arbitrarily lifted from The Social Contract, must have struck the French peasants as particularly suited to their cause: "Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains,"[12] and "To renounce liberty is to renounce being a man...."[13]

The irony of this conception of Rousseau's political work lies in the following facts. First, Rousseau was opposed to revolution as a desirable instrument for change.

Second, he was not democratic. Rousseau realized the impossibility of achieving democracy in an imperfect world and thus argued: "If we take the term in the strict sense, there never has been a real democracy, and there never will be".[14] He elaborates: "Were there a people of gods, their government would be democratic. So perfect a government is not for men".[15] In fact, he favoured some form of aristocratic government based on education and ability over one based on money and heredity. He clarifies his position by dividing aristocracy into three types:

> ... natural, elective, and hereditary. The first is only for simple peoples; the third is the worst of all governments; the second is the best, and is aristocracy properly so called.[16]

Rousseau's conclusion is based on the following hypothesis:

> ... it is the best and most natural arrangement that the wisest should govern the many, when it is assured that they will govern for its profit, and not for their own.[17]

Third, he suggested that republics only work well for small countries, arguing that different peoples are suited to different forms of government. Rousseau would have been appalled that Robespierre, who enforced the Reign of Terror after the French Revolution and butchered both real and perceived opponents, was fond of quoting him.

Rousseau's designation as the Father of the French Revolution comes not so much from what he wrote, as from the misconstrued versions that reached the public by way of revolutionary orators. Rousseau's distinctiveness is as

unwarranted as Byron's posthumous evolution into the symbol of a liberated Greece. Byron, praised and honoured by supporters of the Greek cause, received all the accolades of an active combat soldier, although he never actually engaged in battle. He died a pathetic death from fever made worse by the medical incompetence of his doctors. Such an untimely exit from this world, in the marshes of Missolonghi, was far from heroic. Yet, the Byron who was known to the Greeks, symbolized commitment to liberty, just as the Rousseau the French saw, represented their vision of freedom.

"Clarens! sweet Clarens"

Byron celebrates the memory of Rousseau throughout stanzas 99-104 in which the village of Clarens becomes the focal point of his reminiscences. The poet is immersed in the fictional world of Julie and St. Preux as he considers the "birth-place of deep Love!"(99;923). The optical illusion of rose-coloured ice to which Byron refers was previously alluded to by Rousseau. Byron gives his sense of this visual spectacle:

> The very Glaciers have his colours caught,
> And sun-set into rose-hues sees them wrought
> By rays which sleep there lovingly...
> (99;926-28)

Byron makes a point of clarifying his use of the metaphor as part of a lengthy explanatory note which indicates his awareness of Rousseau's rendering of the same

glorious illusion of sunlight trapped in ice. Byron accurately identifies the location of the reference within La Nouvelle Héloïse as a note Rousseau appended to the letter describing St. Preux's return to Meillerie:

> These mountains are so high that a half hour after sunset their summits are still lit by the sun's rays, the red of which creates on these white peaks a beautiful rose color which is seen from very far away.
>
> (4.XVII;335)

Byron's observation about the mountains in the sunset sparks a remembrance of Meillerie from where the exiled St. Preux observed Julie at distant Clarens:

> ... the rocks,
> The permanent crags, tell here of Love, who sought
> In them a refuge from the worldly shocks,
> Which stir and sting the soul with hope that woos, then mocks.
>
> (99;928-31)

Preoccupied with the image of Julie, St. Preux spent part of his exile in the mountainous haut-Valais before descending into the lower region of Meillerie:

> I am sending this note to the usual address, through a boatman who is a stranger to me, to inform you that I have taken refuge at Meillerie, on the shore opposite from you, in order to enjoy at least the sight of the place which I dare not come near.
>
> (1. Note; 71)

Byron's textual note continues with a quotation from Book IV of Rousseau's Confessions, indicating how Rousseau came to choose Clarens and the surrounding mountainous area as the setting for the love affair of Julie and St. Preux.

The passage by Rousseau to which Byron alludes is as follows:

> On arriving at Vevay I put up at 'The Key', and in the two days that I spent there without seeing anyone I took a liking to the town, which has remained with me on all my journeys, and which finally caused me to make the characters of my novel live there. I would say to all those possessed of taste and feeling: 'Go to Vevay, explore the countryside, examine the scenery, walk beside the lake, and say whether Nature did not make this lovely land for a Julie, a Claire, and a Saint-Preux. But do not look for them there.'[18]

The Edenic ambience of Clarens, which is conducive to love, is acknowledged by Byron as an appropriate dwelling for Rousseau's Julie - the paragon of love and virtue:

> Clarens! by heavenly feet thy paths are trod,-
> Undying Love's, who here ascends a throne
> To which the steps are mountains...
> (100;932-34))

Byron's reflection on the love between St. Preux and Julie becomes a homage to the intoxicating and overwhelming power of nature. Nature, from its most peaceful pastoral elements to its tumultuous Alpine splendour, becomes for Byron, as it was for Rousseau, the embodiment of God. This godliness or perfection is a "pervading life and light"(100;935) which penetrates the natural beauty of Clarens in both nature's monumental and minute features. The perfection of God is found:

> Not on those summits solely, nor alone
> In the still cave and forest; o'er the flower
> His eye is sparkling, and his breath hath blown,
> His soft and summer breath, whose tender power
> Passes the strength of storms in their most
> desolate hour.
> (100;936-40))

Clarens is a paradisal refuge where nature is paradoxically the manifestation of God and His creation. At the same time, nature pays homage to its creator. God is the omniscient force simultaneously initiating and receiving the joys of his "populous solitude"(101;949). Stanzas 100-102 suggest an odyssey of procreative love in praise of God. From the bleakness of the "black pines" symbolically shading God and the deafening "loud roar / Of torrents" which God hears, to the "vines" which "slope his green path" to the shore, where the waters kiss "his feet with murmurs", everything plays a part in this natural spectacle. The "old trees" and "light leaves, young as joy" embrace in a deistic dance of joy. The "populous solitude" in its animate and still forms is a kaleidoscope of beauty "made by Love".

The accuracy and enthusiasm of Byron's description suggest that he may have achieved a temporary sensation of oblivion in his role as observer and embellisher of nature through poetic expression. While he may have been in a general state of depression, Byron's animated description proves that the splendour of nature was not lost on a gloomy mind. At least the Swiss scenery provided Byron with a brief respite from his torments.

The idea of losing oneself in the greater power of nature is particularly favoured by Rousseau. The paradox of man standing back from, yet participating in, the festival

of nature is central to the love theme of La Nouvelle Héloïse.

In the characters of St. Preux and Julie, reason is sometimes overwhelmed by emotion; hence the power of natural surroundings draws them into a hypnotic reverie of love. St. Preux, finding himself drunk with indulgence in the springtime birth ritual, begs Julie to add the crowning touch to the Bacchanal spectacle with their union in love.

> I find the country more gay, the green more fresh and vivid, the air more pure, the sky more serene. The song of the birds seems to be more tender and voluptuous; the murmur of the brooks evokes a more amorous languor; from afar the blooming vine exudes the sweetest perfumes; a secret charm either embellishes everything or fascinates my senses. One would say that the earth adorns itself to make for your happy lover a nuptial bed worthy of the beauty he adores and of the passion which consumes him. Oh Julie! Oh dear and precious half of my soul, let us hurry to add the presence of two faithful lovers to these ornaments of spring. Let us carry the sentiment of pleasure into the places which afford only an empty idea of it. Let us animate all nature; it is dead without the warmth of love.
>
> (1.XXXVIII;97)

Byron was cognizant of nature's relationship to love in much the same way as St. Preux. While the sensation of sexual climax may partially indicate the presence of love for a Byron or a St. Preux, the theory of love to which they ascribe is of a more ethereal aspect. What Byron endeavours to express is a sense of the benevolence of nature as symbolized by Clarens. In this peaceful bower, nature plays a didactic role as the oracle of love:

> He who hath loved not, here would learn that lore,
> And make his heart a spirit; he who knows
> That tender mystery, will love the more,
> For this is Love's recess, where vain men's woes,
> And the world's waste, have driven him far from
> those...
>
> (103;959-63)

In teaching man to love at Clarens, nature removes him "far from the madding crowd" and through solitude provides him with a visionary experience. Penetrating the mind and heart, love usurps those regions commonly dominated by the baser passions of lust, gluttony and covetousness. All-encompassing love thrusts the imagination ever upward into a transcendent euphoria. Through nature, man becomes part of "a boundless blessing, which may vie / With the immortal lights, in its eternity!"(103;966-67).

The concepts of sublimity and immortality which Clarens ignites in the imagination are elaborated upon by Byron in a textual note:

> ... the feeling with which all around Clarens, and the opposite rocks of Meillerie is invested, is of a still higher and more comprehensive order than the mere sympathy with individual passion; it is a sense of the existence of love in its most extended and sublime capacity, and of our own participation of its good and of its glory: it is the great principle of the universe, which is there more condensed, but not less manifested; and of which, though knowing ourselves a part, we lose our individuality, and mingle in the beauty of the whole.[19]

The whole of nature becomes, for Byron, a paradise of perfection which conjures up notions of perfect love, in a perfect world, ordered by a perfect God. He explores his

feelings of sublimity and raised consciousness in stanzas 99 to 104. The paradoxical "populous solitude" of Clarens is the embodiment of nature's beneficence bursting forth in a procreative act. Byron's imagination elevates his consciousness to a higher level of spiritual awareness whereby he feels part of a greater incomprehensible scheme. He is at once everything and nothing. Most important, in glimpsing this vast and immortal scene, Byron accomplishes his desire to subsume his identity in a reverie prompted by the observation of love breathing through nature.

Such a transcendent communion with nature was also known by Rousseau and expressed through the imagination of St. Preux. As for Rousseau, so too for St. Preux, nature's tableau proved an astonishing spectacle overflowing with subtle and compelling features. Nature rouses an imaginative escape into the world of the supernatural. The pageantry of the Swiss landscape defies one to see all that she embraces, as St. Preux suggests:

> Imagine the variety, the grandeur, the beauty of a thousand astonishing sights; the pleasure of seeing only new things around oneself, unusual birds, strange and unknown plants, to observe in some way another nature and to find oneself in a new world. All this strikes the eye as an inexpressible blend, the charm of which is further increased by the subtlety of the air which renders colours more vivid, features more marked, bringing together all viewpoints. Distances appear less than on the plains, where the thickness of the air covers the ground with a veil. The horizon presents more objects to the eye than it seems able to contain. Finally, the view has some unknown magic, a supernatural element which enlivens the spirit and senses; one forgets

> everything, one forgets oneself, one does not know where one is.
>
> (1.XXIII; my translation)

Rousseau's choice of Clarens, particularly "le bosquet", or grove of Julie, as the lovers' haven, reflects his ability to marry the pastoral and rugged aspects of the Swiss landscape. Rural Clarens perched on the edge of Lake Geneva is a far removed place where the passion of love thrives unknown to the rest of the world. Byron was deeply aware of the Rousseauean idea of Clarens as a natural shrine to love, a fit habitat for the transcendent love of St. Preux and Julie. He found a respite from his real life through suspension in a Rousseauistic reverie:

> It was the scene which passion must allot
> To the mind's purified beings; 'twas the ground
> Where early Love his Psyche's zone unbound,
> And hallowed it with loveliness: 'tis lone,
> And wonderful, and deep, and hath a sound,
> And sense, and sight of sweetness...
>
> (104;970-75)

The essence of nature is captured at Clarens. All that it is acquires a sublime significance through imagination. Nature's all encompassing influence is everywhere felt. The juxtaposition of the Rhone river and the Alps at the end of Byron's song of Clarens emphasizes that the imaginative response it provokes in the poet is not limited by an earthly or horizontal boundary; it is ever upward-looking through the celestial Alpine regions to a realm of immortality. The intersection of horizontal and vertical features is accentuated by the "Rhone" which "Hath spread

himself a couch" and "the Alps" which have "rear'd a throne"(104;975-76).

CHAPTER III

THE BOAT TOUR - IN SEARCH OF JULIE AND ST. PREUX

Travelling Rousseau's Ground

Byron's eulogy, in the stanzas on Rousseau, is the product of his familiarity with the facts of Rousseau's life and the details of his fictional work La Nouvelle Héloïse. On the other hand, the stanzas on Clarens are the direct result of Byron's famed boat tour with Shelley of Lake Geneva from June 22 to July 1, 1816.[20] Byron introduced Shelley to La Nouvelle Héloïse and they read it together during the summer months of 1816. In fact, their ten day outing was a deliberate pilgrimage to places associated with Rousseau.

In 1754 Rousseau had made a similar tour around Lake Geneva. During a visit to his homeland, Rousseau, Thérèse Le Vasseur and the De Luc family spent about a week touring the area. Rousseau later expressed his appreciation of the natural beauty around the shores of the Lake in La Nouvelle Héloïse. Rousseau recalls this pleasurable time in Book VIII of The Confessions:

> ... and my favourite pastime was to row around the lake with Deluc, his daughter-in-law, his two sons, and my Thérèse. We spent seven days making the circuit in the finest possible weather. I retained the clearest memories of these spots at the other end of the lake which had formerly delighted me and which I described some years afterwards in The New Héloïse.[21]

Writing to John Murray from Venice on April 9, 1817, Byron is most likely referring to "The Prisoner of Chillon" when he relates how, according to Augusta, a Mr. De Luc enjoyed the poem. What excites Byron is that Mr. De Luc was one of the party who accompanied Rousseau on his journey around Lake Geneva in 1754. Byron alludes to Rousseau's comment on the tour as related in the above passage from The Confessions. He emphasizes the similarity between his tour of the preceding summer, and the one made by Rousseau sixty-two years previous:

> - I will tell you something about Chillon. - A Mr. De Luc ninety years old - a Swiss - had it read to him & is pleased with it - so my Sister writes. - He said that he was with Rousseau at Chillon - & that the description is perfectly correct - but this is not all - I recollected something of the name & find the following passage in "The Confessions" - vol. 3. page 247. Liv. 8th.
>
> "De tous ces amusemens celui qui me plut davantage - fut une promenade autour du Lac - que je fis en bateau avec De Luc pere - sa bru - ses deux fils - et ma Therèse. - Nous mimes sept jours a cette tournée par le plus beau temps du monde. J'en gardai le vif souvenir des sites qui m'avoient frappé a l'autre extremité du lac, et dont je fis la description quelques années apres, dans la Nouvelle Heloise."
>
> This nonagenarian De Luc must be one of the "deux fils". He is in England - infirm but still in faculty. - It is odd that he should have lived so long - & not wanting in oddness that he should have made this voyage with Jean Jacques - & afterwards at such an interval read a poem by an Englishman (who had made precisely the same circumnavigation) upon the same scenery.[22]

The sights and sounds of Lake Geneva, experienced by Byron and Shelley, echoed Rousseau. The frequency with which Rousseau is mentioned, in the letters written during

their excursion, suggests that they were more preoccupied with the imaginary world of Julie and St. Preux than with the real one. The first couple of days en route to the haunts of Julie and St. Preux were of lesser interest since they were both anticipating with excitement the sight of such Rousseauean locales as Clarens and Meillerie. Writing to his friend John Cam Hobhouse from Evian at the outset, Byron relates enthusiastically:

> - At the present writing I am on my way on a water-tour round the Lake Leman ... - Tomorrow we go to Meillerei (sic) - & Clarens - & Vevey - with Rousseau in hand - to see his scenery - according to his delineation in his Heloise now before me. - The views have hitherto been very fine - but I should conceive less so than those of the remainder of the lake.[23]

In terms of the Rousseauistic expedition, the day of their visit to Meillerie proved to be a particularly significant one for Byron and Shelley. They visited St. Preux's home during his exile from Julie and found themselves imagining St. Preux's solitary ruminations in the isolation of Meillerie. Leaving Meillerie en route to St. Gingolph, Byron and Shelley were filled with images of St. Preux's retreat. The pleasure of their sailing, however, was shattered when a sudden squall overtook them and Byron and Shelley were nearly shipwrecked. Rousseau's lovers had encountered a similar fate when an unexpected storm overtook them and they were forced to find refuge at Meillerie.

Rousseau's description of Meillerie revisited by St.

Preux, this time accompanied by Julie, over ten years after it had been his temporary home, gives a sense of its wildness and yet natural benevolence which later stimulated the two travelling poets. St. Preux revels in nostalgia as he retreads the paths that once offered him consolation in an otherwise dismal existence:

> This solitary place formed a retreat, wild and deserted but full of those kinds of beauties which please only sensitive souls and appear horrible to the others... Behind us a chain of inaccessible crags separated the flat place where we were from that part of the Alps called the glaciers, because of the enormous peaks of ice which, incessantly increasing, have covered them since the beginning of the world. To the right, forests of black firs afforded us a gloomy shade. A large wood of oak was to the left beyond the torrent, below us that immense body of water that the lake forms in the midst of the Alps separated us from the rich shores of the Vaud region, and the peak of the majestic Jura crowned the landscape.
>
> In the middle of these great and superb objects, the small piece of ground where we were displayed the charms of a cheerful and sylvan refuge; some streams filtered through the rocks and rolled over the green in crystal rivulets. Some wild fruit trees bent their heads over ours; the moist and fresh earth was covered with grass and flowers. As I compared such a pleasant place to the things which surrounded it, it seemed that this deserted spot should have been the refuge of two lovers who alone had escaped the general confusion of nature.
>
> (4.XVII;335)

Recalling their visit to Meillerie, Shelley recounts the experience within the context of La Nouvelle Héloïse:

> Meillerie is the well-known scene of St. Preux's visionary exile; but Meillerie is indeed enchanted ground, were Rousseau no magician. Groves of pine, chesnut (sic), and walnut overshadow it; magnificent and unbounded forests to which England affords no parallel. In the midst of these woods are dells of lawny expanse, inconceivably verdant, adorned with a thousand of the rarest flowers, and

odorous with thyme.[24]

Like Shelley, Byron attempted to imagine the outings of St. Preux at Meillerie and in the neighbouring hamlets on Lake Geneva. Though delighted by the picturesque setting, he admitted being unable to surpass Rousseau's accurate and famous renderings of the scenes. Shortly after visiting Meillerie, he wrote to his publisher, John Murray, from Ouchy near Lausanne, of the indelible Rousseauean impression imprinted on his imagination through his pilgrimage:

> - I have traversed all Rousseau's ground - with the Heloise before me - & am struck to a degree with the force & accuracy of his descriptions - & the beauty of their reality: - Meillerie - Clarens - & Vevey - & the Chateau de Chillon are places of which I shall say little - because all I could say must fall short of the impressions they stamp.[25]

Byron's vision of Meillerie, as a refuge for the solitary figure of St. Preux, was disspelled by modern alterations to the once isolated place. Although deeply aware of St. Preux, he was irritated by the scars modern road-building had left on St. Preux's refuge. Napoleon's interest in extending an empire had marred the scene for Byron, as he explains in a note:

> ... Buonaparte has levelled part of the rocks of Meillerie in improving the road to the Simplon. The road is an excellent one, but I cannot quite agree with a remark which I heard made, that 'La route vaut mieux que les souvenirs'.[26]

Because of the similarity between Byron's note and Hobhouse's journal entry for October 6, 1816, one can conclude that Byron's note must have been written after that

date when he and Hobhouse went via the Simplon Road to Italy. According to Hobhouse, he and Byron felt, at this time, that the road did not intrude upon the natural scenery:

> ... went by the water's edge on Napoleon's noble road, of what he called the department of the Simplon; approaching the hamlet of Meillerie the rocks and woods, and all the magnificence of that scenery which Rousseau found so savage in winter, but which seemed to us anything but savage, then came down close upon us. The souvenirs did not appear to us at all destroyed by the road, or if they did, we agreed with Rocca, that "La route vaut bien les souvenirs."[27]

Either Byron changed his mind about the effect the road had on Rousseau's homeland or he did not want to argue with Hobhouse over the issue while they were travelling.

Embarking from Meillerie, Byron and Shelley, as noted, found themselves caught in a squall that threatened to destroy both their boat and themselves. That they had experienced an ordeal similar to the one endured by Rousseau's lovers was mere coincidence. But both Byron and Shelley came to regard their near calamity as a re-creation of the dilemma of St. Preux and Julie. Like Byron and Shelley, St. Preux and Julie, under the protection of their boatmen, set out for a peaceful ride on the lake oblivious to the impending storm. Speaking through St. Preux, Rousseau relates the chaotic and frightening experience which threatened the lives of the lovers. The somewhat lengthy episode is worth quoting in full as Byron and

Shelley read into their own experience many aspects of the happening. St. Preux vividly recalls the trauma of the event:

> While we were agreeably amusing ourselves in thus surveying the neighboring coasts, a rising gale, which pushed us obliquely toward the opposite shore, began to blow, and when we thought to tack about the resistance was so strong that it was no longer possible for our frail boat to overcome it. Soon the waves became terrible; we had to make for the Savoy shore and try to land at the village of Meillerie, which was opposite us and which is almost the only place on that side where the shore affords a convenient landing. But having changed, the wind gathered strength, made our boatmen's efforts useless, and made us drift lower along a line of steep rocks where there was no more shelter to be found.
>
> We all took the oars, and almost at the same instant I had the grief of seeing Julie seized with sickness, weak and fainting at the edge of the boat. Fortunately, she was used to the water, and this condition did not last. Nevertheless, our efforts increased with our danger; the heat of the sun, the fatigue and perspiration put us all out of breath and exhausted us excessively. Then, recovering all her courage, Julie revived our spirits with her compassionate kindness. Indiscriminately, she wiped all our brows, and mixing some water in a jar of wine, for fear of intoxication, she presented it alternately to the most exhausted. No, never did your lovely friend shine with such a lively luster as in this moment when the heat and the activity had given a greater glow to her complexion, and what added most to her charms was that we saw so well by her tender behavior that all her solicitude came less from fear for herself than from pity for us. For an instant, two planks being partly opened in an impact which wet us all, he thought the boat broken to pieces, and in an exclamation from this tender mother, I distinctly heard these words: "Oh my children, must I see you no more?"
>
> As for myself, whose imagination always exceeds the peril, although I knew the real state of the danger, I expected to see the boat swallowed up at any moment, that affecting beauty struggling in the midst of the waves, and the pallor of death dulling the roses of her cheeks.

> Finally, by dint of labor we reached Meillerie, and after having battled more than an hour at ten feet from shore, we succeeded in getting to land. In landing, all fatigue was forgotten. Julie took it upon herself to express gratitude for all the pains each one of us had taken and, just as in the thick of the danger she had thought only of us, on land she seemed to think that we had saved no one but her.
>
> (4.XVII;333-34)

Shelley's detailed encounter of his and Byron's near brush with death does resemble the aforementioned experience of St. Preux and Julie, particularly in terms of the suddenness with which they were projected into a state of bedlam. Admittedly not a good swimmer, Shelley felt that his life rested in Byron's hands. Had circumstances dictated, Byron would very likely have grasped the opportunity for heroism by saving his vulnerable friend's life. As St. Preux fretted over Julie's safety, so too did Byron play the role of a St. Preux; he denied his own importance in the greater cause of saving Shelley - his veritable Julie. Frustrated by the lack of action in his life, Byron was probably selfishly attracted to the situation as an opportunity for selfless heroism. That Shelley was terrified at the havoc of the scene and equally awed by Byron's maintenance of composure under stress is amply demonstrated by his account of the predicament:

> The lake appeared somewhat calmer as we left Meillerie, sailing close to the banks, whose magnificence augmented with the turn of every promontory. But we congratulated ourselves too soon: the wind gradually increased in violence, until it blew tremendously; and, as it came from the remotest extremity of the lake, produced waves

> of a frightful height, and covered the whole surface with a chaos of foam. One of our boatmen, who was a dreadfully stupid fellow, persisted in holding the sail at a time when the boat was on the point of being driven under water by the hurricane. On discovering his error, he let it entirely go, and the boat for a moment refused to obey the helm; in addition, the rudder was so broken as to render the management of it very difficult; one wave fell in, and then another. My companion, an excellent swimmer, took off his coat, I did the same, and we sat with our arms crossed, every instant expecting to be swamped. The sail was, however, again held, the boat obeyed the helm, and still in imminent peril from the immensity of the waves, we arrived in a few minutes at a sheltered port, in the village of St. Gingoux.
>
> I felt in this near prospect of death a mixture of sensations, among which terror entered, though but subordinately. My feelings would have been less painful had I been alone; but I knew that my companion would have attempted to save me, and I was overcome with humiliation, when I thought that his life might have been risked to preserve mine. When we arrived at St. Gingoux, the inhabitants, who stood on the shore, unaccustomed to see a vessel as frail as ours, and fearing to venture at all on such a sea, exchanged looks of wonder and congratulation with our boatmen, who, as well as ourselves, were well pleased to set foot on shore.[28]

One can never be sure that the occasion was as dramatic as Shelley suggests, but that it had a strong effect on both men is certain. The manner in which Shelley recalls his feelings of terror is particularly poignant as the event was a prelude to his tragic drowning, less than six years later, in a sea squall while boating off the coast of Italy.

What is most significant about the boating experience is Byron's and Shelley's tendency to turn an event of mere coincidence into a meaningful Rousseauean experience. For

Byron, as for many visitors to Switzerland, the characters depicted in La Nouvelle Héloïse acquired a reality beyond fiction when thought of against the backdrop of the Swiss scenery. Recalling the boating incident in his lengthy note on Rousseau appended to Canto III, Byron speaks of St. Preux and Julie as if they were real persons rather than figments of Rousseau's imagination:

> I had the good fortune (good or evil as it might be) to sail from Meillerie (where we landed for some time), to St. Gingo during a lake storm, which added to the magnificence of all around, although occasionally accompanied by danger to the boat, which was small and overloaded. It was over this very part of the lake that Rousseau has driven the boat of St. Preux and Madame Wolmar to Meillerie for shelter during a tempest.
>
> On gaining the shore at St. Gingo, I found that the wind had been sufficiently strong to blow down some fine old chestnut trees on the lower part of the mountains.[29]

That Byron immediately recognized the correlation between his own and the near fatality of Rousseau's characters is verified by Shelley's comment appended to his record of the next day's activities:

> I forgot to remark, what indeed my companion remarked to me, that our danger from the storm took place precisely in the spot where Julie and her lover were nearly overset, and where St. Preux was tempted to plunge with her into the lake.[30]

The wording of Shelley's remark leads one to think that Julie's and St. Preux's near-drowning occurred at the same time that St. Preux was tempted to drown himself and Julie. In fact, St. Preux's temptation had occurred after the encounter with the storm, and after his walk around

Meillerie with Julie, when they were returning to Clarens. The moonlight, the calm water and the silence, except for the song of the birds, made St. Preux melancholy as he held Julie's hand and remembered similar outings which they had made at an earlier time. The knowledge that he would never have Julie to himself enraged St. Preux. The idea of a double suicide appealed to him as a resolution to his tormented longing for Julie. He recalls how this feeling had overpowered him:

> Soon I began to turn over deadly projects in my mind, and in a fit of passion, which I shudder to think of, I was violently tempted to hurl her with me into the waves and to end my life and my long torments in her arms. This horrible temptation finally became so strong that I was obliged to let go her hand suddenly and go to the bow of the boat.
>
> (4.XII;338)

Byron had more or less deemed the boating incident to be a Rousseauean experience. That Shelley was equally entranced with the mystical land of St. Preux and Julie is proven by his recollection of the closing of the eventful day at St. Gingolph, "We returned to St. Gingoux before sunset, and I passed the evening in reading Julie".[31]

"Le Bosquet de Julie"

Through their arrival at Clarens, Byron and Shelley penetrated further into the world of La Nouvelle Héloïse. The "bosquet de Julie" is the wooded grove at Clarens where the illicit love of St. Preux and Julie was consummated.

But Clarens is also the home of the redeemed fallen woman - the idyllic estate of Julie de Wolmar where human activity advances in harmony with nature and the world.

In La Nouvelle Héloïse, Wolmar brings his wife and her former lover to the "bosquet de Julie" to demonstrate that his faith in both persons is complete and knows no limitations. Julie is fearful that renewing acquaintance with the scene of her passionate encounter with St. Preux might stir up long dormant desires. She recalls the fear which gripped her at the time:

> ... he led us into the groves, and precisely, my dear, into the very grove where all the misfortunes of my life began. Approaching this fatal spot, I felt my heart throbbing frightfully, and I should have refused to go in if shame had not checked me...
>
> (4.XII;316)

Wolmar philosophizes in the grove, telling St. Preux and Julie of the events of his own life and discussing life in general. Through Wolmar's sermonizing, Julie is finally able to come to terms with the "bosquet". It had originally been the scene of love but later became a reminder, for her, of sinfulness. Revisiting the grove, in the company of both her husband and her former lover, Julie enjoys a spiritual purification, which she describes to her cousin Claire:

> Getting up, he embraced us and desired us to embrace each other too, in that place ... in that very place where once before ... I made no resistance to it. Alas! How wrong I should have been to make any! This kiss was nothing like the one which had made the grove fearful for me. I congratulated myself sadly for it, and I knew that

> my heart was more altered than I had dared believe it until then.
>
> As we returned to the road to the house, my husband took me by the hand and, pointing to that grove we had just left, he said, laughing, "Julie, fear that refuge no longer. It has just been profaned."
>
> (4.XII;321-22)

Byron had actually made three visits to the "bosquet" of Julie: two during the boat tour of Lake Geneva and a third in the company of Hobhouse on their September tour of the Bernese Alps. During the boat tour when Byron and Shelley visited the Castle of Chillon, they spent the night at Clarens. That day, too, Shelley recognized the extent to which Rousseau's fiction had evolved into a rural myth with its protagonists assuming the dimensions of folk heroes:

> We proceeded with a contrary wind to Clarens against a heavy swell. I never felt more strongly than on landing at Clarens, that the spirit of old times had deserted its once cherished habitation. A thousand times, thought I, have Julia (sic) and St. Preux walked on this terraced road, looking towards these mountains which I now behold; nay, treading on the ground where I now tread. From the window of our lodging our landlady pointed out 'le bosquet de Julie.' At least the inhabitants of this village are impressed with an idea, that the persons of that romance had actual existence.[32]

It is ironic that Shelley is quick to point out the ostensible ignorance of the Swiss peasantry. In speaking condescendingly of the Swiss landlady, Shelley must have been unaware of how he and Byron sounded as they too talked so credibly about St. Preux and Julie. The more acquainted they became with the setting of La Nouvelle Héloïse, the

less fictional its characters appeared. That the "bosquet" intrigued the travelling poets is verified by their prompt visit to the grove that evening. The visit must have been shrouded in a spiritual aura since Shelley recalls the spellbinding effect of their first visit to this Rousseauean shrine:

> In the evening we walked thither. It is, indeed, Julia's (sic) wood. The hay was making under the trees; the trees themselves were aged, but vigorous, and interspersed with younger ones, which are destined to be their successors, and in future years, when we are dead, to afford a shade to future worshippers of nature, who love the memory of that tenderness and peace of which this was the imaginary abode. We walked forward among the vineyards, whose narrow terraces overlook this affecting scene. Why did the cold maxims of the world compel me at this moment to repress the tears of melancholy transport which it would have been so sweet to indulge, immeasurably, even until the darkness of night had swallowed up the objects which excited them?[33]

Shelley's preconceived notion that he would feel melancholic on seeing Julie's "bosquet" can be traced to his having spent the day reading La Nouvelle Héloïse. He was bent upon seeing Clarens as a Rousseauistic tabernacle. What the actual location lacked in pastoral beauty, Shelley imaginatively injected into the scene:

> ... we sailed for Clarens, determining first to see the three mouths of the Rhone, and then the castle of Chillon; the day was fine, and the water calm. We passed from the blue waters of the lake over the stream of the Rhone, which is rapid even at a great distance from its confluence with the lake; the turbid waters mixed with those of the lake, but mixed with them unwillingly. (See Nouvelle Héloïse, Lettre 17, Part 4.)[34]

Shelley's reference to the phenomenon of the river water mixing with that of the Lake is, as he indicates, found in Letter 17, Part 4 of La Nouvelle Héloïse. The reference to the rose-coloured glaciers on which Byron had remarked can be found in the same letter. It is apparent that Byron and Shelley were literally comparing the scenes before them with the description provided in La Nouvelle Héloïse. St. Preux had pointed out to Julie various interesting features in the landscape surrounding Lake Geneva; the intersection of the Rhone with Lake Geneva was a feature he found worth mentioning to her:

> There, I explained to Julie all the parts of the magnificent horizon which surrounded us. I showed her from afar the mouths of the Rhone whose rapid course stops suddenly at the end of a quarter of a league and seems to dread polluting the crystal blue lake with its muddy waters.
> (4.XVII; my translation)

The evening arrival of the poets at Clarens was highlighted by a pleasant visit to the grove of Julie; however, observing the same location in the cold light of the next day proved to be disappointing. When a second haj was made to the "bosquet", they saw the scene in a more realistic light; it was notably different than the one they remembered from the previous evening. The physical depravity of the "bosquet" is described by Shelley as a defilement of a Rousseauean shrine:

> We went again to 'the bosquet de Julie,' and found that the precise spot was now utterly obliterated, and a heap of stones marked the place where the little chapel had once stood. Whilst we were

> execrating the author of this brutal folly, our guide informed us that the land belonged to the convent of St. Bernard, and that this outrage had been committed by their orders. I knew before, that if avarice could harden the hearts of men, a system of prescriptive religion has an influence far more inimical to natural sensibility. I know that an isolated man is sometimes restrained by shame from outraging the venerable feelings arising out of the memory of genius, which once made nature even lovelier than itself; but associated man holds it as the very sacrament of his union to forswear all delicacy, all benevolence, all remorse; all that is true, or tender, or sublime.[35]

The intense disappointment which overwhelmed Shelley indicates the extent to which Rousseau's descriptions were taken literally. Shelley's lament echoes the horror that often occurs when one finds that time and man have all but devastated the celebrated scene of some great human activity. Shelley's fluctuation, between actual scenes and those imbued with a higher significance through Rousseau's imagination, was bound to result in intense disappointment at the discrepancy between the two. Shelley, the atheist, was undoubtedly more agitated by the fact that the desecration of the "bosquet" took place at the hands of the St. Bernard monks. While Byron shared in Shelley's emphatic disgust with the scene, it seems likely that his worldliness prevented him from an emotional response as extreme as Shelley's.

Having included the stanzas on Clarens in Canto III of Childe Harold, Byron wrote to Murray, while en route to Milan with Hobhouse in October of 1816, to ensure that a

note be appended to the Canto to clarify that the description of Clarens was more general than specific:

> ... it may perhaps be as well to put a short note to that part relating to Clarens - merely to say - that of course the description does not refer to that particular spot so much as to the command of scenery round it...[36]

In a pragmatic sense, Byron was offended by the destruction of the "bosquet". He found that the improvements made by Napoleon to the Simplon road lacked aesthetic coherence, and destroyed the natural integrity of the rocky Meillerie famed by Rousseau. Likewise, he was offended by the monks' destruction of the grove as a natural haven. While Byron can hardly be termed a conservationist or an environmentalist, he had sufficient foresight to recognize that indiscriminate elimination of natural resources by man is an act of ignorance and shortsightedness. The disgust with which Byron viewed the monks' arbitrary rape of the grove indicates that he saw it as an act of stupidity; while it profanes the name of Rousseau, it is really an affirmation of human selfishness denying any sensitivity to nature. In the subsequent note to Canto III, Byron condemns blatant human stupidity, not only in memory of Rousseau, but for its vile and senseless repercussions:

> The hills are covered with vineyards, and interspersed with some small but beautiful woods; one of these was named the 'Bosquet de Julie', and it is remarkable that, though long ago cut down by the brutal selfishness of the monks of St. Bernard, (to whom the land appertained), that the

> ground might be inclosed into a vineyard for the miserable drones of an execrable superstition, the inhabitants of Clarens still point out the spot where its trees stood, calling it by the name which consecrated and survived them.
>
> Rousseau has not been particularly fortunate in the preservation of the 'local habitations' he has given to 'airy nothings'. The Prior of Great St. Bernard has cut down some of his woods for the sake of a few casks of wine...[37]

Despite the physical austerity and privation of the "bosquet", Byron could still see it in a Rousseauean light, by remembering the context of La Nouvelle Héloïse. When visiting places associated with La Nouvelle Héloïse, Byron occasionally escaped reality through his imaginative fascination with Rousseau. Nevertheless, the intrusions of modern life prevented him from breaking completely free of concern with daily living. While Byron's reflections on Rousseau may have contained a certain intensity, the interruptions of the physical world ensured the brevity of such reflections.

Visiting Clarens for the second time, and specifically the "bosquet de Julie" for the third time, during his Alpine tour in September, 1816, Byron recalls two instances of the unwanted intrusion of humanity on his Rousseauistic nostalgia. He thought English tourists the most despicably ignorant of travellers and often went to great lengths to avoid encountering them; in fact, his selection of hotels was limited to those not frequented by the English. He was frustrated after leaving the imaginatively stimulating

settings of Clarens and Chillon to encounter English ladies who, he felt, were intellectually unable to grasp the awe-inspiring intensity of Rousseau's homeland. Writing in his "Alpine Journal" for September 18, 1816 Byron sarcastically indicates his disbelief at English ignorance in a typically cutting but humourous fashion:

> ... - arrived the second time (1st time was by water) at Clarens beautiful Clarens! - went to Chillon through Scenery worthy of I know not whom - went over the Castle of Chillon again - on our return met an English party in a carriage - a lady in it fast asleep! - fast asleep in the most anti-narcotic spot in the world - excellent - I remember at Chamouni - in the very eyes of Mont Blanc - hearing another woman - English also - exclaim to her party - "did you ever see anything more rural" - as if it was Highgate or Hampstead - or Brompton - or Hayes. "Rural" quotha! - Rocks - pines - torrents - Glaciers - Clouds - and Summits of eternal snow far above them - and "Rural!"...[38]

By September, 1816, Byron was intimately familiar with the details of La Nouvelle Héloïse. On September 18, at the grove of Julie, Byron was irritated by a Swiss inhabitant's ignorance of Rousseau:

> ... saw all worth seeing and then descended to the "Bosquet de Julie" &c. &c. - our Guide full of Rousseau - whom he is eternally confounding with St. Preux - and mixing the man and the book - on the steps of a cottage in the village - I saw a young paysanne - beautiful as Julie herself - went again as far as Chillon to revisit the little torrent from the hill behind it - Sunset - reflected in the lake...[39]

Byron's frustration with the guide was soon replaced by his delight at seeing the image of Julie in the face of a peasant girl. Byron and Hobhouse must have discussed the

guide's confused knowledge of Rousseau and La Nouvelle Héloïse. It seems that Byron, who had told Shelley that they had nearly drowned where the same fate threatened St. Preux and Julie, had also told Hobhouse that they were now walking where St. Preux and Julie had walked. These statements are verified by Hobhouse's journal entry of September 18, 1816:

> ... coming down we had pointed to us by our peasant guide - where the bosquet de Julie was formerly before cut down by the monks of St Bernard - its site was a vineyard just above Clarens [-] the peasant had read Rousseau whom he also confounded with St Preux - he said R. wrote from Meillerie - he added now & then - they are but embellishments & yet he gave a certainty to the recorded spots as if something had happened there - no romance has ever received such a complete local habitation - perhaps the actual Heloise has given some identity to her new namesake [-] we wandered into a very [ ] grove of noble trees on the declivity of the hills - where B. said Julie & St Preux might have walked...[40]

Intrigued by Rousseau's persona, Byron's imagination irresistibly gravitated towards him.

Still Looking For Julie

Even after they departed from "le bosquet", Byron and Shelley continued their remembrance of Julie. It was not necessary for them to be in the grove in order to imagine the ideal Julie. When they trekked to the Castle of Clarens, they were still seeking Julie's path. As Shelley recalls, their act of picking roses was in the hope that the blooms had descended from some planted by Julie:

> The road which conducted to it wound up the steep ascent through woods of walnut and chesnut (sic). We gathered roses on the terrace, in the feeling that they might be the posterity of some planted by Julie's hand. We sent their dead and withered leaves to the absent.[41]

Spending the night at Vevey, Shelley was delighted with the town and remarked, as Byron had done, that it was here that Rousseau conceived the idea of La Nouvelle Héloïse.

> Vevai is a town more beautiful in its simplicity than any I have ever seen. Its market-place, a spacious square interspersed with trees, looks directly upon the mountains of Savoy and La Valais, the lake, and the valley of the Rhone. It was at Vevai that Rousseau conceived the design of Julie.[42]

When Byron and Shelley visited Gibbon's house at Lausanne on June 28, Shelley was by this time so completely entranced in a Rousseauean homage that he became annoyed with Byron's picking of acacia leaves in memory of Gibbon, seeing it as an act of sacrilege against the mind of Rousseau:

> My companion gathered some acacia leaves to preserve in remembrance of him. I refrained from doing so, fearing to outrage the greater and more sacred name of Rousseau; the contemplation of whose imperishable creations had left no vacancy in my heart for mortal things. Gibbon had a cold and unimpassioned spirit. I never felt more inclination to rail at the prejudices which cling to such a thing, than now that Julie and Clarens, Lausanne and the Roman Empire, compelled me to a contrast between Rousseau and Gibbon.[43]

For Shelley, everything was reminiscent of Rousseau. Even a visit to Gibbon's house sparked a comparison of Gibbon with Rousseau. While Byron enjoyed tracing the steps of Rousseau

and his fictional characters, he very likely thought Shelley's indignation on this occasion to be eccentric. Shelley, however, was highly indignant over Byron's lack of respect for the memory of Rousseau.

Although Byron and Shelley returned to their homes on Lake Geneva on July 1, the significance of their boat journey around Lake Geneva with La Nouvelle Héloïse as a guide book was not soon forgotten. The journey aided Byron's completion of the third Canto of Childe Harold, "The Prisoner of Chillon" and other lesser poems, all of which indicate his awareness of both Rousseau and his fiction.

On June 27, 1816, Byron wrote to Murray from Ouchy that he had finished the third Canto of Childe Harold. The note appended to the Canto acknowledges the role played by Rousseau in guiding Byron's imaginative processes during the summer of 1816. The boat trip in particular was a voyage into the fictional world of Rousseau's characters. Byron admits that it is impossible to see Switzerland without seeing Rousseau:

> In July, 1816, I made a voyage round the Lake of Geneva; and, as far as my own observations have led me in a not uninterested nor inattentive survey of all the scenes most celebrated by Rousseau in his 'Heloise', I can safely say, that in this there is no exaggeration. It would be difficult to see Clarens (with the scenes around it, Vévay, Chillon, Bôveret, St. Gingo, Meillerie, Evian, and the entrances of the Rhône), without being forcibly struck with its peculiar adaptation to the persons and events with which it has been peopled.[44]

Rousseau believed himself an especially passionate writer and hoped for an especially sensitive reader. He would probably have thought Byron an ideal reader of La Nouvelle Héloïse. In The Confessions, he claims to have been pleased by the sensitive reaction of a contemporary female reader and hopes for as much from other readers of his novel:

> ... I have always believed that no one could take so lively an interest in Héloïse without possessing that sixth sense, that moral sensibility, with which so few hearts are endowed and without which no one could understand my own.[45]

The memory of their boat tour was cherished by Byron and Shelley as a distinctive Rousseauean experience. At the beginning of the July 12, 1816 letter to Thomas Love Peacock, containing a record of the boat trip, Shelley places his account of the journey in a Rousseauean context before he begins to recall any of the events of the tour:

> This journey has been on every account delightful, but most especially, because then I first knew the divine beauty of Rousseau's imagination, as it exhibits itself in Julie. It is inconceivable what an enchantment the scene itself lends to those delineations, from which its own most touching charm arises.[46]

That Shelley retained a special memory of Rousseau long after he had read La Nouvelle Héloïse is verified by his letter dated July 18, 1816 to James Jefferson Hogg:

> I have seen Vevai, Clarens, Meillerie. I have read La Nouvelle Heloise at these places, a book which tho in some respects absurd & prejudiced, is yet the production of a mighty Genius, & acquires an interest I had not conceived it to possess when

> giving & receiving influences from the scenes by which it was inspired. Rousseau is indeed in my mind the greatest man the world has produced since Milton.[47]

In the same letter, he expresses his pleasure at Byron's poetic achievement in Canto III of Childe Harold:

> ... it infinitely surpasses any poem he has yet published, with the exception perhaps of Lara, which is of another character.[48]

Unconcerned with current critical opinion, Byron was pleased with Canto III of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage. Writing to Augusta from Venice in January of the year following its composition, he expresses his satisfaction with its profoundness and assumes a stance of indifference towards its audience:

> I care not much about opinions at this time of day, and I am certain in my mind that this Canto is the best which I have ever written; there is depth of thought in it throughout and a strength of repressed passion which you must feel before you find; but it requires reading more than once, because it is in part metaphysical, and of a kind of metaphysics which every body will not understand. I never thought that it would be popular & should not think well of it if it were, but those for whom it is intended will like it.[49]

Writing to Thomas Moore, less than a week later, Byron again repeats his pleasure in the poetry of the third Canto, but this time he is more frank about the state of mental torpor in which he frequently found himself during that first summer after leaving England. The joys of Switzerland offered a brief respite from an otherwise guilt-ridden psyche. He recalls his state of mind during the composition

of the third Canto with half-joking, yet poignantly sincere self-deprecation:

> ... it is a fine indistinct piece of poetical desolation, and my favourite. I was half mad during the time of its composition, between metaphysics, mountains, lakes, love unextinguishable, thoughts unutterable, and the nightmare of my own delinquencies. I should, many a good day, have blown my brains out, but for the recollection that it would have given pleasure to my mother-in-law...[50]

Composed during July and August of 1816, poems such as "The Dream", "Prometheus" and "Darkness", as well as "The Prisoner of Chillon" and "Epistle to Augusta", (the last two composed in June) are permeated with the morbidity and fatalistic outlook that characterized Byron's thinking at the time. Manfred recalls the extent to which Byron was immensely disturbed when he left Switzerland for Italy.

Byron probably realized the effect Rousseau's renderings of the Swiss lifestyle and landscape depicted in La Nouvelle Héloïse had on his own impressions of Switzerland. But, as he states, it was really to nature that Rousseau owed his greatest debt in terms of inspiration:

> If Rousseau had never written, nor lived, the same associations would not less have belonged to such scenes. He has added to the interest of his works by their adoption; he has shewn his sense of their beauty by the selection; but they have done that for him which no human being could do for them.[51]

Byron makes it abundantly clear that it is the natural spectacle which he celebrates, rather than Rousseau's

description of the scenes. What is most pertinent, however, is that Byron is constantly stimulated by the Alpine setting into remembering Rousseau and his works. Byron could rarely think of the Swiss landscape without remembering something of Rousseau's life or work. There is a spiritual kinship linking the two writers who, although not contemporary, were stimulated by the natural features of the Swiss panorama into the same euphoric response to what the eye saw and the imagination embellished.

CHAPTER IV

ROMANTIC RUMINATIONS: SOCIETY, NATURE AND SOLITUDE

Rebel Against Society

Byron sought in nature all that the society of man seemed to deny him - peace of mind, a creative outlet and harmony with his surroundings. While the neo-classical standards of the eighteenth-century dictated the importance of manners and reasonable interaction among men, Byron and Rousseau revolted against these standards. By virtue of their iconoclastic world view, they were both latter day Prometheans. Having found society to be cruel, insensitive and based on principles of selfishness, hatred and pettiness, both endured a Promethean excommunication in being ostracized by their respective societies.

From a Byronic and Rousseauean viewpoint, the imagination is most highly activated when one is away from the society of man. Removed from the world of men striving for material gain, power, or fame, the Promethean man is able to clear his mind of such vanities by turning to nature. It is by choice, not chance, that he encounters those with whom he wishes to communicate through the never-failing power of imagination. In the solitude of nature, the rebel aspires to the high ideals of love and hope which are blurred in the chaos of the world's cities. A brighter, clearer conception of the world is gained through retirement

to rural areas where one is permitted a closer union with nature. The continuation of such an experience is, however, undermined by the innate human desire for sociability.

It is in the lonely retreats of nature that Byron can escape the vain aspirations of man. Like Byron, Harold is repulsed by the ceaseless warring of passions in the real world. He seeks the little known corners of the world for an imaginative retreat:

> ... he can tell
> Why thought seeks refuge in lone caves, yet rife
> With airy images, and shapes which dwell
> Still unimpair'd, though old, in the soul's haunted cell.
>
> (5;42-45)

Rejecting the vain and unsustaining ambitions of the social world, Harold looks at the quieter region of rural Europe as a strange land in which "He found in wonder-works of God and Nature's hand" - the "Fit speculation"(10;89-90) which society denies him. Battling the mores of society, Harold seeks a place where he is welcomed, rather than mocked. He is tired of being jostled in a world where individuality is viewed contemptuously. He opts out of corrupt society where his attempts at self-realization are ignored:

> And he, as one, might midst the many stand
> Unheeded, searching through the crowd to find
> Fit speculation!
>
> (10;87-89)

At the root of this unwillingness to conform to society is the notion that the individual must be recognized, not obliterated, by society. Thus, the individual, because of

his non-conformity, becomes an enemy to society. Rising in opposition to society, Harold's rebelliousness is praised as heroic. He is unwilling to compromise his high ideals to gain the patronage of unprincipled fellow man. Adhering to his principles, Harold attains a Promethean aspect whereby he defies prescribed rules in an effort to maintain the strength of his convictions:

> But soon he knew himself the most unfit
> Of men to herd with Man; with whom he held
> Little in common; untaught to submit
> His thoughts to others...
>
> (12;100-03)

Similarly, Rousseau sees society as a hostile environment for the sensitive St. Preux. The falseness of urban society overwhelms St. Preux once he has arrived in Paris. He finds himself in a crowded desert where manners are a mask for the cruelties of humanity. The supposed wisdom of the Paris intellectuals is merely a tool for justifying the current prejudices of society. In keeping with social decorum, men conceal their true nature. For St. Preux, the city is a vast desert of chaos where virtue is undermined by artificiality.

St. Preux's unhappiness with the crowded city is the same dissatisfaction that prompts Byron to cry, "I look upon the peopled desert past, / As on a place of agony and strife"(73;690-91). St. Preux's oppressed soul seeks refuge in the imagination, thus enabling him to claim that he is least alone when by himself and most alone in a crowd. The

corrupt urban desert prompts him to lament:

> With a secret horror I am entering this vast wasteland of a world. This chaos offers me only a frightful solitude, in which a dismal silence reigns. My oppressed soul seeks to burst forth but finds itself everywhere restrained more closely. I am never less alone than when I am by myself, an ancient writer said; as for me, I am only alone in the crowd, where I can be neither with you or with others.
>
> (2.XIV;196)

Again, St. Preux's resistance to the norms of society is like that of the solitary Harold who "might midst the many stand / Unheeded, searching through the crowd..."(10;87-88). Unwilling to succumb to the surrounding social pressures which similarly plagued St. Preux, Byron, too, thrives on individualism and delights in resisting the temptation to be a mere flatterer:

> ... in the crowd
> They could not deem me one of such; I stood
> Among them, but not of them ...
>
> (113;1053-55)

Philosophically aloof from mankind, the Promethean man revels in a defiant stance from which he prides himself on his refusal to flatter the base passions of fellow-man. Once the rebel has shaken off the chains of society, he can look inward to the imagination as suggestive of the ideal realm to which he aspires:

> He would not yield dominion of his mind
> To spirits against whom his own rebell'd;
> Proud though in desolation; which could find
> A life within itself, to breathe without mankind.
>
> (12;105-08)

At the close of a letter to Julie, St. Preux asks her

to judge if he is right in thinking the city a desert. Overwhelmed by the masks and phantoms that disguise human nature, St. Preux concludes that the city prevents any real outbursts of sincere feeling. Unwilling to stoop to the standards of society, St. Preux takes a Promethean stand as a solitary figure in a world oblivious to virtue. He asks Julie to recognize his sad predicament:

> Meanwhile, judge if I am right in calling this crowded scene a wasteland, and of being alarmed by a solitude in which I find only an empty appearance of sentiment and of sincerity which changes every instant and falsifies itself, in which I see only spectres and phantoms which strike the eye for a moment and disappear as soon as one tries to touch them? Until now I have seen a great many masks; when shall I see the faces of men?
>
> (2.XIV,197)

The high-principled insurgent, epitomized by Harold and St. Preux, is confined by the limits of society. As he struggles for the freedom of self-expression, society smothers his idealism with its tyrannous insensitivity. Firm in his convictions, the Promethean man must employ the strength of his moral superiority to thrust himself into a higher sphere beyond the imprisonment of an unthinking, uncaring society. In close commerce with others, such a sensitive individual as Harold is lost:

> But in Man's dwellings he became a thing
> Restless and worn, and stern and wearisome...
>
> (15;127-28)

St. Preux's familiarity with the society of the densely

populated city allows him to contrast such a lifestyle with that of rural life. He thereby concludes that it is in the country, rather than in the city, that one finds the true nature of a people:

> If I wanted to study a people, it is in the remote provinces where the inhabitants still have their natural tendencies, where I would go to observe them. I would travel slowly and with care through several of these provinces, the farthest from the others. All the differences that I would observe between them would give me the particular character of each. All that they would have in common, and which the other people would not have, would form the national character, and that which can be found everywhere, would belong to mankind in general.
>
> (2.XVI; my translation)

The frustration that a Byronic hero, such as Harold, feels in the society of man should not be construed as an innate malevolent instinct. In assuming the role of renegade, the hero does not despise humanity. Finding no niche for himself in a world where men's daily preoccupations are at such variance from his own, he realizes that it is his obligation to seek out a more compatible environment. Because his aspirations are not those of the majority, he is obliged to find contentment elsewhere. As Byron says, rejecting society is mutually beneficial to the individual and to the collective group he opposes:

> To fly from, need not be to hate, mankind;
> All are not fit with them to stir and toil,
> Nor is it discontent to keep the mind
> Deep in its fountain, lest it overboil
> In the hot throng, where we become the spoil
> Of our infection...
>
> (69;653-58)

Byron's sense of society's condemnation is essentially autobiographical. Rumours of Byron's alleged mistreatment of Lady Byron and of an incestuous relationship with Augusta gained momentum after Byron left England in 1816. While Byron was fortunate enough to manage an escape to the Continent, Augusta bore the brunt of Lady Byron's wrath at home. She became the pawn of the puritanical Annabella who wanted to reform Augusta from her wicked ways. Annabella intimidated Augusta into revealing all correspondence which passed between herself and Byron. Through Augusta's letters, Byron sensed that Augusta was guilt-ridden because she now saw their former sexual intimacy as sinful. Byron tried to alleviate Augusta's distraught state of mind when he wrote to her in August of 1816:

> ... do not be uneasy - and do not "hate yourself" if you hate either let it be <u>me</u> - but do not - it would kill me; we are the last persons in the world - who ought - or could cease to love one another.[52]

To remain within a society to which the man of feeling is diametrically opposed takes its toll on everyone "in wretched interchange of wrong for wrong"(69;660). It is better for a rebel, such as Byron, to realize his unwillingness to assimilate and leave society which is content with its own interest in fame, glory and money. The cost to the individual of reaching such a conclusion is high. To maintain his incorruptibility he is forced into the

role of a wanderer. He becomes an Ahasuerus doomed to a life of wandering. He is much like Coleridge's ancient mariner, who is destined to be forever searching and forever denied a permanent haven of contentment. The pilgrimage is the means whereby the pilgrim is prevented from a descent into madness. Paradoxically, his pilgrimage is at once his punishment and salvation; as an outsider, he is sustained by this constant movement. Byron sees this restlessness in himself:

> ... on the sea,
> The boldest steer but where their ports invite,
> But there are wanderers o'er Eternity
> Whose bark drives on and on, and anchored ne'er
> shall be.
>
> (70;667-70)

Outside populated areas, the poet-wanderer finds consolation in having rid himself of the torment aroused by his knowledge of society's condemnation of his individuality compounded with his moral refusal to succumb to its pressures:

> I look upon the peopled desert past,
> As on a place of agony and strife,
> Where, for some sin, to Sorrow I was cast,
> To act and suffer, but remount at last,
> With a fresh pinion...
>
> (73;690-94)

Looking back at his outlook when he lived in the world of men, Byron admits that his quest for fame was a lapse in his principles. There was a time when the praise of other men was alluring; but he now knows that his fascination with fame was a misguided youthful goal. Byron claims

nonetheless that while fame held a certain appeal, he did not prostitute himself to it:

> Fame is the thirst of youth, - but I am not
> So young as to regard men's frown or smile,
> As loss or guerdon of a glorious lot;
> I stood and stand alone, - remembered or forgot.
> (112;1045-48)

The Promethean man is defiantly proud of his life-long battle with society. His moral victory rests in his never having flattered or feigned affection to win the esteem of others. Individuality is his song of joy:

> I have not loved the world, nor the world me;
> I have not flattered its rank breath, nor bow'd
> To its idolatries a patient knee, -
> Nor coin'd my cheek to smiles...
> (113;1049-52)

But how does one maintain such a firmness of conviction which runs so much against the grain of society? Byron argues that imagination is the inner well from which the rebel draws sustenance. What the real world lacks in terms of love and compassion, one may find by looking inward to the imagination. Where reason tends to reward only logical interpretations of the universe, imagination welcomes emotional raptures of feeling as the means of reaching greater knowledge. Cloaking his imagination in favourite thoughts, Byron was able to create a world of his own, more sensitive and intense than the chaotic outside world. He describes how he was able to divorce himself imaginatively from the pettiness of all that disquieted him in the real world:

> ... I stood
> Among them, but not of them; in a shroud
> Of thoughts which were not their thoughts...
> (113;1054-56)

Disillusioned with the goals of fame, power and money, the Promethean man is forced into an introspective state of mind. It is only through imagination that he can even attempt to comprehend the greater ideals of love and perfection. If the world's goals are misguided and illusory, the imagination offers a realm of endless possibility where human frailty need not impede a vision of greater accomplishment. Realizing the unlikelihood of his and the world's views ever merging, Byron reiterates "I have not loved the world, nor the world me" and adds "But let us part fair foes"(114;1058-59).

Pilgrim of Nature

If, as Byron suggests, the truly heroic man is out of place in society, what recourse remains to him? If, also, he finds refuge in the imagination, for how long can such an escape be maintained? While the poet can find comfort in becoming a pilgrim of nature, he cannot live completely devoid of human contact; but neither does he need the chaos of the overpopulated city. While the pilgrim finds refuge by forays into the imagination, such escapes, though frequent and brief, do not suggest a permanent transcendence. But through nature, the Promethean man can

reconcile the real world and the ideal imagined one.

Turning to nature, displayed in both its pastoral and turbulent states, the poet can find a world which teaches him self-knowledge. The power displayed by nature stimulates the mind and heart into profound and sublime contemplation. Consumed with the trials of the world, man can also find a calming effect in the serenity and solitude of nature. Byron was drawn to the awe-inspiring power of nature manifested in mountains, oceans, thunderstorms and avalanches. He was also enthralled with the subtlety of pastoral nature displayed in calm lakes, the song of birds, sunlight, and fields of flowers. Focussing on nature, in any of these forms, lures the poet into an intense awareness of himself and the God who created such a multifaceted universe. Observation of the diverse order of nature leads the poet to see a coherence in its ostensibly disordered arrangement. Piecing together the seemingly opposite elements of nature produces a grand, yet incomprehensible scheme. Furthermore, man and nature join to make a complete unified whole. As a traveller in the world of nature, the poet joins in the celebration of unity. For Harold, as for Byron, all aspects of nature are beneficent:

> Where rose the mountains, there to him were friends;
> Where roll'd the ocean, thereon was his home;
> Where a blue sky, and glowing clime, extends,
> He had the passion and the power to roam;
> The desart, forest, cavern, breaker's foam,
> Were unto him companionship; they spake
> A mutual language, clearer than the tome

> Of his land's tongue, which he would oft forsake
> For Nature's pages glass'd by sunbeams on the lake.
>
> (13;109-17)

In La Nouvelle Héloïse, St. Preux, exiled from Julie, completes a week long trek though the mountains. Like Byron, who kept a journal for Augusta of his September 1816 Alpine tour, St. Preux kept one for Julie. St. Preux keeps his letters free from trivial detail so that he may communicate on a more intimate level:

> I shall not give you here a detailed account of my trip and observations. I have written a report of it all which I intend to bring you. Our correspondence must be reserved for things which touch us more closely.
>
> (1.XXIII;64)

One of the things St. Preux chooses to relate to Julie is his response to the overwhelming spectacle of the Alpine scene. Rousseau found himself endeavouring to describe the intense feeling provoked by nature; the feeling which Byron describes, in his Notes to Canto III, as being "of a still higher and more comprehensive order than the mere sympathy with individual passion", "the existence of love in its most extended and sublime capacity", and "the great principle of the universe." St. Preux finds that the vastness of the Alps draws him into grand and sublime contemplation. Removed from society, St. Preux is drawn irresistibly upward in an ecstatic revivification. The mountains and the surrounding air have a rejuvenating and spiritually uplifting effect. He vividly describes how the

intoxication, evoked by the mountains, works on the mind and heart:

> Pleasures are less ardent there, the passions more moderate. Meditations take on an indescribably grand and sublime character, in proportion to the grandeur of the surrounding objects, and an indefinable, tranquil voluptuousness which has nothing of the pungent and sensual. It seems that in being lifted above human society, one leaves below all base and terrestrial sentiments, and that as he approaches the ethereal regions, his soul acquires something of their eternal purity. One is serious there but not melancholy, peaceful but not indolent, content to exist and to think. All overly vivid desires become dulled. They lose that sharpness which makes them painful, they leave only a light and sweet emotion in the bottom of the heart, and it is thus that a pleasing climate causes the passions, which elsewhere constitute man's torment, to contribute to his happiness. I doubt whether any violent agitation or any vapor sickness could withstand a prolonged stay in the mountains, and I am surprised that baths of salutary and beneficial mountain air are not one of the great remedies of medicine and morality.
>
> (1.XXIII;65-66)

The companionship denied the rebel by the community of man is unconditionally enjoyed by the pilgrim of nature. The wanderer, in receiving sensory stimuli from nature, idealizes the scene before him. The observer receives these natural impressions and adds yet another dimension to them through imagination. Through the creative process, the poet adds an even higher significance to that which he sees. In its changing forms, nature, metaphorically speaking, is beckoning to the poet. In turn, the poet offers a creative response through his work. This exchange between nature and the poet is a continuous imaginative dialogue. The rise of

the imagination into thoughts sublime and immortal provoked by observation of nature is, however, brief. Thus, limited by mortality, the poet can only glimpse eternity. Such a tension between mortality and immortality was made known to Byron through the observation of a star-filled sky on a clear night. As he says of Harold:

> ... he could watch the stars,
> Till he had peopled them with beings bright
> As their own beams; and earth, and earth-born jars,
> And human frailties, were forgotten quite...
> (14;118-21)

Byron does not, however, delude himself into hoping that such an excited state could last. He is aware that mortality prevents him from permanently transcending the world:

> Could he have kept his spirit to that flight
> He had been happy; but his clay will sink
> Its spark immortal, envying it the light
> To which it mounts as if to break the link
> That keeps us from yon heaven which woos us to its brink.
> (14;122-26)

But all is not lost. The poet can look forward to numerous other times when nature will briefly enliven the imagination. For the time being, he resumes his worldly drudgery as the wandering "Self-exiled Harold", feeling that "he lived in vain, / That all was over on this side the tomb"(16;138-39).

In Rousseau's novel, the important role played by nature in the lives of Julie and Wolmar is exemplified by

their having cultivated an enclosed garden which, in all ways, appears to be completely natural. Rousseau indicates his preference for wild uncultivated regions, instead of formal manmade gardens, by having the Wolmars cultivate a garden that paradoxically suggests no human presence. The Wolmars called the garden Elysium and it provided them with an easily accessible natural retreat.

Through the image of Elysium, Rousseau denies the validity of the neo-classical taste for gardens which have been forced into a symmetry and uniformity that is completely unnatural. He favours the romantic view that nature in its wildness and variety cannot be embellished by the hand of man.

What the Wolmars created is a garden which symbolically contradicts human standards of order and taste in appearing to be the result of procreative nature developing according to its own unwritten laws. On first entering Elysium, St. Preux is awed by the variety of this solitary retreat:

> Entering this so-called orchard, I was struck by an agreeable sensation of freshness which the thick foliage, the animated and vivid greenness, the flowers scattered about on all sides, the murmuring of a running brook, and the singing of a thousand birds brought to my imagination at least as much as to my senses; but at the same time I thought I saw the wildest, the most solitary place in nature, and it seemed I was the first mortal who had ever penetrated into this desert island. Surprised, impressed, ecstatic over a sight so little expected, I remained motionless for a moment...
>
> (4.XI;305)

Through Julie, Rousseau eliminates the seeming contradiction in the creation of a garden which does not appear to be a garden. She argues that if one cannot easily see nature in its traditional setting, then one must help nature by bringing it closer, as she and Wolmar have done. She maintains that nature is instinctively repelled by humanity:

> ... nature seems to desire to hide from the eyes of men its real attractions, of which they are too little aware and which they disfigure when they are within reach. Nature flies from frequented places. It is on the summits of mountains, in the depths of forests, on desert islands that it displays its most affecting charms.
>
> (4.XI;312)

Presented with the natural appearance of Elysium, St. Preux is stimulated into contrasting the scene before him with the artificial order of formal gardens that he remembers from London and Paris. He complains that the gardens of the rich are made by siphoning off and discarding natural beauty and forcing what remains into a false order. He mocks the rich who mar nature by trimming hedges and sculpting trees and grass into unnatural shapes. Such tampering with nature is dismissed by St. Preux as a futile attempt by man to improve upon the perfection of nature.

Rousseau has chosen to have Wolmar also share in the romantic vision of nature celebrated by St. Preux and Julie. The reader finds himself surprised that Wolmar, the atheist

and stoic, has a disdain for formal gardens and is almost religiously ecstatic over the beauty manifested in the disorderly appearance of nature:

> What, therefore, will the man of taste do? - one who lives to live, who knows how to enjoy himself, who seeks true and simple pleasures, and who wants to create for himself a walkway close to his house. He will make it so comfortable and attractive that he would find pleasure there at any hour of the day, and yet, the walk will be so simple and so natural that it appears that nothing has been done. He will bring together water, greenness, shadow and freshness, because in nature, we find all these things. He will forget symmetry; it is the enemy of nature and of variety.
>
> (4.XI; my translation)

Arriving in Switzerland, Harold is uplifted to a higher plane by the mountainous scenery. Despite the scenes of human devastation known to places such as the battlefield at Morat, the surrounding mountains appear ageless and oblivious. To Harold, the mountain is the symbol of immortality:

> And from its immortality look forth
> In the sun's face, like yonder Alpine snow,
> Imperishably pure beyond all things below.
>
> (67;641-43)

Byron was enthralled with the magnificence of Mont Blanc. He cites it as the source of inspiration for the stanza which "is written in the eye of Mont Blanc (June 3d, 1816) which even at this distance dazzles mine".[53]

Byron, observing Lake Geneva, is further drawn into contemplation of his surroundings because the Lake mirrors the stars and mountains. His trance, however, is shattered

by the presence of humanity and so he laments, "There is too much of man here, to look through / With a fit mind the might which I behold"(68;648-49).

Returning to Switzerland after spending several years travelling the world, St. Preux, has an intense emotional response to the natural splendour of the Swiss landscape. He is unable to resist the spontaneous joy which overpowers his senses and is intoxicated with the sights, sounds and fragrances that envelope him:

> The closer I came to Switzerland, the more excited I felt. The instant when from the heights of the Jura I discovered the Lake of Geneva was an instant of ecstasy and rapture. The sight of my country, of that cherished country where torrents of pleasure had flooded my heart; the Alpine air so wholesome and so pure; the gentle breeze of the country, more fragrant than the perfumes of the orient; that rich and fertile land, that matchless countryside, the most beautiful ever beheld by human eyes; that charming place to which I had found nothing equal in my tour of the world; the aspect of a happy and free people...
>
> (4.VI;286)

Likewise, it is to nature that Byron returns to celebrate his individualism. The rapid flow of the Rhone river into the calmness of Lake Geneva suggests to Byron the metaphor of a mother nursing a child:

> Is it not better, then, to be alone,
> And love Earth only for its earthly sake?
> By the blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone,
> Or the pure bosom of its nursing lake,
> Which feeds it as a mother who doth make
> A fair but froward infant her own care,
> Kissing its cries away as these awake; -
> Is it not better thus our lives to wear,
> Than join the crushing crowd, doom'd to inflict
> or bear?
>
> (71;671-79)

Feeling at one with nature, Byron contrasts his present sensations of comfort with those of utter desolation and discomfort which he had formerly experienced at the hands of society. The mountainous landscape inspires Byron to a higher level of contemplation which is in direct contrast to the baseness he had witnessed in society. While the mountains beckon the imagination ever-upward, cities pull men downward to base inclinations. Paradoxically, the further Byron is removed from mankind the more human he feels. Through heightened sensitivity he becomes a more active participant in the scheme of nature:

> I live not in myself, but I become
> Portion of that around me; and to me,
> High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
> Of human cities torture...
>
> (72;680-83)

Inspired into sublime contemplation, the poet has only one regret, the finitude of life. While the imagination is briefly ignited by a celestial flame, the limitations of mortality ensure the impossibility of escape. To be persistently at one with nature would require that man transcend his human limitations. Byron is aware of the boundaries of his human form:

> ... I can see
> Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be
> A link reluctant in a fleshly chain,
> Class'd among creatures, when the soul can flee,
> And with the sky, the peak, the heaving plain
> Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in vain.
>
> (72;683-88)

While nature offers condolence and comfort to the poet, it also unleashes in him a dissatisfaction over his weakness and insignificance. Byron is not fearful of death, provided it is not a state of nothingness. Byron looks forward to annihilation of the body, for then "the mind shall be all free / From what it hates in this degraded form, / Reft of its carnal life"(74;698-700). Byron hopes that death will be an eternal state of intense feeling. He might then fully know the immortality which an earthly existence denies him:

> ... shall I not
> Feel all I see, less dazzling, but more warm?
> The bodiless thought? the Spirit of each spot?
> Of which, even now, I share at times the immortal lot?
>
> (74;703-06)

Love of nature is a passion for Byron. He is overwhelmed by its vastness and diversity and endeavours to express the extent to which it penetrates his whole being. He is aware of his insignificance in the broad and perfect plan of nature. He is simultaneously elevated by the spectacle of the natural world yet dejected by an awareness of his humanity. The poet seeks answers to the questions he poses:

> Are not the mountains, waves, and skies, a part
> Of me and of my soul, as I of them?
> Is not the love of these deep in my heart
> With a pure passion? Should I not contemn
> All objects, if compared with these?...
>
> (75;707-11)

Attempting a reply to these inquiries, the poet is led back

to reality and a remembrance of all that is disgusting in society. The perfection of nature emphasizes the baseness of humanity thus causing the poet once again to reflect on the inadequacies of society. He is at a loss to reconcile the disparity between the worlds of nature and man and looks with contempt on the pettiness of humanity:

> ... the hard and worldly phlegm
> Of those whose eyes are only turn'd below,
> Gazing upon the ground, with thoughts which dare not glow?
>
> (75;713-15)

Rural Solitude

The rejuvenating ability of nature was affirmed by Rousseau, who, like Byron, saw the juxtaposition of urban and rural life. For Rousseau and Byron, the solitude of nature is conducive to contentment. Rousseau saw the perfection of nature as the manifestation of the goodness of God. His belief in the goodness of God is a fundamental principle of his philosophy and one he insisted upon in his treatise on education - Emile. That man is born good and becomes corrupt through society is Rousseau's explanation for the evil and malice present in the world. He emphasizes God's goodness at the opening of Emile:

> Everything is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of things; everything degenerates in the hands of man.[54]

The solitude of nature so highly praised by Byron in the stanzas on Clarens is also applauded in stanzas 85-91 on

Lake Geneva. The peace and harmony of Lake Geneva at twilight ironically remind Byron of the recent chaotic disorder of his life. It is as if the Lake is beckoning Byron to a more quiet kind of existence:

> Clear, placid Leman! thy contrasted lake,
> With the wild world I dwelt in, is a thing
> Which warns me, with its stillness, to forsake
> Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring.
> (85;797-800)

It is in the solitude of nature that Byron is often reminded of the chaotic state of his own life. Sailing quietly on the lake, Byron finds the "soft murmuring sounds" to be as sweet as a "sister's voice"(85;803-04). His reflection on Augusta is most poignant when he finds himself alone.

Separated from Julie, St. Preux finds solace in his imaginative ability to conjure up her image. Away from her, St. Preux sees her as faultless - the ideal of love and beauty. Solitude is not tiresome for St. Preux because his mind is actively engaged in thinking of Julie. The peacefulness of the natural setting is conducive to his reverie of Julie. Undistracted in the absence of company, St. Preux experiences a oneness which combines his and Julie's souls. Writing to Julie from Sion, St. Preux is annoyed that some business affairs necessitate a temporary absence from the isolation of the natural setting he enjoys exploring. Due to the pressure exerted by Julie's class-conscious father, St. Preux is forbidden to marry Julie.

Consequently, he finds imaginative activity in solitude to be an outlet for his intense love. He explains to Julie that solitude is paradoxically his punishment and salvation:

> I have dragged into exile only the most inconsiderable part of myself; all that is truly alive in me dwells forever near you. My soul roams with impunity over your eyes, over your lips, over your breast, over all your charms. It penetrates everywhere like a subtle vapor, and I am happier despite you than I ever was with your permission ... I am not to be pitied in my solitude, where I can occupy myself with thoughts of you and transport myself imaginatively to wherever you are. Only active employment which calls me back to myself is unbearable. I am going to transact my affairs badly and quickly, in order to be free soon and to be able to wander at my leisure through the savage places which constitute in my eyes the charms of this country.
> (1.XVIII;57)

St. Preux claims to feel more ecstatic about Julie when separated from her than he felt in her company. Byron's solitary experience is not, however, as overpowering. The privacy of the Swiss wilderness intensifies his desire to share the beauty of its isolation with Augusta. The presence of Augusta would have been, for Byron, the crowning touch to his solitary experiences:

> I do not write to you in good spirits, and I cannot pretend to be so, but I have no <u>near</u> nor <u>immediate</u> cause of being thus ... This country is altogether the Paradise of Wilderness - I wish you were in it with me - & every one else out of it - Love me, A., ever thine - B[55]

Three days later, Byron wrote to Augusta, again emphasizing that her presence in Switzerland would add to his enjoyment of the country:

> You have no idea how very beautiful great part of

> this country is - and <u>women</u> and <u>children</u> traverse it with ease and expedition. I would return from any distance at any time to see you, and come to England for you...[56]

Byron's perception of the solitude of Lake Geneva before a storm is characterized by a sense of eerieness or impending doom. There is a lack of clarity in the twilight experience during which it is difficult to distinguish the real from the imagined. The description of the lake's "margin and the mountains, dusk, yet clear / Mellowed and mingling"(86;807-08) creates a sense of mystery in the "... darken'd Jura, whose capt heights appear / Precipitously steep..."(86;809-10).

Byron is conscious of every detail around him: the fragrance of the flowers, the drip of water from the oar, the song of the birds and grasshoppers. The resplendent starlit sky soon prompts Byron into a state of meditation. The stars are illustrative of all which nature embodies, that which man can only vainly hope to touch. The stars are invoked as "the poetry of heaven!"(88;824). Their alluring intangible beauty symbolizes all that man desires but can never achieve. These stars are the models to which man compares his futile efforts:

> ... 'tis to be forgiven,
> That in our aspirations to be great,
> Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,
> And claim a kindred with you; for ye are
> A beauty and a mystery, and create
> In us such love and reverence from afar,
> That fortune, fame, power, life, have named themselves a star.
>
> (88;826-32)

The melancholic pleasure Byron and Rousseau derive from the solitude of nature is partially explained by their refusal to acknowledge anything negative in rural life. They see only idyllic pleasures in the toil of Swiss peasants. They do not see rural labour as a backbreaking effort characterized by long hours of repetitive exertion for little pay. The subsistence based lifestyle of the Swiss peasantry is perceived by Byron, as by Rousseau before him, as the epitome of peace and contentment. Rousseau even suggests that rural work and pleasure are one and the same.

According to Rousseau, rural people are close to nature through their work because they are distant from the decadent luxuries of high society. Their contentment is founded on the ease with which they interact with nature while achieving their needs through a frugal existence. Rousseau points to the strong work ethic of rustics as a source of joy:

> The aim of public and private utility makes it interesting; and therefore, it is the first vocation of man. It recalls to the mind a pleasant idea and to the heart all the charms of the golden age. Our senses do not remain untouched at the sight of labouring and harvesting. The simplicity of the pastoral and rustic life always has something touching.
> (5.VII; my translation)

Julie has the same strong appreciation of rural life that St. Preux often expresses. She thrives on the rusticity of her Clarens estate. Her sensitive management

of the household includes a responsibility for the well-being, not only of her husband and children, but also of her servants. Directing the daily routine of labour on the estate, Julie is the epitome of motherhood ensuring that an harmonious balance is struck between nature and its cultivators. She expresses no desire for the frivolities of urban life, preferring the simplicity of rural ways.

> You know my aversion for the city, my preference for the country, for rustic occupations, and the attachment that a three year stay has given me for my house at Clarens.
>
> (4.I;278)

St. Preux sees an innocence in the peasants of the haut-Valais who, though poor in monetary terms, he deems rich in their humanity. Free from the vain luxuries of urban life, the mountain dwellers see work as a pleasure. Their practicality prevents them from striving for the accumulation of useless trinkets. Paradoxically their wealth lies in their not having accumulated money. Rousseau points out that there is even a gold mine in their region which they have chosen not to exploit. St. Preux is impressed by the equitable manner in which work is distributed among family members. The family is likened to an efficiently run state. Through St. Preux's remarks, the reader understands that Rousseau was more impressed with the subsistence economy of the Swiss peasant than with the pecuniary preoccupations of the avaricious city dwellers:

> However, money is very scarce in the haut-Valais; but it is because of this that the inhabitants are

> at their ease: because commodities are abundant there without outside commerce, without consuming luxury within, and without the alpine farmer, whose work is his pleasure, becoming less hard working. If they ever have more money, they will undoubtedly become poorer. They have the wisdom to be aware of this and there are some gold mines in the country that are not allowed to be mined.... Children of the age of reason are the equals of their fathers; the servants sit at the table with their masters; the same liberty reigns in the houses and in the republic; and the family is the image of the state.
>
> (1.XXIII; my translation)

The corrupting effect of luxury was felt by Rousseau to be inimical to man's nature. Rousseau's perception of the accumulation of wealth as debilitating for both the individual and the nation is also central to The Social Contract:

> ... it corrupts at once rich and poor, the rich by possession and the poor by covetousness; it sells the country to softness and vanity, and takes away from the State all its citizens, to make them slaves one to another, and one and all to public opinion.[57]

Byron's "Alpine Journal", which he kept for Augusta, indicates that he was profoundly affected by the seemingly effortless pleasure of shepherds in the pastoral setting of the Alps. He found the rustics and their sheep surrounded by magnificent mountains to be more Arcadian than their counterparts in Greece and Asia Minor. The shepherds at work in the rural setting impressed him as a scene of pastoral innocence. Removed from the chaos of the city, the shepherds conduct their simple work with a dignity and enthusiasm lacking in the work of urban dwellers. Such an

harmonious scene of man interacting with nature caused Byron's imagination to respond intensely to the power of nature:

> - The music of the Cows' bells (for their wealth like the Patriarchs is cattle)in the pastures (which reach to a height far above any mountains in Britain -) and the Shepherds' shouting to us from crag to crag & playing on their reeds where the steeps appeared almost inaccessible, with the surrounding scenery - realized all that I have ever heard or imagined of a pastoral existence - much more so than Greece or Asia Minor - for there we are a little too much of the sabre & musquet order - and if there is a Crook in one hand, you are sure to see a gun in the other - but this was pure and unmixed - solitary - savage and patriarchal - the effect I cannot describe - as we went they played the "Ranz des Vaches" and other airs by way of farewell. - I have lately repeopled my mind with Nature.[58]

Like Byron, Rousseau presents the workers on the Wolmar estate as happily working in the pleasant atmosphere of Clarens. St. Preux looks upon the grape harvest on the estate of the Wolmars as a festival of bountifulness. The harvesters, singing as they work, are symbolic of an harmonious marriage of man and nature. One derives a sense from the scene that God is invisibly overseeing the production and delighting in the observation of man working with, not against, nature. For Rousseau, rural work completed with enthusiasm and efficiency is truly rewarding for the labourers. Work is not the drudgery of the city marketplace where fighting and haggling mean that only a few reap the benefits and the masses are slaves to the indulgences of the rich. The Clarens grape harvest takes on

an air of autumnal beneficence because man's toil is rewarded by the plenitude of nature. St. Preux celebrates the rustic simplicity of the scene:

> ... the song of the grape gatherers with which these slope reverberate; the continuous tread of those who carry the harvest to the press; the raucous sound of the rustic instruments that inspire them to work; the pleasant and affecting picture of a general cheerfulness which seems at this time spread over the face of the earth; finally, the veil of mist which the sunlight lifts in the mornings like a theater curtain in order to discover such a charming sight to the eye - all conspire to give it a festive air, and this festival becomes only more pleasing upon reflection, when one observes that it is the only one in which men have been able to combine the agreeable and the useful.
>
> (5.VII;358)

At the end of his Alpine tour with Hobhouse, Byron is melancholy because of his inability to escape from himself. Nature impressed him but could not obliterate his haunting memories and subsequent unhappiness. The intense sense of solitude and sublimity expressed in the "Journal" makes it hard to believe that even if Byron could not permanently escape from his tormented mind, he must have at least derived some temporary relief through the imagination by reflecting on the scene before him. He stubbornly insists, however, that he was plagued with misery during the entire Alpine tour:

> - I was disposed to be pleased - I am a lover of Nature - and an Admirer of Beauty - I can bear fatigue - & welcome privation - and have seen some of the noblest views in the world. - But in all this - the recollections of bitterness - & more especially of recent & more home desolation - which must accompany me through life - have preyed

upon me here - and neither the music of the Shepherd - the crashing of the Avalanche - nor the torrent - the mountain - the Glacier - the Forest - nor the Cloud - have for one moment - lightened the weight upon my heart - nor enabled me to lose my own wretched identity in the majesty & the power and the Glory - around - above - & beneath me.[59]

CHAPTER V

RETROSPECT

Largely due to Byron's aborted liaison with Claire Clairmont and the controversy which ensued over what was to be done with Allegra, the unfortunate result of that brief encounter, Byron's relationship with the Shelleys had become strained. Although they resumed closer ties in the fall of 1821 at Pisa, they would never again enjoy the intimacy of the summer nights spent on Lake Geneva in 1816. Reading Canto III of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage in May of 1817, Mary Shelley nostalgically reminisced about the previous summer. The pleasure at Shelley's first reading the Canto to her after he and Byron had returned from their Rousseauean pilgrimage had a lasting effect:

> I am melancholy with reading the 3rd Canto of Childe Harold. Do you not remember, Shelley when you first read it to me? One evening after returning from Diodati. It was in our little room at Chapuis - the lake was before us and the mighty Jura. That time is past and this will also pass when I may weep to read these words and again moralize on the flight of time.[60]

Shelley wrote to Thomas Moore regarding the background of the work written by himself and Mary and published in 1817 and entitled History of a Six Weeks' Tour Through a Part of France, Switzerland, Germany, and Holland: with Letters Descriptive of a Sail Round the Lake of Geneva, and of the Glaciers of Chamouni. The manner in which Shelley

recalls the boat tour with Byron suggests that he retained a special place in his heart for the memory of that unforgettable journey:

> - The letters from Geneva were written in the summer of 1816, & the voyage round the lake, described in one of them was made in the society of Lord Byron, & its memory derives from that circumstance the light of an enchantment which can never be dissolved. I mention this because you were often the theme of our conversations, from which I learned that you were intimate with him.[61]

Once Byron arrived in Italy in the fall of 1816, he resumed a promiscuous style of living reminiscent of the one he enjoyed in young adulthood prior to his doomed marriage. Well-rested from his summer in Switzerland, he welcomed the rollicking high life of Venice, particularly during the annual carnival. His later relationship with Teresa Guiccioli had a calming effect on him as he settled into the role of "cavalier servente" which he maintained until he went to Greece in 1823.

Noticeably recovered from the traumas of his life in England during the winter of 1815 and the spring of 1816, Byron again enjoyed mixing in society. The solitude of the Swiss Alps was no longer sustaining and he now found pleasure in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Italian drawing rooms. In 1821, when Teresa's family was banished from Ravenna because of their pro-revolutionary tendencies against the Austrian controlled government, Byron had briefly thought of Switzerland as a possible dwelling place.

But the Rousseauistic light in which he saw Switzerland in 1816 had lost its glow. Writing to Teresa's brother, Count Pietro Gamba in August 1821, he says that the idea of returning to Switzerland is "most unpleasant". Byron is probably remembering the numerous English tourists whom he disliked intensely and who frequented the towns around Lake Geneva. He might well have been thinking of his brief liaison with Claire Clairmont and the troubles which stemmed from it. Furthermore, Byron was irritated by rumours circulating in England that he and Shelley had been involved in a "league of incest" with Claire Clairmont and Mary Shelley. These factors combined to make the idea of returning to Switzerland repulsive to Byron:

> ... Switzerland is perhaps the dearest county (sic) in Europe for foreigners, its people being the most canny and rascally in the world about all that has to do with money - and deceitfulness - and avarice.[62]

Just over a month later, in a letter to Thomas Moore, Byron wrote some equally deprecating remarks about the Swiss but maintained that their country was "romantic". Once Byron had recovered from the trials that plagued him in 1816, he resumed his typically nonchalant view of life. The Swiss to whom he refers in 1821 are not the sylvan shepherds he saw in 1816:

> Switzerland is a curst selfish, swinish country of brutes, placed in the most romantic region of the world. I never could bear the inhabitants, and still less their English visitors; for which reason, after writing for some information about houses, upon hearing that there was a colony of

> English all over the cantons of Geneva, & c., I immediately gave up the thought and persuaded the Gambas to do the same.[63]

Byron's homage to Rousseau had ended. In retrospect, Byron had a more realistic remembrance of the summer of 1816. He was no longer under the spell of La Nouvelle Héloïse which he had read in the bosom of Alpine nature. Out of Switzerland, he was very much in the real world, distinctly different from the idyllic Rousseauean settings which he had visited with Shelley.

For the most part, Shelley and Mary Shelley chose to remember a summer of pleasure on Lake Geneva. Even Mary Shelley's memory of Byron's distraught state of mind is not condemnatory. She was aware that the creator of Childe Harold was plagued with feelings of isolation and low self-esteem during that memorable summer. In a letter to Murray written sixteen years later, she takes a retrospective glance at the Byron of 1816:

> When he quitted England, feeling himself wronged - an outcast & a mourner - his mind took a higher flight - It fed upon his regrets - & on his injuries - & Manfred & the 3d Canto of C.H [Childe Harold] bear marks of solitary ruminations in wild scenery - detached from the spirit of fashion & the world...[64]

In 1828, Hobhouse revisited Switzerland accompanied by his wife. He felt the haunting presence of Byron during a visit to Diodati. He describes his impressions of seeing Byron's villa on August 22, 1828 and nostalgically remembers the pleasures he had enjoyed there in 1816:

> ... I walked down to the banks of the lake, and looked for a time across the water to find out the Villa Diodati on the other side. At last I recognised the site of it by discovering the little boat-house where Byron used to embark on his water excursions. And I soon discovered the balcony of the villa itself, where he and I had so often strolled together, gazing at the lake and talking of old days. I saw that the shops at Geneva had got a picture of the villa, and described it as the residence of Byron. I had never seen it since he and I set out for Italy together in 1816. We drove over with Lord and Lady Tweeddale to the other side of the lake, and went by the back of the Villa Diodati, and found nothing changed but myself.[65]

On hearing of Byron's death, Mary Shelley thought back to Lake Geneva and the pleasurable moments spent in his company in 1816. Ignoring the dark side of Byron's character, Mary remembers him as the effervescent personality who brought delight to their shared Swiss sojourn:

> ... Byron has become one of the people of the grave - that innumerable conclave to which the beings I best loved belong. I knew him in the bright days of youth ... Can I forget our evening visits to Diodati - our excursions of the lake when he sang the Tyrolese hymn - and his voice was harmonized with winds and waves? - Can I forget his attentions & consolations to me during my deepest misery? - Never.
>
> Beauty sat on his countenance and power beamed from his eye - his faults being for the most part weaknesses induced one readily to pardon them. Albe - the dear capricious fascinating Albe has left this desart world.[66]

APPENDIX

(Passages from Rousseau which are given in English translation in this thesis)

A deterrent to detailed study of Rousseau in relation to Byron is the lack of precise English translations from which to work. Philosophical works, such as The Social Contract and the Discourses, and Rousseau's educational treatise, Emile, as well as his autobiographical Confessions, are widely available in English. But La Nouvelle Héloïse and Rousseau's Letters are not readily available in accurate and complete translation. There are a few translations of Rousseau's letters sporadically located within criticism of a primarily philosophical or political bent, but what is required is a complete authoritative English translation.

The unavailability of a comprehensive version of La Nouvelle Héloïse is frustrating. The work has been translated into English only twice since its original appearance in French in 1761. The first translation entitled Eloisa: or a Series of Original Letters Collected and Published by J.J. Rousseau by William Kenrick is marred by inaccuracies and stilted language. Kenrick's effort is more correctly described as a hobby, not a professional work. Considered a rare book nowadays, Kenrick's

translation would be of only peripheral interest even if it were widely available. An English abridgement of La Nouvelle Héloïse, edited by Judith McDowell, appeared in 1968.[67] McDowell's work, while accurate in terms of translation is badly scarred by its haphazard and severe abridgement. In shrinking the original work from 315,000 words to 180,000, McDowell has produced a work that may be of cursory interest to Rousseau scholars but is completely invalid as a tool for close study of La Nouvelle Héloïse. McDowell defends her arbitrary hacking of the text:

> Rousseau is often repetitious, describing an event sometimes from three or four points of view, breaking into his narrative to recapitulate the plot, and restating an opinion or a moral dictum several times. These repetitious elements can be deleted without serious harm to the plot or to the characterizations of the novel. Moreover, like many eighteenth century novelists, Rousseau delighted in digressions on moral, social, and political topics.[68]

Some of these "digressions" and "repetitions" to which McDowell alludes are of particular interest to studies focussing on the romantic aspects of Rousseau's thinking. She has eliminated what are, in fact, highly relevant descriptive passages pertaining to wild mountain scenery, the artificiality of society, the malevolent effects of social conventions, the clash between neo-classical and romantic tastes, and the supremacy of rural over urban values. While she may feel such deletions are justified, the reader who has an interest in these areas is forced back

to French in order to obtain a complete picture. Because La Nouvelle Héloïse is in many respects disjointed and incoherent, Rousseau's repetitions are often the only means whereby the reader can assay an appreciation of the novel.

Compounding the problems associated with the unavailability of an adequate text is the lack of critical and biographical information in English on Rousseau. Only well-known biographies have been well translated. In terms of La Nouvelle Héloïse, criticism to a large extent remains limited to that published in French.

Of the criticism available in English, there are two particularly noteworthy articles which recognize the link between Rousseau and Byron. Though brief, the articles are perceptive: "Byron and La Nouvelle Héloïse: Two Parallel Paradoxes" by Ernest J. Lovell, Jr.[69] and "Rousseau & Byron" by Wadad Iskander Ajami.[70] In terms of La Nouvelle Héloïse and Canto III of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, love of nature encompasses a variety of other ideas some of which Ajami has touched upon in his list of affinities.

APPENDIX: FRENCH VERSIONS

Page 33: Ces montagnes sont si hautes qu'une demie heure après le soleil couché leurs sommets sont encore éclairés de ses rayons, dont le rouge forme sur ces cimes blanches une belle couleur de rose qu'on apperçoit de fort loin.
(4.XVII;518)

Page 33: J'écris par un batelier que je ne connois point ce billet à l'addresse ordinaire, pour donner avis que j'ai choisi mon azile à Meillerie sur la rive opposée; afin de joüir au moins de la vüe du lieu dont je n'ose approcher.
(1.Billet;89)

Page 36: Je trouve la campagne plus riante, la verdure plus fraiche et plus vive, l'air plus pur, le Ciel plus serain; le chant des oiseaux semble avoir plus de tendresse et de volupté; le murmure des eaux inspire une langueur plus amoureuse; la vigne en fleurs exhale au loin de plus doux parfums; un charme secret embellit tous les objets ou fascine mes sens, on diroit que la terre se pare pour former à ton heureux amant un lit nuptial digne de la beauté qu'il adore et du feu qui le consume. O Julie! ô chere et précieuse moitié de mon ame, hâtons-nous d'ajouter à ces ornemens du printems (sic) la présence de deux amans fidelles: Portons le sentiment du plaisir dans des lieux qui n'en offrent qu'une vaine image; alons animer toute la nature, elle est morte sans les feux de l'amour.
(1.XXXVIII;116-17)

Pages 38-39: Imaginez la variété, la grandeur, la beauté de mille étonnans spectacles; le plaisir de ne voir autour de soi que des objets tout nouveaux, des oiseaux étranges, des plantes bizarre et inconnues, d'observer en quelque sorte une autre nature, et de se trouver dans un nouveau monde. Tout cela fait aux yeux un mélange inexprimable dont le charme augmente

encore par la subtilité de l'air qui rend les couleurs plus vives, les traits plus marqués, rapproche tous les points de vue; les distances paroissant moindres que dans les plaines, où l'épaisseur de l'air couvre la terre d'un voile, l'horison présente aux yeux plus d'objets qu'il semble n'en pouvoir contenir: enfin, le spectacle a je ne sais quoi de magique, de surnaturel qui ravit l'esprit et les sens; on oublie tout, on s'oublie soi-même, on ne sait plus où l'on est.

(1.XXIII;79)

Page 44: Ce lieu solitaire formoit un reduit sauvage et desert; mais plein de ces sortes de beautés qui ne plaisent qu'aux ames sensibles et paroissent horribles aux autres... Derriere nous une chaîne de roches inaccessibles séparoit l'esplanade où nous étions de cette partie des Alpes qu'on nomme les glacieres, parce que d'énormes sommets de glace qui s'accroissent incessamment les couvrent depuis le commencement du monde. Des forêts de noirs sapins nous ombrageoient tristement à droite. Un grand bois de chêne étoit à gauche au delà du torrent, et au dessous de nous cette immense plaine d'eau que le lac forme au sein des Alpes nous séparoit des riches côtes du pays de Vaud, dont la Cime du majestueux Jura couronnoit le tableau.

Au milieu de ces grands et superbes objets, le petit terrain où nous étions étaloit les charmes d'un séjour riant et champêtre; quelques ruisseaux filtroient à travers les rochers, et rouloient sur la verdure en filets de cristal. Quelques arbres fruitiers sauvages panchoient leur têtes sur les notres; la terre humide et fraîche étoit couverte d'herbe et de fleurs. En comparant un si doux séjour aux objets qui l'environnoient, il sembloit que ce lieu désert dut être l'azile de deux amans échappés seuls au bouleversement de la nature.

(4.XVII;518)

Pages 47-48: Tandis que nous nous amusions agréablement à parcourir ainsi des yeux les côtes voisines,

un séchard qui nous poussoit de biais vers la rive opposée s'éleva, fraichit considérablement, et quand nous songeames à revirer, la resistance se trouva si forte qu'il ne fut plus possible à notre frêle bateau de la vaincre. Bientôt les ondes devinrent terribles; il falut regagner la rive de Savoye et tâcher d'y prendre terre au village de Meillerie qui étoit vis-à-vis de nous et qui est presque le seul lieu de cette côte où la greve offre un abord comode. Mais le vent ayant changé se renforçoit, rendoit inutiles les efforts de nos bateliers, et nous faisoit dériver plus bas le long d'une file de rochers escarpés où l'on ne trouve plus d'azile.

Nous nous mimes tous aux rames et presque au même instant j'eus la douleur de voir Julie saisie du mal de coeur, foible et défaillante au bord du bateau. Heureusement elle étoit faite à l'eau et cet état ne dura pas. Cependant nos efforts croissoient avec le danger; le soleil, la fatigue et la sueur nous mirent tous hors d'haleine et dans un épuisement excessif. C'est alors que retrouvant tout son courage Julie animoit le notre par ses caresses compatissantes; elle nous essuyoit indistinctement à tous le visage, et mêlant dans un vase du vin avec de l'eau de peur d'ivresse, elle en offroit alternativement aux plus épuisés. Non, jamais votre adorable amie ne brilla d'un si vif éclat que dans ce moment où la chaleur et l'agitation avoient animé son teint d'un plus grand feu, et ce qui ajoutoit le plus à ses charmes étoit qu'on voyoit si bien à son air attendri que tous ses soins venoient moins de frayeur pour elle que de compassion pour nous. Un instant seulement deux planches, s'étant entre-ouvertes dans un choc qui nous inonda tous, elle crut le bateau brisé, et dans une exclamation de cette tendre mere j'entendis distinctement ces mos: O mes enfans (sic), faut-il ne vous voir plus? Pour moi dont l'imagination va toujours plus loin que le mal, quoique je connusse au vrai l'état du péril, je croyois voir de moment en moment le bateau englouti, cette beauté si touchante se débattre au milieu des flots, et la pâleur de la mort ternir les roses de son visage.

Enfin à force de travail nous remontames à

Meillerie, et après avoir lutté plus d'une heure à dix pas du rivage, nous parvinmes à prendre terre. En abordant, toutes les fatigues furent oubliées. Julie prit sur soi la reconnoissance de tous les soins qu' chacun s'étoit donnés, et comme au fort du danger elle n'avoit songé qu'à nous, à terre il lui sembloit qu'on n'avoit sauvé qu'elle.
(4.XVII;516-17)

Page 51: Bien-tôt je commençai de rouler dans mon esprit des projets funestes, et dans un transport dont je frémis en y pensant, je fus violemment tenté de la précipiter avec moi dans les flots, et d'y finir dans ses bras ma vie et mes longs tourmens. Cette horrible tentation devint à la fin si forte que je fus obligé de quiter brusquement sa main pour passer à la pointe du bateau.
(4.XVII;521)

Page 52: ... il nous a menés dans les bosquets, et précisément, ma chere, dans ce même bosquet où commencerent tous les malheurs de ma vie. En approchant de ce lieu fatal, je me suis sentie un affreux batement de coeur, et j'aurois refusé d'entrer si la honte ne m'eut retenue...
(4.XII;489-90)

Pages 52-53: En se levant il nous embrassa, et voulut que nous nous embrassassions aussi, dans ce lieu....dans ce lieu même où jadis ... Je n'en fis aucune difficulté. Hélas! que j'aurois eu tort d'en faire! Ce baiser n'eut rien de celui qui m'avoit rendu le bosquet redoutable. Je m'en félicitai tristement, et je connus que mon coeur étoit plus changé que jusques-là je n'avois osé le croire.
Comme nous reprenions le chemin du logis, mon mari m'arrêta par le main, et me montrant ce bosquet dont nous sortions, il me dit en riant: Julie, ne craignez plus cet azile; il vient d'être profané.
(4.XII;496)

Page 55: Là j'expliquois à Julie toutes les parties du superbe horizon que nous entouroit. Je lui

montrois de loin les embouchures du Rhone dont l'impétueux cours s'arrête tout à coup au bout d'un quart de lieue, et semble craindre de souiller de ses eaux bourbeuses le cristal azuré du lac.

(4.XVII;515)

Page 70: J'entre avec une secrette horreur dans ce vaste desert du monde. Ce cahos ne m'offre qu'une solitude affreuse, où regne un morne silence. Mon ame à la presse cherche à s'y répandre, et se trouve par tout resserrée. Je ne suis jamais moins seul que quand je suis seul, disoit un ancien; moi, je ne suis seul que dans la foule, où je ne puis être ni à toi ni aux autres.

(2.XIV;231)

Page 71: En attendant, juge si j'ai raison d'appeller cette foule un desert, et de m'effrayer d'une solitude où je ne trouve qu'une vaine apparence de sentimens et de vérité qui change à chaque instant et se détruit elle-même, où je n'apperçois que larves et fantômes qui frapent l'oeil un moment, et disparoissent aussi-tôt qu'on les veut saisir? Jusqu'ici j'ai vû beaucoup de masques; quand verrai-je des visages d'hommes?

(2.XIV;236)

Page 72: Si je voulois étudier un peuple, c'est dans les provinces reculées où les habitans ont encore leurs inclinations naturelles que j'irois les observer. Je parcourrois lentement et avec soin plusieurs de ces provinces, les plus éloignées les unes des autres; toutes les différences que j'observerois entre elles me donneroient le génie particulier de chacune; tout ce qu'elles auroient de commun, et que n'auroient pas les autres peuples, formeroit le génie national, et ce qui se trouveroit par tout, appartiendroit en général à l'homme.

(2.XVI;242)

Page 78: Je ne vous ferai point ici un détail de mon

voyage et de mes remarques; j'en ai fait une relation que je compte vous porter. Il faut reserver notre correspondance pour les choses qui nous touchent de plus près l'un et l'autre.

(1.XXIII;76)

Page 79: ... les plaisirs y sont moins ardens, les passions plus modérées. Les méditations y prennent je ne sais quel caractere grand et sublime, proportionné aux objets qui nous frappent, je ne sais quelle volupté tranquille qui n'a rien d'acre et de sensuel. Il semble qu'en s'élevant au dessus du séjour des hommes on y laisse tous les sentimens bas et terrestres, et qu'à mesure qu'on approche des régions éthérées l'ame contracte quelque chose de leur inaltérable pureté. On y est grave sans mélancolie, paisible sans indolence, content d'être et de penser: tous les desirs trop vifs s'émoussent; ils perdent cette pointe aigue qui les rend douloureux, ils ne laissent au fond du coeur qu'une émotion légere et douce, et c'est ainsi qu'un heureux climat fait servir à la félicité de l'homme les passions qui font ailleurs son tourment. Je doute qu'aucune agitation violente, aucune maladie de vapeurs put tenir contre un pareil séjour prolongé, et je suis surpris que des bains de l'air salutaire et bienfaisant des montagnes ne soient pas un des grands rémedes de la médecine et de la morale.

(1.XXIII;78-79)

Page 81: En entrant dans ce prétendu verger, je fus frappé d'une agréable sensation de fraicheur que d'obscurs ombrages, une verdure animée et vive, des fleurs éparses de tous côtés, un gazouillement d'eau courante et le chant de mille oiseaux porterent à mon imagination du moins autant qu'à mes sens; mais en même tems je crus voir le lieu le plus sauvage, le plus solitaire de la nature, et il me sembloit d'être le premier mortel qui jamais eut pénétré dans ce desert. Surpris, saisi, transporté d'un spectacle si peu prévu, je restai un moment immobile...

(4.XI;471)

Page 82: ... la nature semble vouloir dérober aux yeux des hommes ses vrais attraits, auxquels ils sont trop peu sensibles, et qu'ils défigurent quand ils sont à leur portée: elle fuit les lieux fréquentés; c'est au sommet des montagnes, au fond des forêts, dans des Isles désertes qu'elle étale ses charmes les plus touchans.

(4.XI;479)

Page 83: Que fera donc l'homme de goût qui vit pour vivre, qui sait jouïr de lui-même, qui cherche les plaisirs vrais et simples, et qui veut se faire une promenade à la porte de sa maison? Il la fera si comode et si agréable qu'il s'y puisse plaire à toutes les heures de la journée, et pourtant si simple et si naturelle qu'il semble n'avoir rien fait. Il rassemblera l'eau, la verdure, l'ombre et la fraîcheur; car la nature aussi rassemble toutes ces choses. Il ne donnera à rien de la simétrie; elle est ennemie de la nature et de la variété...

(4.XI;482-83)

Page 84: Plus j'approchois de la Suisse, plus je me sentois ému. L'instant où, des hauteurs du Jura je découvris le lac de Geneve fut un instant d'extase et de ravissement. La vue de mon pays, de ce pays si chéri où des torrens de plaisirs avoient inondé mon coeur; l'air des Alpes si salutaire et si pur; le doux air de la patrie, plus suave que les parfums de l'Orient; cette terre riche et fertile, ce paysage unique, le plus beau dont l'oeil humain fut jamais frapé; ce séjour charmant auquel je n'avois rien trouvé d'egal dans le tour du monde; l'aspect d'un peuple heureux et libre...

(4.VI;419)

Page 89: Je n'ai traîné dans mon exil que la moindre partie de moi-même: tout ce qu'il y a de vivant en moi demeure auprès de vous sans cesse. Il erre impunément sur vos yeux, sur vos levres, sur votre sein, sur tous vos charmes; il pénetre par tout comme une vapeur subtile, et je suis plus heureux en dépit de

vous, que je ne fus jamais de votre gré ... Je ne suis point à plaindre dans la solitude, où je puis m'occuper de vous et me transporter aux lieux où vous êtes. La vie active qui me rappelle à moi tout entier m'est seule insupportable. Je vais faire mal et vîte, pour être promptement libre, et pouvoir m'égarer à mon aise dans les lieux sauvages qui forment à mes yeux les charmes de ce pays.

(1.XVIII;69)

Page 91: L'objet de l'utilité publique et privée le rend intéressant; et puis, c'est la premiere vocation de l'homme, il rapelle à l'esprit une idée agréable, et au coeur tous les charmes de l'âge d'or. L'imagination ne reste point froide à l'aspect du labourage et des moissons. La simplicité de la vie pastorale et champêtre a toujours quelque chose qui touche.

(5.VII;603)

Page 92: Tu connois mon aversion pour la ville, mon goût pour la campagne, pour les travaux rustiques, et l'attachement que trois ans de séjour m'ont donné pour ma maison de Clarens.

(4.I;404)

Pages 92-93: Cependant l'argent est fort rare dans le haut-Valais, mais c'est pour cela que les habitans sont à leur aise: car les denrées y sont abondantes sans aucun débouché au dehors, sans consommation de luxe au dedans, et sans que le cultivateur montagnard, dont les travaux sont les plaisirs, devienne moins laborieux. Si jamais ils ont plus d'argent, ils seront infailliblement plus pauvres. Ils ont la sagesse de le sentir, et il y a dans le pays des mines d'or qu'il n'est pas permis d'exploiter ... les enfans en âge de raison sont les égaux de leurs peres, les domestiques s'asseyent à table avec leurs maîtres; la même liberté regne dans les maisons et dans la république, et la famille est l'image de l'Etat.

(1.XXIII;80-81)

Page 95: ... le chant des vendangeuses dont ces côteaux retentissent; la marche continuelle de ceux qui portent la vendange au pressoir; le rauque son des instrumens rustiques qui les anime au travail; l'aimable et touchant tableau d'une allégresse générale qui semble en ce moment étendu sur la face de la terre; enfin le voile de brouillard que le soleil éleve au matin comme une toile de théatre pour découvrir à l'oeil un si charmant spectacle; tout conspire à lui donner un air de fête, et cette fête n'en devient que plus belle à la réflexion, quand on songe qu'elle est la seule où les hommes aient su joindre l'agréable à l'utile.

(5.VII;604)

NOTES

[1]Ernest J. Lovell, Jr., "Byron and La Nouvelle Héloïse: Two Parallel Paradoxes," Modern Language Notes 56 (1951):459.

Lovell concludes:

> The earliest indication of Byron's familiarity with the French novel seems to be in the list of his reading printed in Moore's Life and dated by Byron November 30, 1807.

[2]George Gordon Noel, Lord Byron, Letter to John Murray, October 7, 1808, in Letters and Journals, 12 vols. ed. Leslie A. Marchand (London: John Murray, 1973-82) 1:171. Hereafter referred to as BLJ.

[3]Byron, Letter to Lady Melbourne, October 21, 1813 in BLJ, 3:151.

[4]Byron, Letter to Teresa Guiccioli, August 30, 1820 in BLJ, 7:167.

[5]Byron, Letter to Douglas Kinnaird, February 24, 1823 in BLJ, 10:109.

[6]Byron, Entry in "Detached Thoughts", journal, October 15, 1821 in BLJ, 9:11-12.

[7]Leslie A. Marchand, Byron: A Biography, 3 vols. (London: John Murray, 1957) 2:631.

Marchand concludes:

> But he had already paid a finer tribute to Rousseau in the verses he wrote before leaving Diodati; perhaps while rereading him preparatory to making the tour.

Marchand supports his theory through the addition of the following note:

> This is a conjecture based partly on the fact that there is nothing topical in these verses compared with those on Clarens, and that Byron mentioned on June 23 at Evian having written 111 stanzas and told Murray on the 17th., writing from Ouchy, that he had written 117, which would just account for those concerning Clarens.

[8]Marchand, Biography 2:631.

Marchand points to an intensity of feeling as the force which drove Byron to write the Clarens stanzas while visiting there:

> Byron's impulse again was to find words for the feelings that overpowered him, and he wrote some more stanzas for Childe Harold.

[9]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Confessions, trans. J.M. Cohen (London: Penguin Books, 1953) 506.

[10]George Gordon Noel, Lord Byron, Notes to Canto III of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, in The Complete Poetical Works. 5 vols. ed. Jerome J. McGann (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980-86) 2:309. Hereafter referred to as CPW.

[11]Rousseau, Confessions 414-15.

[12]Rousseau, The Social Contract and Discourses, trans. by G.D.H. Cole (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1973) 165.

[13]Rousseau, Social Contract 170.

[14]Rousseau, Social Contract 217.

[15]Rousseau, Social Contract 218.

[16]Rousseau, Social Contract 219.

[17]Rousseau, Social Contract 219.

[18]Rousseau, Confessions 149.

[19]Byron, Notes to Canto III, CPW, 2:312.

[20]Marchand, Biography 2:630, line 12.
The actual dates of Byron's boat tour of Lake Geneva are a subject of debate as Leslie Marchand points out in a note:

> There is some confusion about the date of their departure and return. Shelley, who gave a day-by-day account of the journey in a letter dated July 12, 1816, published with the History of a Six Weeks' Tour, says that they left Montalègre on June 23. But this letter, written for publication some time later, seems to be in error in the date, for Byron's letter of June 23 is from Evian, their second night's stop. And Polidori in his diary of June 22 wrote: "L[ord] B[yron] and Shelley went to Vevay."

Marchand further supports his argument that the correct dates of the tour were June 22 to July 1 inclusive:

> The date of the return is again left uncertain because of the discrepancy of contemporary accounts. Polidori's diary which ought to be most trustworthy as written at the time, records their

> arrival on July 1. (Diary, p. 135.) The probability seems to be that they left Ouchy on Sunday the 30th and arrived the evening of July 1. 2:632, line 34.

Keeping in mind this textual discrepancy, I have chosen to use the dates given by Byron when referring to any of his correspondence and those provided by Shelley in the text of his letters where applicable.

[21]Rousseau, Confessions, 367.

[22]Byron, Letter to John Murray, April 19, 1817 in BLJ, 5:208-09.

[23]Byron, Letter to John Cam Hobhouse, June 23, 1816 in BLJ, 5:80-81.

[24]Percy Bysshe Shelley, abstract for June 25, 1816 in Letter to Thomas Love Peacock, July 12, 1816 in The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley, 2 vols. ed. Frederick L. Jones (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964) 1:483. Hereafter referred to as PBSL.

[25]Byron, Letter to John Murray, June 27, 1816 in BLJ, 5:82.

[26]Byron, Notes to Canto III, CPW, 2:313.

[27]John Cam Hobhouse, Lord Broughton, Journal entry, October 6, 1816, in Recollections of a Long Life, 6 vols. ed. Lady Dorchester (London: John Murray, 1909-11) 2:30.

[28]Percy Bysshe Shelley, abstract for June 25, 1816 in Peacock Letter, PBSL, 1:483-84.

[29]Byron, Notes to Canto III, CPW, 3:312.

[30]Percy Bysshe Shelley, abstract for June 27, 1816 in Peacock Letter, PBSL, 1:486.

[31]Shelley, abstract for June 25, 1816 in Peacock Letter, PBSL, 1:484.

[32]Shelley, abstract for June 26, 1816 in Peacock Letter, PBSL, 1:486.

[33]Shelley, abstract for June 26, 1816 in Peacock Letter, PBSL, 1:486.

[34]Shelley, abstract for June 26, 1816 in Peacock Letter, PBSL, 1:485.

[35]Shelley, abstract for June 27, 1816 in Peacock Letter, PBSL, 1:486-87.

[36]Byron, Letter to John Murray, October 9, 1816 in BLJ, 5:113.

[37]Byron, Notes to Canto III, CPW, 2:312-13.

[38]Byron, Entry in "Alpine Journal", September 18, 1816 in BLJ, 5:97.

[39]Byron, Entry in "Alpine Journal", September 18, 1816 in BLJ, 5:98.

[40]John Cam Hobhouse, Lord Broughton, Journal entry, September 18, 1816, in Byron et la Suisse by John Clubbe and Ernest Giddey (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1982) 40.

[41]Shelley, abstract for June 27, 1816 in Peacock Letter, PBSL, 1:486.

[42]Shelley, abstract for June 27, 1816 in Peacock Letter, PBSL, 1:487.

[43]Shelley, abstract for June 28, 1816 in Peacock Letter, PBSL, 1:487-88.

[44]Byron, Notes to Canto III, CPW, 2:312.

[45]Rousseau, Confessions 506.

[46]Shelley, Peacock Letter, PBSL, 1:480.

[47]Shelley, Letter to Thomas Jefferson Hogg, July 18, 1816 in PBSL, 1:493-94.

[48]Shelley, Letter to Thomas Jefferson Hogg, July 18, 1816 in PBSL, 1:493.

[49]Byron, Letter to Augusta Leigh, January 13, 1817 in BLJ, 5:159-60.

[50]Byron, Letter to Thomas Moore, January 28, 1817 in BLJ, 5:165.

[51]Byron, Notes to Canto III, CPW, 2:312.

[52]Byron, Letter to Augusta Leigh, August 27, 1816 in BLJ, 5:89.

[53]Byron, Notes to Canto III, CPW, 2:308.

[54]Rousseau, Emile: or On Education, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979) 37.

[55]Byron, Letter to Augusta Leigh, September 14, 1816 in BLJ, 5:94.

[56]Byron, Letter to Augusta Leigh, September 17, 1816 in BLJ, 5:95.

[57]Rousseau, Social Contract 217.

[58]Byron, Entry in "Alpine Journal", September 19, 1816 in BLJ, 5:99.

[59]Byron, Entry in "Alpine Journal", September 28, 1816 in BLJ, 5:104-05.

[60]Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Journal entry, May 28, 1817, in The Journal of Mary Shelley, 2 vols. ed. Paula R. Feldman and Diana Scott-Kilvert (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) 1:171. Hereafter referred to as MWSJ.

[61]Shelley, Letter to Thomas Moore, December 16, 1817 in PBSL, 1:583.

[62]Byron, Letter to Count Pietro Gamba, August 9, 1821 in BLJ, 8:175.

[63]Byron, Letter to Thomas Moore, September 19, 1821 in BLJ, 8:214.

[64]Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Letter to John Murray, June 10?, 1832 in The Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, 3 vols. ed. Betty T. Bennett (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1980-88) 2:163.

[65]Broughton, Journal entry, August 22, 1828 in Recollections of a Long Life, 3:287.

[66]Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Journal entry, May 15, 1824 in MWSJ, 2:477-78.

[67]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, La Nouvelle Héloïse : Julie, or the New Eloise, Letters of Two lovers, Inhabitants of a Small Town at the Foot of the Alps, trans. and abridged by Judith H. McDowell. (University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1968) 2.

McDowell, alluding to James H. Warner's having traced the history of the English translation of La Nouvelle Héloïse, points out that "according to Warner, there were ten English editions between 1761 and 1800"; but

she can add little more.

[68]McDowell in Rousseau, La Nouvelle Héloïse 21.

[69]Ernest J. Lovell Jr., "Byron and La Nouvelle Héloïse," Modern Language Notes 56 (November, 1951) 459-61.
Lovell acknowledges and explains two paradoxes, which he sees as common to Rousseau and Byron:

> "... both are highly characteristic expressions of Byron's sentimental misanthropy: (1) the notion that to fly from the mass of mankind into natural solitude is not necessarily to hate mankind, and (2) the notion that the poet is least alone when in solitude and most alone when among crowds of people" (459).

While he does relate his observations to the third canto of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, he does not give a detailed reading of the text as it relates to La Nouvelle Héloïse.

[70]Wadad Iskander Ajami, "Rousseau & Byron," American Book Collector, 12 (1962) 26-32.
Ajami sees a parallelism between Rousseau and Byron and places it in a broad context. While he does allude briefly to Canto III, he does not provide a thorough analysis of Byron's Canto or La Nouvelle Héloïse.

> "The literary parallelism between the two writers is based on the affinities between Rousseauism and Byronism -- the two inexhaustible sources of romanticism. It is very difficult to define these isms, but we can find at least a few common elements between them: lyricism, individualism, love of Nature, love of solitude, worship of passion, exaltation of feeling, cult of self, horror of the crowd, misanthropy, melancholy, incurable ennui, pessimism, revolt against society, powerful imagination, love of liberty, revolt of the imagination against reason, affirmation of egoism above the laws of society, voluntary exile" (26).

The elements listed by Ajami can all be listed under the heading of love of nature.

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