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THE QUESTION OF ROUSSEAU'S "PREFACE DE JULIE."

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY, PH.D., 1979

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Susan Klem Jackson
1979
THE QUESTION OF ROUSSEAU'S PREFACE DE JULIE

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
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* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1979

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This essay is dedicated to my parents, and to the three "R."'s who can take credit without responsibility for its being in the world, Rousseau, Ron, and especially Rich.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VITA.</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION: A VALID QUESTION; SOME REASONS FOR ASKING.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Text in Question: Description; Details of Publication; Reception by the Contemporary Readership.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Open Question: Uses and Abuses of the Text in the Critical Discourse to Date</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTES TO CHAPTER I</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. REFORMULATING THE QUESTION: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTRATEXTUAL MODEL</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Model Presented</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Reader Solicited</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTES TO CHAPTER II</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE QUESTIONS MOST OFTEN ASKED: PREFACES PREFACED</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For, and against, an Anatomy of Novel Prefacing</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figures of &quot;Truth&quot;</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figures of &quot;Interest&quot; and &quot;Morality&quot;</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reopening the Question, I: Techniques of Demystification and Demythologizing</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTES TO CHAPTER III</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. A QUESTION OF STATUS: MODALITIES OF INTERACTION BETWEEN PREFACE AND NOVEL.</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reopening the Question, II: First and Second Prefaces; the (In)visible Interspace</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rejected Alternative: A Fundamental Structure</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before or After?</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside or Out?</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literal or Figurative?</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTES TO CHAPTER IV</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. DEFERRED QUESTIONS: THE PREFACE DE JULIE IN THE CONTEXT OF ROUSSEAU'S OVERALL CAREER</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honoring the Truth: Silence and the Avatars of Confession</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing a Loss: &quot;N.&quot; ou le nouvel Aristarque</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding a Form: The Preface Rewritten in Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTES TO CHAPTER V</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. CONCLUSION: THE LIMITS OF INTERPRETATION</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTES TO CHAPTER VI</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"The Question of Rousseau's *Préface de Julie*"? Already implicit, and intentionally so, in the title to this study are an assumption, an ambiguity and an argument. The assumption, first, had it not been condensed, would have read: there is a question of Rousseau's *Préface de Julie*. In fact, the actual title not only takes for granted that such a question exists, but suggests that it may exist in either or both of two forms. And this, thanks to the ambiguity of articulation provided by the preposition "of." What sense we make of the overall title depends on whether that preposition is understood to denote possession or, alternately, apposition.

On the one hand, replacing "of" by "in" would mean linking question to preface metonymically as contents to container. The *Préface de Julie* could then be characterized internally as a text which includes, and perhaps favors, the interrogative mode. In this case, our logical next step would be to ask "what?" and "how?: what is the *Préface de Julie* question, and how is it formulated?

On the other hand, should "of" be read to function like a comma, the *Préface de Julie* would not so much have a question as be one. A metaphorical relation between substantives would enable us to consider the preface as question in the same way that we speak of "the civil rights question," "the question of relativity," or, in a more nearly related instance, "the question of Hamlet." Rather than "what?" or
"how?", we should then be tempted to ask "why?: why is the Préface de Julie a question, and, more specifically, why is it a question which merits our attention in a study of this length? why confer upon this particular text the privileged status of being treated as a problem in its own right?

Within the context of the forthcoming essay, both these translations of its title not only can, but should be preserved. Ultimately, our greater preoccupation will be with the line of reasoning initiated by the first: we shall begin almost immediately to pursue the "what?" and the "how?" of the Préface de Julie's question. And yet, motivating the entirety of that pursuit will be the answers we propose now to the "why" of the Préface de Julie as question.

It is here that the argument to which we alluded at the outset comes into play. In the face of seeming deterrents to the enterprise at hand, we shall explain our reasons for undertaking it. On the negative side of the ledger, it is easy to anticipate how charges of disproportion between the critical discourse to come and its designated subject might arise, given such literal and figurative limitations as are, admittedly, built into the Préface de Julie. The most obvious of these is brevity. Author and public may well have used the epithet grande to distinguish the preface in question from the other, considerably more petite préface which originally headed La Nouvelle Héloïse. The fact remains that, however long by prefatory standards, the Préface de Julie, also known as the seconde préface or préface dialoguée, occupies fewer than twenty-five pages in the "Pléiade" edition of Rousseau's complete works. This lack of physical stature is further accentuated by circumstances of
the Préface de Julie's accession to print. Its having first appeared as a mere brochure renders the preface ineligible for the kind of automatic reverence which, by a convention which our society is only now beginning to challenge, depends on having been born into the greater solidity of a full-fledged book.

A third objection to the Préface de Julie as problem may be the most damning of all. Even had the text been longer, and its cover harder, it would have remained, by definition, a preface. As such, its very essence consists in the fact of being secondary to that other text whose name it honors, and whose margins it inhabits. What possible importance could accrue in the broader scheme of things to a preface which, like any other, must declare itself a priori to be of only marginal importance, especially since the so-called "primary" text would appear to place restrictions not only on the preface's autonomy, but on its capacity for signification? The title Préface de Julie binds preface to novel in an exclusive signifier-to-signified relation which, if strictly enforced, would deprive the secondary text of any possible relevance to worlds beyond Julie. However indispensable to students of Rousseau's novel, the preface would hardly qualify for the amount or the kind of attention which we shall accord it here by moving it out of the margins and into the spotlight.

Behind the seemingly unwarranted promotion is a rationale which closely resembles one elaborated in another context by Rousseau himself. In order to justify his having abandoned sociology for self-study, he formulates the following claim in the "Avertissement" to his Lettres écrites de la Montagne: "Si mes sujets sont petits, mes objets sont grands et dignes de l'attention de tout honnête homme." No better
epigraph could be written to our encounter with the Préface de Julie. The basic antithesis between petits sujets and grands objets holds as well for the individual text as for the flesh-and-blood individual. To the man already "little" in his individuality and further diminished by an absence of title, wealth and exploits, there corresponds the "little" text, slim, soft-covered and born into the service of another. In themselves, both pretexts are slight.

And yet, at the polarity's opposite extreme, the singular becomes singularly universal by virtue of its potential for articulating worlds beyond itself. Inscribed within the ego-centered and Julie-centered texts are objects whose scope far exceeds that of their avowed subjects. The confessional writings purport to originate an anthropology; autobiographer Rousseau demands outright that nothing less than humanity's own chronicle be read into the memoirs of its self-styled "lowliest" member. It is my contention that the lowly Préface de Julie also participates in grand designs, although preface Rousseau does not invoke them so explicitly. Just how far-reaching these designs may be will emerge progressively from our internal examination of the text. Suffice it to say at present that what the autobiography claims to do by way of reorganizing empirical reality, the preface does in fact with respect to the intertextual order of La Romancie. For a preliminary insight into its capital importance to the domain of matters novelistic, we need only mention the text's full name: Préface de la Nouvelle Héloïse: ou entre­tiensur les romans, its date of publication: 1761, and its author: Jean-Jacques Rousseau.
That much said, the preface is already situated at the confluence of at least three non-negligeable currents in the evolution of narrative fiction: the time-honored practice of preface-writing; the controversy, of more recent origin, surrounding certain other Entretiens sur les romans; and the overall literary career of a confessed and confirmed berger extravagant.

As regards the first current, what Georges May has called the "régularité aujourd'hui surprenante" of prefacing early novels is well documented by testimony from Rousseau's predecessors on both shores of the Channel. In fact, if we are to believe such insiders as William Congreve and Daniel Defoe, not to preface would have constituted a flagrant violation of the etiquette to which would-be novelists either conformed gladly or were expected to conform in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. According to the author of Incognita (1691), his colleagues' taste for prefacing was such that they tended to indulge regardless of whether they had anything of a truly prefatory nature to say: "Some Authors are so fond of a Preface that they will write one when there be nothing more in it than an apology for its self." For his part, the author of Colonel Jack (1722) views preface-writing as an inescapable prerequisite to publication:

Prefaces are so customary before Books of this Nature to introduce them into the World by a Display of their Excellencies, that it might be thought too presuming to send this Performance abroad, without some such Preliminary.

Allowances must, of course, be made for posturing on the part of both Congreve and Defoe: they formulate the above-noted generalities in defense
of their own prefaces in progress. Still, the first-person testimony of these and other novelists corroborates evidence of a more circumstantial nature: with preaced novels far outnumbering those which ventured forth unprefaced, the convention would appear to have been well on its way to becoming a kind of second nature.8

Furthermore, as we shall see in some detail later on (Chapter III), widespread repetition served to normalize not only the fact of prefacing but its protocol. Codification of content followed from the establishment of a significant prefatory corpus, and dictated which, exactly, of the novel's "excellencies" were most likely to be displayed. Individual authors were thus enabled to anticipate and reinforce specific expectations of the preface-reading public, such that l'abbé Prévost, for one, could write in his English preface to Cleveland (1731): "The Reader will very probably be desirous of knowing how these Papers came into my Hands."9

It is impossible to know for sure whether or to what extent empirical readers espoused the desires thus attributed to their rhetorical counterparts. However, May's scholarly celebration of "invention" and "ingéniosité" among preface-writers notwithstanding,10 there are ample indications that the risk of less than enthusiastic reception increased with later variations on a handful of familiar themes. An anonymous 1783 essay "On Fable and Truth" proclaims novel prefaces utterly devoid of interest, pro forma exercises, mere "words of course...to which nobody pays any regard."11 The greater their proliferation, the less seriously prefaces might be taken by readers and writers alike. Louvet, for example, delights in converting the liminary space of his Amours du
Chevalier de Faublas (1787, 1789) into an extended personal playground. He staunchly upholds the novelist's prerogative to pile préface on avertissement on épître dédicatoire. But Louvet's pseudo-logic proves so extravagant ("Eh oui! C'est précisément parce qu'il y a déjà cinq ou six préfaces, qu'il en faut encore une; ce qui rappelle le mot de cette femme d'esprit: il n'y a que le premier pas qui coûte") as to make all the more graphic his reduction of prefacing to empty gesturing.\textsuperscript{12}

In short, by the latter half of the eighteenth century, the novel preface had become sufficiently institutionalized, and its various devices, sufficiently commonplace, to call forth an entire gamut of potential rewritings. Among the available alternatives--perfunctory imitation, modest inventiveness, reductio ad absurdum, systematic refutation and renewal--Rousseau will elect the last. His personal prestige, never before greater than in 1761, will procure for his preface an attention not always accorded the efforts of lesser luminaries.\textsuperscript{13} And, from a twentieth-century vantage point, the complexity of his interaction with the corpus will emphatically confirm Peter France's contention that it is always "interesting and rewarding to concentrate on individuals and their specific responses" to such "commonly experienced situations and problems" as those of novel-prefacing.\textsuperscript{14}

By its external structure, meanwhile, the Préface de Julie deliberately articulates a second rhetorical tradition, that of fictional dialogue on matters literary, and, more particularly, since the seventeenth century, on the infamous question du roman. Lest the reader
forget the dialogue's proud heritage in Antiquity, the Préface reproduces a pair of rejoinders from Persius' first satire. Borrowed intact and in the original Latin, this fragment implicates Rousseau's text in that generalized nostalgia for the dialogue as genre which Maurice Roelens has identified as a characteristic attitude of French Classicism:

Tout se passe comme si, souvent aux 17e et 18e siècles, la forme dialoguée n'était pas retenue comme un genre mais comme une sorte de signe culturel, forme vide renvoyant à une forme pleine, qu'elle ne désigne que par allusion ou par défaut, dans le lointain inaccessible d'un paradis perdu du dialogue, celui des Grecs et des Italiens.

That prefacer Rousseau will proceed to translate this cultural loss of authentic dialogue into the terms of his own personal history makes the Préface de Julie uniquely representative of an age where, whatever their manifest content, literary dialogues tended to be willfully archaic, and to include their own inadequacy as part of their meaning.

Among modern adaptations of the form to the questions of reading and writing novels, Rousseau was probably familiar with Boileau's celebrated "Dialogue des héros du roman" of 1665. However dissimilar their respective projects, the législateur du Parnasse prefigures in the citoyen de Genève an underlying seriousness of purpose apparently out of proportion to the subject's presumed triviality. It might be said of Rousseau's "entretien supposé," as of Boileau's, that "sous le voile d'une fiction," there lurks the least "frivole" of intentions.

In any case, one body of dialogues which could scarcely have escaped Rousseau's attention, and may even be directly implicated in the subtitle of his Préface de Julie was the abbé Jacquin's voluminous
Entretiens sur les romans. This text of almost four hundred pages first appeared in 1755, thus antedating by only six years the publication of La Nouvelle Héloïse and its dialogic preface. Called by Henri Coulet "le manifeste le plus acharné de l'hostilité au genre romanesque," Jacquin's treatise does little more in fact than lend a trio of new voices, those of an abbé, a comtesse and a chevalier, to the recitation of already out-moded attacks. Yet, its publication generated sufficient furore that the chevalier de Mouhy felt compelled to defend the genre against this latest detractor, and so subtitled his preface to Le Financier (1755) "Essais pour servir de réponse à un ouvrage intitulé 'Entretiens sur les Romans', par M. l'abbé J." Over twenty years later, with the "débat" still enjoying "quelque notoriété," it was Restif de la Bretonne who took up the gauntlet in his Ecole des pères (1776): "J'attaque ici particulièrement cet auteur [Jacquin], qui fait lui-même une fiction froide et languissante pour combattre les fictions." And in the interim, Rousseau himself may well have posed his singular Entretien in direct, if implicit, opposition to Jacquin's vastly inferior Entretiens.

Indeed, whatever the abbé's qualifications to write authoritative­ly about narrative fiction, it is difficult to imagine their surpassing those of the self-proclaimed âme romanesque whose (hi)story would be told in the Confessions, and promoted by multiple retellings to the status of received truth. The pertinent moments are easily recalled: whether weeping with his father over l'Astree and La Calprenède, repressing adolescent desires for the seductive wares of La Tribu, commiserating with the heroes of Prévost, proving the gravity of an
illness by his inability to read even novels, or declaring his *héroïde* in every way the equal of a *Princesse de Clèves*, Rousseau's invented self is everywhere depicted as an inveterate, if ambivalent, even anxious consumer of novels. Incalculable affect attaches to what others had deemed at worst a frivolous or morally corrupting pastime by virtue of scriptor Rousseau's retracing a full-blown problematics of self to primal scenes of novel-reading. The *Confessions* hold these scenes ultimately responsible for inscribing protagonist Rousseau's entire biography in the difference between his own *âme romanesque* and the world's harsh realities. In the words of Philippe Lejeune: "La lecture, c'est à dire le rapport au texte écrit, ne figure pas dans le récit comme souvenir anecdotique, mais comme expérience originelle et constitutive, et comme aboutissement." By chronicling the impossible dream of living a novel, the autobiographical text effects a dramatic displacement to the ontological domain of that illusion/disillusion antithesis which had long preoccupied novelists as only a question of technique and thematics.

It has become a critical commonplace, moreover, to elaborate with greater or lesser sophistication on Faguet's uncomplimentary epithet, "Rousseau, romancier français." Residual effects of Rousseau's novel-reading have been "discovered" to permeate the whole of his own supposedly non-fictional production. But from whence comes the initial impetus for two centuries of attempts at relocating the frontiers of truth and fiction in Rousseau, if not from such "novels" as the two *Discours*, the *Emile*, the *Confessions* and the *Rêveries du promeneur solitaire*? The very texts under perpetual indictment for indulgence in fictionality themselves take the lead in phrasing and rephrasing the increasingly
obsessive question: did Jean-Jacques Rousseau--or, for that matter, anyone--ever write anything but novels?

From this necessarily simplistic account of Rousseau's lifelong, highly personal involvement with matters both strictly and broadly novelistic, it might be inferred that his Préface de Julie, rhetorical heritage to the contrary, would stand too far outside the mainstream to be of major significance in a general study of eighteenth-century preface-writing. And yet, above and beyond the carefully nurtured legend of idiosyncrasy, the fact remains that this same Préface de Julie would have as its pretext and pre-text the century's most widely purchased, vigorously debated and slavishly imitated novel, La Nouvelle Héloïse. Everything from William Mead's account of "people lining up in the streets outside the bookshops for a chance to spend half an hour reading it," to Daniel Mornet's calculation that the late eighteenth century would see fifty novels "qui sont tout Rousseau," and seventy more "où son influence se mêle à celle de Richardson et de Prévost," points to the immediate popularity of Julie, and to its enduring importance.25

The Text in Question: Description; Details of Publication; Reception by the Contemporary Readership

The novel's liminary texts did not, however, share in the favorable judgments passed on its main corpus by large portions of the contemporary public. On the contrary, as attested in the Correspondance and in the Neuchâtel anthology of representative reactions, both the first and second prefaces were almost universally decried by professional and
amateur readers alike.

Duclos, the author's closest confidant during the pre-publication period, counseled him as follows in a letter from November, 1760: "À présent que j'ai vu l'ouvrage, je vous dirai que je désapprouve fort l'idée de préface que vous m'avez dite." Reporting on the published novel's initial impact, La Condamine noted in February, 1761, that "il plait généralement hors la préface." La Condamine referred of course to what we now know as the première préface (the seconde, or Préface de Julie, had not yet been made public), as did Grimm in this entry from the Correspondance littéraire: "La préface qu'on lit à la tête de la Nouvelle Héloïse est déjà assez plate et assez extraordinaire," and d'Alembert, when he concluded a generally favorable appraisal of the novel with the suggestion that its cause would be served by "l'adoucissement de quelques phrases de la préface." More or less diplomatic in his direct dealings with the author, d'Alembert expressed what we might assume to be his true feelings in a much more critical letter to Julie de Lespinasse: "J'ai trouvé la préface mauvaise; elle m'avait même un peu prévenu contre L'Ouvrage." Not surprisingly perhaps, the exceptions to this common disapproval of the first preface seem to have been confined for the most part to Rousseau's female readership. What better way to prove one's devotion to the master of sentiment than to champion his every word against the unenlightened masses. Self-appointed spokeswoman for the "happy few," Mme de Créqui sent off the following reassurance: "Votre préface est ravissante; on la traduit en ridicule dans Paris, mais je la leur fais entendre." Nevertheless, as Rousseau himself observed in a letter to
Mme de Luxembourg, the misfortunes of the petite préface boded ill for
the still unpublished seconde or grande préface, a text whose general
outlines and eventful prehistory should now be recalled.

It is in a communiqué dated March 14, 1759, that Rousseau first
alerts publisher Rey, proprietor since 1758 of the complete six-volume
Héloïse, to the existence of an "écrit sur les Romans que j'intitulerai
peut-être, préface de Julie, mais que j'entends point imprimer avec cet
ouvrage, et qui n'en doit faire partie en aucune manière." The "écrit"
in question, identical but for a few last-minute revisions with the
definitive Préface de Julie, takes the form of an imaginary tête-à-tête
between two speakers designated internally only as "R." and "N." Par­
tial characterizations of the pair would be provided both by the dialogue
itself and by the full subtitle Entretien sur les romans entre l'éditeur
et un homme de lettres. Discussion between the editor and the man of
letters is carried out in the absence of any third-party intervention
beyond the punctuating "R."
's and and N."
's (there are no extra-dialogic
indications of setting or dramatic action, for example), and begins
with the editor's asking his interlocutor to evaluate the manuscript
version of La Nouvelle Héloïse which he claims to have finished reading,
and is now returning. Since the two disagree immediately and often,
not only in their assessments of Julie but in their respective criteria
for judgment, it is only natural that the base of discussion should
broaden to include more general questions of reading and writing novels.

By the debate's final rounds, "R." and "N." have so thoroughly
exhausted both the state of the art and Julie's place in it that "N."
hits upon the idea of having "R." transcribe what has just been said
for use in lieu of a more conventional preface. Once "R." has promised to do just that, there is nothing further to be said. The Entretien's final words look ahead in hindsight to that leap into print which at the time of our beginning to read will have already taken place. Spoken dialogue, or rather its illusion, is suspended at the very moment of anticipating its own accession to the prefatory status which, in actual fact, Rousseau would deny it temporarily.

With the author reserving the right to publish this tentatively titled Préface de Julie "où et quand bon [lui] semblera[it] comme un ouvrage appartenant à [lui] seul,"33 Rey's inaugural edition of La Nouvelle Héloïse went on sale in Paris in February, 1761, prefaced only by a vastly abbreviated, superficially monologic reworking. The latter text had been announced two months earlier to Duclos as "l'abrége de celle dont je vous ai parlé."34 Evidently first in conception, but ultimately second in publication, the Préface de Julie had almost surfaced prematurely in 1760 as part of a strategy for sustaining public curiosity in La Nouvelle Héloïse. At the time, Rey's edition of the novel, eagerly awaited ever since the Lettre à d'Alembert's cryptic allusion to "un manuscrit dont je suis le dépositaire," had been progressing entirely too slowly for Rousseau's tastes.35 Nevertheless, he had decided, for the moment at least, to put aside both the Préface and that attendant "Avis préliminaire" whose language would be reproduced almost intact in the eventual "Avertissement," except, of course, that where the "Avis" had announced La Nouvelle Héloïse, the "Avertissement" would follow in its wake.
Rousseau's considerable indecision regarding the fate of the Préface de Julie is further illustrated by at least two other plans for publication which he abandoned before they could be realized. According to the first, "aussitôt que l'ouvrage Julie aura paru," the preface would be forwarded to Guérin, who would then be responsible for overseeing its appearance in conjunction with "le morceau que nous avons conclu d'y joindre." However, for reasons left unreported in the correspondence, the "morceau" in question, an "Essai tiré des dialogues de Platon" on the subject of "l'imitation théâtrale" was destined not to accompany the preface into print, but rather to follow at a later date. The preface would likewise be detached from the series of "estampes" which, upon reflection, Rousseau deemed too "différentes" from the written text to appeal to the same readership: "Il n'est pas juste de forcer ceux qui voudront la préface d'acheter aussi les planches, ni ceux qui voudront les planches d'acheter la préface."

At what precise interval should the Préface de Julie attend Julie itself? This became the burning question, once the decision had been made to publish, and to publish in isolation. With the matter finally resolved in his own mind, Rousseau took to expressing very definite ideas about the timing of his prelude-turned-postlude. To Guérin, he explained: "Il convient que la brochure ne paroisse que quinze jours ou trois semaines après la publication du livre, il m'importe qu'il n'en transpire rien jusqu'à ce temps-là." Coindet, to whom the actual manuscript had been more or less entrusted, was hounded at every turn by the anxiety-ridden author, who wrote on February 9, 1761: "Je persiste à être d'avis que la préface apparaisse le lundi 16," again
on the eleventh: "La préface doit actuellement être tirée," and finally on the fifteenth: "Les exemplaires de la préface ne sont pas arrivés hier." 39 Rousseau's worst fears to the contrary, the Préface de Julie did appear as scheduled chez Duchesne on February 16, 1761.

Thereafter, it would be incorporated into every important, authorized or unauthorized, re-edition of the novel, although its exact placement would vary from edition to edition. In his 1763 printing, for example, Rey opted against the more usual insertion between the first preface and the correspondence proper, in favor of using the Préface de Julie to flesh out what he thought to be a too-slim second volume. 40 Finally, despite its usefulness to Rey, Rousseau's second preface seems to have fared little better with the public than his first. What Mme de Luxembourg applauded as improvements: "J'aime mieux la grande préface que la petite; la grande dit la même chose, mais comme c'est plus détaillée, elle révolte moins," Grimm chose to deplore as new depths of absurdity: "C'est en quatre-vingt-dix pages un recueil fort serré de sophismes où la bonne foi est offensée à chaque ligne." 41

An Open Question: Uses and Abuses of the Text in the Critical Discourse to Date

If I have lingered over the somewhat confusing details of how the Préface de Julie came into existence, it is because I believe them to be of more than anecdotal interest. The timing of the preface, its "detachability" from the novel, its complex relationship to the
so-called "first" preface—each in turn will orient what to my knowledge constitutes the first full-scale investigation into the text's inner workings.

Indeed, as recently as 1964, Bernard Gagnebin's introduction to the "Pléiade" edition of La Nouvelle Héloïse remarked upon the lack of critical attention previously accorded its grande préface:

This general neglect of what Gagnebin proceeds to label "un des meilleurs exemples de critique du créateur" is, however, not nearly so "surprising" as he would have us believe. As long as readers continued to focus almost exclusively on the autobiographical increment of La Nouvelle Héloïse, as long as the explicitly autobiographical texts were taken for essentially true accounts of Rousseau's lived experience, it followed that the Préface de Julie would be supplanted as privileged key to the novel by yet another préface annexe, to wit, the extended recital of origins and elaboration to be found in Book IX of the Confessions. It is only recently that critics have realized, with Jean Starobinski, that "[i]l n'est plus même concevable d'expliquer l'oeuvre par la vie, puisque tout est oeuvre et que tout est, en même temps, vie," and so, have reacted en masse against the two-fold error of attributing objective finality to the Confessions, and relegating the remainder of Rousseau's oeuvre to the status of more or less defective variants of that text. Ironically enough, Gagnebin's own enthusiastic
analysis of the actual preface rests on the assumption that to be understood properly, the incomplete 1761 text must be supplemented by the posthumous full confession: "Rousseau ne dit pas tout; il ne le peut pas encore; les vraies explications de la genèse de l'oeuvre ne seront avouées que dans les Confessions" (emphasis added).

More basic still to such an analysis is the unwritten premise that what really matters in the Préface de Julie is confined, when all is said and done, to the level of manifest content. Gagnebin's reading remains strictly informational in the sense that what he seeks and finds are answers to a series of important questions regarding Julie in particular and the novel in general. Inevitably—and, I would argue, unfortunately—in order to reduce the entire Préface to a short encyclopedia of Rousseau's thoughts on "les trois grandes notions d'intérêt, de vérité et de moralité," Gagnebin has had to exclude from the process of signification several of the text's most "significant" dimensions: its dialogism, diachrony, fictionality, and so forth. By respecting, however implicitly, the traditional divorce between form and content, by failing to show how a "brillant exercice de rhétorique" becomes "un ensemble théorique extrêmement riche," Gagnebin does little to discourage the unfair practice of quoting selectively from the Préface de Julie, whether in general studies on the novel or in anthologies like Henri Coulet's Le Roman jusqu'à la Révolution (1967).45

Those recent critics who have given the preface more than a passing glance include R. J. Ellrich (Rousseau and His Reader: The Rhetorical Situation of the Major Works, 1969), Juliet Flower MacCannell ("The Post-Fictional Self: Authorial Consciousness in Three Texts by

Ellrich, for example, attributes to the Préface de Julie a function virtually identical with that of the preamble to the Confessions. In each instance, he describes a textual space devoted in its entirety to the establishment of "an identity of vision and feeling" between narrator and narratee. Although it does afford some measure of insight into the preface's value as a press release, that is, into its strategies for predisposing real-life readers in favor of La Nouvelle Héloïse, Ellrich's study is beset by difficulties, chief among them a facile psychologism responsible at worst for such blatant misreadings as "Rousseau teases the reader and glories in his own independence and power." That Rousseau (wherever "he" may be in the text) does no such thing or only pretends to do so is amply, if briefly, demonstrated by MacCannell's insightful treatment of the preface in conjunction with the earlier Préface à Narcisse and the later Dialogues. While she too focuses on the "R."/"N." dyad, it is in order to characterize, not the speakers, but the dialogue itself as a discrete episode in the absent author's struggle with the notion of selfhood, empirical and literary. To a significant degree, then, MacCannell shares Paul de Man's assessment of the preface—made in passing, in a recent
article— as "the place in the text where the question of textual mastery and authority is being decided and where, in the instance of *Julie*, it is also found to be undecidable."48

For Robitaille as well, the *Préface de Julie* becomes the textual locus for a "crisis of identity." More specific than MacCannell as to the nature of this crisis, and less careful than she to refrain from making assumptions about Rousseau's actual state of mind, Robitaille depicts the prefacer as really torn between two apparently contradictory self-images: "Was he the 'Citoyen de Genève,' the man of moral principle, the conscience of society? Or was he, as author of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, one of those he accused as corrupters of society?". And since the primary focus of Robitaille's first two chapters has been on the novel's main corpus, it is only logical that, in the third, he should assign the same sort of motivation to the prefatory discourse as to the letters themselves:

Much like *Julie* and *Saint-Preux*, who must continue to write letters in order to resolve the problems caused by their first ones, Rousseau wrote this preface in response to the personal problems caused by his novel.

Though the comparison is certainly well taken, and its implications, developed with both subtlety and sense, the ensuing discussion leaves unexploited all those aspects of the *Préface de Julie* which do not directly inform the prefacer's existential situation or, to quote Robitaille's subtitle, constitute the preface as a "prelude to autobiography."49 A more faithful reading of the preface might have placed less emphasis on the absolute uniqueness of Rousseau's project, and more, on the context of prior prefaces which that project both
acknowledges and refutes.

Rosbottom, finally, makes it clear from the outset that he will concern himself only with those rejoinders which either formulate or somehow elucidate the unwritten but understood query: "Who will read La Nouvelle Héloïse?". In so doing, he correctly identifies an important organizing principle of the interchange between "R." and "N." But his provocative discussion of demographically determined sub-publics, of "socialized" and "ruralized" readers, implies a psycho-sociological approach which is beyond the scope of this study, and at one point he underestimates the text's rhetorical intricacy by suggesting that its message could be adequately conveyed in list form: "Here are a few of the conclusions that one reaches after having read this key to Julie." 50

What, despite their diverse ends and means, does Rosbottom's reading of the préface dialoguée have in common with Gagnebin's, with Ellrich's, with MacCannell's and with Robitaille's? In the first place, each either professes to have discovered, or proceeds as if he or she had discovered, the question(s) most essential to elaboration of the preface's overall significance. Each effects a reordering of the text's internal hierarchy to suit the purposes of his or her working hypothesis; each chooses to privilege one or more of the questions explicitly voiced by the interlocutors themselves, or tacitly inscribed beneath or between rejoinders. In short, all five, to some extent, sacrifice complexity to unity of meaning. One is reminded of the claim advanced with respect to the "first" preface by one of its earliest exegetes, Mme de Cramer-Delon:
Votre préface paraîst encore à bien des gens un tas de paradoxes; pour moi qui ai pour tout ce qui vient de vous, Monsieur, une prévention toujours favorable, elle me parut une manière d'énigme et en effet j'en ai trouvé le mot, à mesure que j'ai lu et que j'ai entendu critiquer ou louer le livre.  

It is as though this unabashed Rousseauophile had set a lasting precedent for serious critical discourse about the Préface de Julie: fawn though she may, Mme de Cramer-Delon joins the most lucid of modern readers in standing before the preface with the concerns, and the confidence, of Oedipus before the Sphinx.
The story of how a two-page preface came to replace the longer text under consideration here will be retold in pp. 12-14 of this Introduction. A textual comparison between the two prefaces will be made in the opening pages of Chapter IV.

No manuscript version of the Préface de Julie is known to have survived. The text on which this study is based was edited for the "Bibliothèque de la Pléiade" by Bernard Gagnebin, and occupies pp. 7-30 in Vol. II of Rousseau's Œuvres complètes.

For Rousseau's own use of the label "brochure" to describe the preface's debut in print, see p. 15 of the current Introduction.


With additions and deletions still being made to the early novelistic corpus itself, there are, to my knowledge, no precise figures available to document the obvious numerical preponderance of prefaced novels. However, among those novels which continue to be widely read today, not one is lacking in some sort of foreword, whether préface, avis, avertissement, épître dédicatoire or some combination.

l'abbé Prévost, "Preface" to Cleveland, cited in Novel and Romance, p. 90.


The contemporary public’s ever-increasing appetite for works bearing the name of Rousseau is reflected in publisher Rey’s advertising campaign for La Nouvelle Héloïse. Referring to the as yet unpublished letters, he asserts: "Le nom de M. Rousseau qui les a recueillies, et en quelque sorte adoptées, est plus que suffisant pour les recommander au public." Cited by Daniel Mornet, in "Le Texte de la Nouvelle Héloïse et les éditions du dix-huitième siècle," AJJR, No. 5 (1909), p. 38.


The rejoinders in question: "Vel duo, vel nemo," and "Turpe et misérable," are the third and fourth of Rousseau’s dialogue, the fourth and fifth of Persius’.


In its entirety, the relevant passage of Boileau’s "Avertissement" reads as follows: "...sous le voile d’une fiction en apparence extrêmement badine, folle, outrée, où il n’arrive rien qui soit dans la vérité et dans la vraisemblance, je leur [à tous les gens d’esprit et de véritable vertu] donne peut-être ici le moins frivole Ouvrage, qui soit encore sorti de ma plume." See: "Dialogue des héros du roman," in his Œuvres complètes, ed. Antoine Adam (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), p. 446.


Cited in Coulet, Le Roman jusqu’à la Révolution, II, 147.

May, Le Dilemme du roman, p. 120; Coulet, Le Roman jusqu’à la Révolution, II, 158.

The most exhaustive retelling to date is that of Jean-Louis Lecercle, who has entitled the initial chapter of his Rousseau et l’art du roman (Paris: Armand Colin, 1969) "Une Ame romanesque."


31 "To Mme de Luxembourg," 16 Feb. 1761, Letter 1020, Correspondance générale, VI, 47.


40 Mornet, La Nouvelle Héloïse de J.-J. R., I, 184 and 207.


42 Bernard Gagnebin, ed., La Nouvelle Héloïse, in Vol. II of Rousseau's Œuvres complètes (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), pp. lxiii-lxiv. All further remarks by Gagnebin cited in this and the following paragraph may be found on the same two pages.


44 Christie McDonald, for one, has insisted that Book IX of the Confessions be resituated "as but one point in an infinite regression of texts." Her point is well made in "Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The Biographiend's False Friend," Romanic Review, 66, No. 4 (1975), p. 302.

45 Le Roman jusqu'à la Révolution, I, 401-02.


47 Rousseau and His Reader, p. 41.


49 "Rousseau and the Epistolary Form." The specific remarks cited in this paragraph can be found on pp. 117, 122 and 111 of Robitaille's Chapter III, entitled "Epistolary Novel: Prelude to Autobiography," and centered in its entirety on discussion of the first and second prefaces to Julie.


CHAPTER II. REFORMULATING THE QUESTION: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTRATEXTUAL MODEL

"J'ai hazar ded quelques conjectures, moins dans l'espoir de résoudre la question que dans l'intention de l'éclaircir et de la réduire à son véritable état."

--Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Préface" au Discours sur les origines de l'inégalité

To concur with all those who from Rousseau's day to the present have treated the Préface de Julie as fundamentally "enigmatic" would certainly be appropriate. No fewer than ninety-seven question marks punctuate the "Pléiade" version of the prefatory dialogue. Of these, forty-six are attributed to interlocutor "N.;" fifty-one to "R." In itself, this virtually symmetrical repartition of explicit questions establishes the interrogative as the prevailing mode for the text at large. At one point, moreover, "N." replies to "R."'s "Que diriez-vous...?" with an echoing "Que diriez-vous...?" of his own. This and other discrete instances of linguistic parallelism further subordinate the individual speakers to an interpersonal format less aptly characterized as "question-answer" than as "question-question."

Ultimately, however, the preface's "enigmatic" nature depends neither on the sheer volume nor on the distribution of specific queries.
Rather, it is important that these queries be structured in such a way that they become so many pieces in the same all-inclusive, even obsessive puzzle. Thus, the bulk of the dialogue is bounded, on the one side, by "N.'s original question, itself, pertinently enough, a question of origins: "Cette correspondance est-elle réelle, ou si c'est une fiction?" (p. 11), and on the other, by "N.'s final attempt at manipulating "R." into answering this self-same question: " Certainement, si tout cela n'est que fiction, vous avez fait un mauvais livre: mais dites que ces deux femmes ont existé; et je relis ce Recueil tous les ans jusqu'à la fin de ma vie" (p. 29). Everything prior to the question's first appearance may be counted as expository; everything after "R."'s definitive non-answer to it--"C'est là tout ce que vous apprendrez de moi sur ce point" (p. 29)--comprises a kind of denouement in which the dialogue leaves the letters behind in order to reflect upon itself. In retrospect, then, each of the intervening points of debate is brought into relationship with the nagging question which frames and might be considered to underlie them all. Even those developments with which it has no obvious thematic links must be considered, henceforth, not simply as digressions, but as digressions from an essential enigma.

Once the text's provocative inscrutability has been acknowledged and partially exorcized, the temptation is great to name, and even to solve, the enigma of Rousseau's Préface de Julie. Nevertheless, as attested by the various critical postures sketched above, there is a risk of reductionism inherent in any over-hasty attempt at focusing on a particular version of the textual riddle to the exclusion of all others. In fact, the preface itself suggests from the outset that it
will not suffice merely to paraphrase "N."'s original question. Nor, the
the preface further suggests, does the difficulty lie so much with the
content of that question as with its implied claim to exhaustivity.
Were we to reassign the question's logical priority to some other speci-
fic query which would seem to us to account more fully for the dialogue's
overall elaboration, we should be no less guilty of over-simplification
than is the fictional man of letters. By contesting the relevance of
"N."'s preoccupation—"Je ne vois point la consequence. Pour dire si
un Livre est bon ou mauvais, qu'importe de savoir comment on l'a
fait?" (p. 11)—"R." immediately raises doubts about the advisability of
singling out a priori any such "ultimate" enigma. These doubts are
only compounded by "N."'s subsequent persistence in the disputed line
of questioning, and by "R."'s equally adamant refusal to cooperate with
him. Given such explicit warnings against premature foreclosure, how
should we proceed so as to realize the promise of legibility extended
by the dialogue's inconclusive conclusion: "écrivez cette conversation
pour toute Préface: Les éclaircissements nécessaires y sont tous"
(p. 30)? One thing alone seems clear: from the moment of the text's
warning how not to read it, we are faced not only with the prospect,
but with the problem of interpretation.

And yet, if the Préface de Julie takes measures to protect itself
against certain potential errors of exegesis, it also points the way
towards an authentic interpretative experience. As we shall see now
in some detail, the preface not only stages an exemplary production of
the hermeneutic process, but actively solicits the reader's creative
participation in that process. It so happens, in short, that the
enigmatic text is also a text about enigmas. Rousseau's interpreting gesture designates both its avowed object, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, and a generalized allegory of interpretation. The specific lessons in understanding derived therefrom will be redirected back towards the preface itself in the main body of this essay. Our own dialogue with Rousseau will extend metonymically, reflect metaphorically and, to some degree, take issue with the complex interplay between the preface as text and the preface as reader.

The Model Presented

But how, precisely, does the *Préface de Julie* reveal itself to be its own first reader? In an effort to appreciate the specific identity assumed by Rousseau's text, we might begin by asking, with Jacques Derrida, what fundamental operations need be performed in order that any given text be classified as "prefatory." In the "Hors livre" to *La Désémination*, Derrida sets out to deconstruct the deceptively self-evident notion that prefaces "present other texts." The verb "to present" is understood by Derrida in the etymological sense of "making present." What the archetypal preface does, then, is to transform into (a facsimile of) manifest presence that (the prefaced text) which is actually past (with respect to the preface) and future (with respect to the preface-reader and potential reader of the prefaced text). It follows that the minimal prefatory gesture would consist in the claim that "what has been written is what you will have read."
Thus, when he initiates the discourse with an assertion, "voilà votre Manuscrit" (p. 11), which acts as if to petition the reader's belief in the novel's physical presence between the two interlocutors, "N." exposes the necessary sleight of hand common to all preface-writing. By literally "demonstrating" the prefaced text, he draws attention finally to its ambiguous status with respect to the "here and now" of the preface. We have only his word, prefatory in the most elementary sense, to vouch for the presentness of those other words from the correspondence proper which have already been written, and which, theoretically at least, we have yet to read. Were the text of La Nouvelle Héloïse immediately and actually present as spectacle to the reader, there would be no need or possibility of its being prefaced. Instead, where the novel itself is concerned, an illusion of "being there" is guaranteed by the fact of "being elsewhere."

It is apparent, however, from the simple fact of "N."'s launching a full-fledged conversation with his imaginary gesture, that something else does take place in the absence of La Nouvelle Héloïse. This something else, which unfolds before our eyes in the real present of the Préface de Julie, exemplifies what R. G. Collingwood meant when, in his philosophical autobiography, he developed the concept of "questioning activity." As the full title Préface de Julie: ou entretien sur les romans implies, this activity is governed by a project which is essentially two-fold: it seeks immediately to understand the world of the novel, and ultimately, through generalized discussion of fiction's ends and means, to determine the nature of understanding in the world. In other words, it evolves into a bona fide "hermeneutical experience"
as defined by Richard Palmer: "Hermeneutics ... involves two different and interacting focuses of attention: (1) the event of understanding a text, and (2) the more encompassing question of what understanding and interpretation as such, are."  

One way in which the text betrays its concern with a general problematics of interpretation is by exploiting the multiple resonances of the Greek verb hermeneuein, "whose various forms... suggest the process of bringing a thing or situation from unintelligibility to understanding." According to Palmer, ancient usage endowed the verb with three basic "directions of meaning... (1) to express aloud in words, that is 'to say;' (2) to explain, as in explaining a situation; and (3) to translate, as in the translation of a foreign tongue." The dialogue between "N." and "R." combines all three activities, and while there is nothing unexpected about the prevalence of type (2), explaining, the habitual preface-reader might be less well prepared to encounter types (1) and (3), saying and translating. Nevertheless, the printed text alludes periodically to its own supposed orality: "N." reads "aloud" from the inscription to "la septième Estampe" (p. 15), invites "R." to catch his breath (p. 20), later urges him to transcribe "cette conversation" at some future date (p. 30). More importantly, the frequent choice of entendre, rather than voir, to mean "understand" (pp. 11, 16, 17, 18, 26) causes the ears to rival the eyes as privileged portals to understanding, and suggests to the reader that fullness of meaning has been sacrificed in the silencing of the preface. Meanwhile "R." perceives much of his own explanatory discourse as the work of a translator: he who is bilingual must render into terms familiar to social man the
otherwise incomprehensible "discours des solitaires;" he must caution "N." that the same expressions will signify radically different things in the mutually exclusive sign systems of "natural" and "conventional" language: "Croyez-vous que les gens vraiment passionnés ayent ces manières de parler vives, fortes, coloriées, que vous admirez dans vos Drames et dans vos Romans?" (p. 14).

Above and beyond this return in spirit to the sources of herméneutic, the Préface de Julie elaborates a particular model of the hermeneutic process which prefigures to a significant degree that proposed recently by the writings of Hans-Georg Gadamer. In fact, Gadamer provides us with a valuable heuristic tool: point by point comparison with his Wahrheit und Methode (1960), as summarized and further developed by Palmer, will leave no doubt that, however sketchily, however unsystematically, Rousseau's text works to elucidate the understanding of understanding.9

Fundamental to both models, first, is a critique of method: both denounce the kind of one-sided analysis which takes place whenever would-be readers arrive at texts forearmed with ready-made methodologies and inspired by the goal of absolute textual mastery. Rather than as a firm basis for understanding, both view what Palmer labels the "subject-object conception of the interpretative stance of man" as a primary source of misunderstanding. To the extent that Rousseau's prototypical man of letters adopts this stance with respect to La Nouvelle Héloïse, his critical ends and means cannot be suffered in silence. Rather, the limitations of "N.'s approach to literature must themselves become matters for discussion. Notwithstanding his boastful claim to have
read the manuscript "tout entier" (p. 11), it becomes increasingly clear that, figuratively speaking, his reading remains incomplete. By explicitly naming the single-minded "curiosité" (p. 12) which alone motivates "N."'s every rejoinder, "R." defines his partner in debate as one who strives above all after intellectual domination of the text. By refusing to satisfy that "curiosité," "R." ensures that, here at least, as Palmer would contend, "truth eludes the methodical man." In fact, the man of letters' admitted pleasure in controlling the novel's distribution--"il ne leur parvient aux provinciaux que ce que nous leur envoyons" (p. 22)--may be seen as imperfectly compensating, on the plane of socio-economic praxis, for the power of understanding which has been denied him.

Among the reasons for this failure to understand, "R." cites his fellow-reader's tendency to take his own presuppositions as absolute, rather than as subject to change. "Dans le point de vue où vous êtes," "R." concedes, "il doit vous paraître ainsi" (p. 13). Indeed, the following sample of "N."'s protestations against La Nouvelle Héloïse would seem to indicate that he preferred willful blindness to the disorienting experience of "not-ness:" "je ne connais rien de si maussade: Ces lettres ne sont point des lettres; ce Roman n'est point un Roman" (p. 12). He does not easily accept those disturbances in his own horizon of expectations which Hegel located at the origin of true understanding.

Meanwhile, by his own alternative reading of La Nouvelle Héloïse, "R." anticipates Palmer's positive plea for open-mindedness on the part of the interpreter, for "not so much appropriating a possession as
being appropriated by the governing claim of the text." Juliet Flower MacCannell has already noted the considerable self-effacement involved in Rousseau's depicting "R." less as an author(ity) than as a reader; this self-effacement is carried one step further by the nature of the reading he undertakes. By his own admission, he aspires only to discover the letters "pour ce qu'elles sont" and to judge them "dans leur espece" (p. 16). In his willingness to follow the lead of the text, "R." quite literally forgets himself. It is no accident that, where "N." reported his encounter with *La Nouvelle Héloïse* in a series of witty one-liners, "R." must break the rhythm of the "R."/"N." dialogue in order to act out his own more genuine immersion in the universe of the novel. Necessarily longer than any previous rejoinder, his meditation on the language of love is also characterized by true diachrony: as he records the progress of the lovers' language towards its ultimate degree, "l'enthousiasme" (p. 15), his own language becomes, as if by contagion, increasingly agitated. No wonder, then, that the literal-minded "N." confuses this exemplum of engaged reading with further proof of authorship on the part of Rousseau.

In short, the interpretative posture dramatized for our benefit by "R." coincides significantly with the comportment of game-players as described in *Wahrheit und Methode* by analogy with that of enlightened exegetes. Like a game between two players, an authentic act of interpretation does not originate wholly with either of its individual participants. On the contrary, transcending both reader and text, such an act "draws these into its own realm and fills them with its spirit." In the same way that "the player experiences the game," so "R."
experiences his reading "as for him an overpowering reality," one which, temporarily at least, surpasses and suspends his own empirical reality as subject and that of the novel as object. Throughout "R."'s reading of the lovers' accession to "enthousiasme," emotions, "amour" and "passion," remain the only nouns which govern verbs of action: "il s'entoure d'objets....elle voit son object parfait," and so forth (pp. 15-16). Human subjects, whether from the characters' world or from the reader's, are noticeably absent. Such purposeful depersonalization suggests that what matters finally to the success of understanding (if not to "N."'s version thereof) is less a confrontation between text and extra-text than their common participation in the "holy kind of seriousness" which is the game of interpretation.

By what rules, then, should this game be played? As is already implicit in the above-cited passages, Gadamer proposes to replace methodology with authentic dialogue between reader and text. More specifically, he envisions the hermeneutic process as a dialectical exchange of questions and answers between the two: "a question is addressed to the text, and, in a deeper sense, the text addresses a question to its interpreter." "To interpret a text," Gadamer explains in a passage of capital importance, "the first requirement is to understand the horizon of meaning or of questioning within which the direction of meaning of the text is determined."

It is in the light of this requirement that we can now characterize with greater precision the "questioning activity" whose prevalence in the Préface de Julie we remarked at the outset of this section.
Rousseau too affirms, in a variety of ways, that the path to knowing *la Julie* consists in hypothesizing about the question(s) which called it into being. This ongoing search for the "right" question explains a number of queries which might, as a group, be labeled "questions of the second degree," questions which comment directly on the validity of those which precede or follow them. Each reader defends his own right to make certain specific inquiries, as when "N." asks "R.:" "N'aurait-on pas le droit de lui demander [au peintre] où est l'homme?" (p. 12); each overtly contests the propriety of inquiries made by the other, as when "R." asks "N.:" "Comment osez-vous faire une question que c'est à vous de résoudre?" (p. 28). Couched in terms of "rights" and "daring," this business of asking questions becomes serious indeed. Nothing proves a greater source of indignation to "R." than his having caught "N." in the act of posing an irrelevant question: "Que parlez-vous de Lettres, de style épistolaire? En écrivant à ce qu'on aime, il est bien question de cela!" (p. 16).

A second indication of the preface's preoccupation with questioning as such is provided by the relative lack of isolated queries, and, conversely, by the frequent grouping of one speaker's queries in clusters of two or more. In cases like the following, the interrogatives thus clustered, if not strictly synonymous, all tend in the same direction: "Savez-vous jusqu'où les Hommes diffèrent les uns des autres? Combien les caractères sont opposés? Combien les moeurs, les préjugés varient selon les temps, les lieux, les âges?" (p. 12). Rhetorical emphasis aside, it is as though the speaker, "R.," were verbally groping, with each successive displacement of his question, for the
magic formula which would mean something to his interlocutor. At the least, the effect of such reformulation is cumulative: each variant of the question adds new information, and thus increases the chances that understanding will ensue. This by no means guarantees, however, that access to the novel will result automatically from the haphazard heaping of question upon question. In Palmer's words, "to understand a text is not simply to bombard it with questions but to understand the question it puts to the reader." One cannot help but perceive "N."'s uninterrupted barrage of random queries: "Les deux amies?...Qu'en dites-vous?...Et cette conversion subite au Temple?...La Grâce, sans doute?" (p. 13), as blatantly unfair not only to his fellow-interpreter but to the text which he professes to interpret. The temporary refusal of dialogue with "R." reflects and reinforces the refusal of dialogue with La Nouvelle Héloïse. Indeed, if we have concentrated thus far on the respective dialogues with the novel of readers "R." and "N.," if we have extrapolated our interpretative model from a comparison between these two variants of the reader-text relationship, it is time now that we see what a third dialogue, the encompassing Préface dialoguée, can tell us about the nature of interpretation. Everything about the circumstances under which this "entretien suppose" (p. 9) takes place—everything from the preface's avowed fictionality, to the absence of spatio-temporal coordinates, to the reduction of its speakers to disembodied voices—connotes abstraction and artificiality. Nothing, therefore, discourages a symbolic understanding of the "R."/"N." dyad. On the contrary, understood exclusively as a conversation between two flesh-and-blood
individuals, the *Préface dialoguée* seems hardly worthy of its name, since "R." as potential scriptor wields ultimate control over all of the words provisionally attributed to "N." Apparently, Rousseau's debate fails to meet the conventional requirement that its participants be as equally matched as possible. However, the irremediable inequality becomes much less intolerable if we treat "R."/"N." as yet another item in the reader/text series. As such, it illustrates Palmer's admission that "the text [in this case, the minimal textual enigma designated by the initial 'N.'] is not fully analogous to a partner in dialogue because it must be helped to speak." Need we recall in this regard the several instances throughout the text where "R." explicitly exhorts "N." to speak: "Expliquez-vous" (p. 11), or to continue speaking: "C'est pour l'avoir [votre jugement] plus au long que je vous réplique" (p. 14)? Nevertheless, whenever possible, the dialogue seeks to minimize the disparity of conditions between reader and text. First "R.": "Je vous suis" (p. 11), then "N.": "je vous ai bien suivi" (p. 20), opens himself up to the otherness of the other. First "R.": "N'est-ce pas cela?" (P. 11), then "N.": "Est-ce bien cela?" (p. 21), evokes the other as a standard of truth against which his own discourse must be measured. Together, these symmetries of expression afford us a glimpse at that ideal tension of genuine dialogue which the *Préface de Julie* approaches as a limit.
The Reader Solicited

To recapitulate: with the aid of Gadamer's *Wahrheit und Methode*, we have collected detailed evidence that Rousseau's preface makes a significant statement about interpretation. Inscribed, by its valorization of speaking, explaining and translating, within the master text of hermeneutics, the preface further articulates that text through a rejection of method (often, but not always, embodied by interlocutor "N.") in favor of question-answer dialectics as practiced by "R." At its most truly dialogistic moments, the exchange between "R." and "N." may be taken as a metaphor for the desired mutuality of respect between reader and text.

And yet, we have not even alluded to what constitutes perhaps the preface's most eloquent plea for receptivity on the part of the reader, Julie's one and only "law of reading": "Je n'ai point, pour moi, d'autre maniere de juger de mes Lectures que de sonder les dispositions ou elles laissent mon âme." First enunciated in the eighteenth letter of Part Two, where it receives immediate editorial endorsement (p. 261), Julie's law is further canonized here by "R."'s recommendation that "N." be guided by it in his reading of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*: "Julie s'étoit fait une regle pour juger des livres: si vous la trouvez bonne, servez-vous-en pour juger celui-ci" (p. 23). By a curious circularity, a character in the novel has been elected its most right-thinking critic. The equally curious fact of "R."'s pronouncing the emotionally-charged word "Julie" for only the second time in over ten pages of dialogue emphasizes the point that it is in the specific role of
reader—and not necessarily as "coupable amante," "chaste épouse," or "digne mere de famille" (p. 17)—that the heroine intervenes here in the preface which bears her name.

What better reminder of the central importance assumed by reading in the "daily life" of the entire Clarens community. Just how much of that life is in fact devoted to "reading" becomes startlingly evident when we consider the extended usage made by the novel of the verb lire. Most obvious, of course, and least problematical, are periodic references within the letters to the specialized activity of reading books. The characters comment on individual works; they contrast their own preferences with prevailing literary tastes; they make the pro forma condemnation of novel-reading which, in 1761, had long since become a commonplace of pseudo-documentary works. In itself, the facility with which the lovers quote from Italian poets speaks for the temporal and logical priority of reading.

But reading, for the "Solitaires" of Clarens, means, above all else, interpreting and reinterpreting those letters—each others' and their own—which emission and reception can be seen to constitute the novel's only "real" events. Directed towards the correspondence proper, reading becomes an activity in which the fictional reader engages at his or her own risk. To read the love letters of Saint-Preux is to expose oneself to death (Mme d’Etange) or to fate worse than death (Julie). Conversely, the fact of having read Julie's letters accounts, in large measure, for Wolmar's power over her. With so much at stake, the necessity of reading correctly becomes less an intellectual challenge than a matter of survival. Already, the
"movement of understanding" is promoted to the "encompassing and universal status" assigned it by Gadamer in *Wahrheit und Methode*.

In Rousseau's novel, the transfer of reading from the domain of literature to that of life itself is consummated by passages such as this one from the pen of Milord Edouard: "Mais que trouvez-vous de nouveau dans des livres? O Wolmar! il ne vous manque que d'apprendre à lire dans celui de la nature, pour être le plus sage des mortels" (p. 655). Indeed, the "tragic flaw" of Rousseau's atheist is consistently described by the other characters in terms pertaining not so much to theology proper as to hermeneutics. It is a central irony of the novel that this acknowledged champion of observation, a man whose wife professes to fear his "interprétations" (p. 490), and who himself declares: "J'aime à lire dans les coeurs des hommes" (p. 491), should, when his own happiness is at stake, write only what Michèle Ansart-Dourlen has called "interprétations réductrices" of the world as text.¹⁴ To a significant degree, Wolmar shares the methodological tendencies evidenced by "N.": he combines a will to domination, instead of dialogue, with unbounded confidence in his own ability to find the essential "mot" for life's "énigme" (p. 509). So preoccupied is he with rewriting the Julie-Saint-Freux story that he neglects to hear what the story itself has to say. "[J']efface un tableau par un autre," he claims, "et couvre le passé du présent" (p. 511), thus betraying his ignorance of the fact that, however radically the interpreting text transforms its object, it cannot write that object out of existence. Traceless deconstruction is revealed by the novel's denouement to be a figment of Wolmar's imagination, not a
legitimate hermeneutic pursuit.

In short, whether by celebrating Julie's law of reading, or by invalidating Wolmar's, the novel draws attention at every turn to the characteristic ways in which its various protagonists behave as readers. A fleeting allusion in the *Préface de Julie* has sufficed to conjure up an entire anthology of interpretation in action. Now it so happens that one of the specific questions up for debate in this same preface concerns the existence in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* of fictional role models which do or do not merit imitation on the part of real-life readers. Were the heroine perfect, wonders "N.," "à qui serviroit-elle de modèle?" (p. 26). This familiar *topos* of eighteenth-century novel prefaces will be examined at length in Chapter III of the present study. For the moment, however, we might infer, from reader "R.'s urging reader "N." to follow the lead of reader "Julie," that the characters' interpretative behavior constitutes one model--perhaps the only intratextual model--which admits of genuine reverse mimesis. Imitation of art by nature here escapes the status of rhetorical commonplace in the special case of real-life readers who would pattern their attitudes on those of readers in novels or readers in novel prefaces. Such at least is the implication of "R.'s depicting reading from the outset as imitative in nature. "N."'s claim to have completed the entire novel evokes the following, rather curiously worded response from his interlocutor: "Tout entier? J'entends: vous comptez sur peu d'imitateurs?" (emphasis added, p. 11).

Even today, we can accept, as an invitation to read like Julie, what countless contemporary devotees (mis)took for an invitation to
live like her. We can appreciate that Rousseau's categoric refusal to court public favor for *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, his unwillingness to "mendier l'indulgence du public" ("Avertissement," p. 9), by no means preclude his practicing in the *Préface de Julie*, that "solicitation" which must be numbered with "presentation" among the most basic of prefatory gestures. Only, the primary object of solicitation has been displaced: rather than automatic approval of the novel, this particular preface seeks a commitment to participation in the hermeneutic process which it initiates. To understand *Julie* is to understand it on Rousseau's terms. At its most elementary, deciphering the preface entails a full complement of interpretative techniques: a note on the pronunciation of "Clarens" (p. 25) requires that we join the fictional interlocutors in "listening" to the dialogue; quotations in the original Latin and Italian necessitate literal acts of translation. Even the disdainful gesture whereby "R." and "N." throw a pitiful "os à ronger" (p. 25) to the extra-textual critics whom "R." especially despises, serves ultimately to provoke them (us) into defending our own desire to explain, against the preface's opposing claim to exhaustiveness. However begrudgingly, the presence of other, real-life readers is acknowledged by the preface; it remains to us to prove, through our own reading of it, that "R." and "N." have underestimated both the amount of interpretation left undone, and our own fitness for the task.

The critical text to come will exist, then, as the partial precipitate of hermeneutical adventures already in progress at its inception. It will not so much confront the *Préface de Julie* as provide it with a sequel. Certainly, I cannot—nor do I wish
to—minimize the influence exerted on this essay by previous Rousseau scholarship and by recent trends in literary theory. I am especially indebted to the works of Jacques Derrida, and, in the area of critical vocabulary, to those of the so-called "structuralists." However, within that general horizon of interpretation, I shall insist that whatever (anti)methodological guidelines govern my investigation arise out of the preface's own lessons in dialogistic reading. In accordance with the intratextual model of question-answer dialectics, my own questions will be subjected to continual displacement, and answers will be deferred indefinitely pending determination of the possibility of answers.

But how will this displacement be effected? What itinerary will it follow? What can it hope to accomplish? With the zeal of the convert, so to speak, I propose to carry to its logical conclusion "R."'s explicit suggestion that La Nouvelle Héloïse be considered, not in isolation, but in conjunction with the Préface de Narcisse, with the Devin du village and with the Lettre à d'Alembert (p. 25). To each successive stage of my reading, there will correspond a specific contextual space which articulates and is articulated in turn by the Préface de Julie. The preface will be enjoined to converse, in Chapter III, with the corpus of pre-existing novel prefaces; in Chapter IV, with the overall volume entitled La Nouvelle Héloïse, including the correspondence proper, its notes, and especially its petite préface; and, in Chapter V, with the Oeuvres complètes of Rousseau as the author himself envisioned them, without La Nouvelle Héloïse. Moreover, each of these chapters, after the first, will
undertake to reformulate specific problems left unresolved by some form of stalemate in the preceding chapter(s). Each will respond in its own way to "R."'s injunction, "Relisez mieux" (p. 25). The message of the Préface de Julie will be elaborated cumulatively: as privileged enigma, the "status of the preface" (Chapter IV) will supplant the "status of the novel" (Chapter III), and be supplanted in turn by the "status of literary language as such" (Chapter V). Wolmarian precepts to the contrary, ultimate failure to pinpoint a single all-embracing "question of Rousseau's Préface de Julie" will in no way nullify the multiplicity of meaning left as a trace by our ongoing displacement and deconstruction of successive hypothetical queries: what does the preface say about novels? what does it say as literature about literature? what can it say as literature about life?

Of course, in its attempt to re-present a truly open-ended interpretative dialogue, this study will prove no less approximate, no less artificial, than the "R."/"N." interchange itself. Prior to posing what appears here to be my initial question, I shall already have read and reread, interpreted and reinterpreted, written and rewritten the Préface de Julie. Like Saint-Preux at a paradoxical moment in his letter-writing career (p. 147), I find myself acquiring pen and paper sometime after beginning to write. I am, like Julia Kristeva, aware that "on n'ECRIT pas, on ne peut qu'AVOIR ECRIT. Contempler l'écrit, c'est contempler la mort." The "present" of this text is of necessity as illusory as the prefatory present demystified by Derrida. Yet, it is precisely because I would use dead words to make the
Preface de Julie "live," that I dare address to the preface the offer made originally, and no doubt more confidently, by "N." to "R.":

"[j]e crois pouvoir peor er pour vous" (p. 20).
NOTES TO CHAPTER II

1 In the absence of extant manuscripts, punctuation of the Préface de Julie varies considerably from edition to edition. The Garnier-Flammarion text, for example, contains considerably fewer question marks than the "Pleiade" version on which this study is based. Even in the latter case, however, it would be misleading to assume that there are only as many questions as question marks in the preface. On the contrary, many apparent statements function as condensed questions. Consider "N.'s sketch of Wolmar: "Un mari débonnaire et hospitalier empressé d'établir dans sa maison l'ancien amant de sa femme..." (p. 13), which might be rendered more faithfully, but, from "N.'s standpoint, less effectively as "Est-il vraisemblable qu'un mari soit empressé...?".


3 See above, pp. 16-22.

4 This orienting of the interpretative experience by the primary text itself is, of course, common to all literature. That it is especially pronounced in the works of Rousseau explains the feelings often expressed by his readers that they have somehow been "cheated" out of full participation in the one activity, reading, which, "by rights," belongs exclusively to them. As Paul de Man has demonstrated in "The Purloined Ribbon," his brilliant analysis of a text from the Confessions, it requires a considerable degree of critical self-discipline to interpret the ready-made interpretations of Rousseau without lapsing into paraphrase.


11 Hermeneutics, p. 250.

12 There is no denying, of course, that this failure to let "R." get a word in edgewise serves Rousseau's purposes very nicely. He could hardly improve his already precarious standing with the authorities of organized religion by having "R." expatiate at length on the theology of La Nouvelle Héloïse. His best self-justificatory strategy consists, therefore, in deflecting the blame for his silence onto his critics.

13 Hermeneutics, p. 244.


Chapter III. THE QUESTIONS MOST OFTEN ASKED: PREFACES PREFACED

Introduction

Where better to locate our arbitrary "beginning" than on the preface's title page. Like the second prénom bestowed post facto on the correspondence proper,¹ the rubric Préface de Julie ou entretien sur les romans is purposefully allusive. Just as the promise of a "new"Heloise points backwards to the heroine's earlier reincarnations, so too, albeit more prosaically, the preface's own title evokes a considerable corpus of like-named texts calling themselves "prefaces," and purporting to talk about "novels." To understand the "R."/"N." dialogue in terms of such a literary "heritage," and vice versa, requires, first, that we question the coherence of that heritage itself. What, if anything, could readers conversant with the prefatory tradition look forward to finding, by way of manifest content, in Rousseau's Préface de Julie? Could it be counted on with any degree of predictability to yield certain specific kinds of information concerning the prefaced text in particular and the state of the art in general? To what degree, in fact, was the accident of their sharing a common family name and a common placement before novels reinforced by significant internal resemblances among earlier prefaces?
There will be no attempt made here to answer these questions by "putting ourselves in the place" of real-life eighteenth-century readers of novel prefaces, or by confusing our own horizon of expectations with what we might surmise theirs to have been. In the words of English Showalter, "what they actually did want," concerns us less than what authors "expected them to want." Rather than rely on the direct testimony, piecemeal at best, of Rousseau's flesh-and-blood contemporaries, we shall concern ourselves with the image of readership reflected, whether falsely or faithfully, within the prefatory texts of his fellow novelists. Nor can I claim to have made an exhaustive personal inventory of novel prefaces published in France before 1761 so as to establish with statistical accuracy the relative frequency of various prefatory topoi. Considerable work in that direction has already been done by such scholars as Showalter, Henri Coulet, Georges May, Daniel Mornet, Vivienne Mylne and Philip Stewart. In the process of responding to the questions raised above, I shall draw heavily from the general findings of these critics. For purposes of further illustration, I shall focus more directly on the prefaces to four acknowledged masterpieces of French fiction before Julie: Les Illustres Françoises (1713), Manon Lescaut (1731), La Vie de Marianne (1731) and Les Égarements du coeur et de l'esprit (1736).

Given these self-imposed limitations in the scope of our inquiry, we can proceed, with some assurance, to make a series of general statements about the "heritage" of Rousseau's Préface de Julie. 1) Sometime prior to the middle of the eighteenth century, liminary texts established themselves as a privileged locus, if not the privileged locus for
discussions about the novel. 2) Not only had the practice of prefacewriting itself been more or less institutionalized, but its ends and means had become sufficiently conventional, sufficiently iterable, to warrant our postulating a hypothetical "prefatory code." 3) Considered in this light as a "perspective de citations" and a "mirage de structures," the archetypal Preface would be characterized, thematically, by a complex interplay among the notions of "truth," "morality" and "interest," and rhetorically, by a decided predilection for antithetical modes of expression.

To elaborate on these points, we might first recall the relatively high proportion of prefaces among those theoretical works which, to date, have proven themselves most useful or intriguing to students of the eighteenth-century novel. Typically, the section of Mornet's bibliography devoted to "théorie du roman, avant 1761" contains forty-two titles of which no fewer than ten designate prefatory texts. That the foreword to De La Solle's Mémoires de deux amis should be juxtaposed therein with Lenglet-Dufresnoy's weighty De l'usage des romans provides a graphic reminder of the combined prefaces' qualitative importance to early criticism of the genre. Extratextual reasons for this phenomenon are various, and need not detain us here. We might conjecture in passing that a desire to legitimize what still constituted a bastard genre encouraged novelists to imitate the prefacing behavior of seventeenth-century dramatists. Add to that a marked tendency among those critics, often churchmen, who were not themselves novelists, to subordinate specifically literary concerns to the all-important tasks of preserving the ideological status quo and safeguarding public morality.
Anachronistic and manichean, Jacquin's treatise epitomizes this failure, probably a refusal, to keep pace critically with the evolution of narrative prose in the Age of Enlightenment. It is clear, in any case, that had he been referring to that Age, Christopher Morley would have been wrong to assume the prefaces are written "after the real work is done;" like the Balzacs and Jameses to come, Rousseau's precursors used prefatory space to do important work of a theoretical nature.

If hindsight endows this work with a collaborative aspect, there is little overt acknowledgement on the part of prefacers that each is, in large measure, rewriting the text of his predecessors. On the contrary, by declaring their own preambulatory remarks "necessary" in view of circumstances peculiar to Marianne, Marivaux's two prefacers voice a general concern, itself increasingly conventional, for naturalizing the preface. After all, it was in the interest of the individual author to feign absolute originality while at the same time exploiting to his own advantage the residual topoi at his disposal.

Among those modern critics who have extrapolated such topoi from the prefatory corpus and thus, argued persuasively for the existence of a prefatory "code," Philip Stewart in particular has analyzed the leitmotifs which cluster around the truth/fiction polarity. That even the most original novelists felt obligated to situate their works within the framework of this polarity is evidenced as well by prefacer Crébillon's refusal to commit himself in the case of Les Égarements, "...soit qu'on doive les [ces Mémoires] regarder comme un ouvrage purement d'imagination, ou que les aventures qu'ils contiennent soient réelles," as by prefacer Marivaux's repeated insistence on the
authenticity of Marianne's memoirs:

"je la [cette histoire] tiens d'un ami qui l'a réellement trouvée... je n'y ai point d'autre part que d'en avoir retouché quelques endroits... Ce qui est de vrai, c'est que si c'était une histoire simplement imaginée, il y toute apparence qu'elle n'aurait pas la forme qu'elle a," and so forth.10

For his part, Georges May has used prefaces and other documents to chart the novel's course between the Charybdis of inverisimilitude and the Scylla of immoralism. May's basic findings are summed up and confirmed with regard to British epistolary fiction by Robert Day: "The same prudent defensiveness can be found in the preface or dedication to almost any early novel: the reader will find the work that follows both innocent and veracious."11 Indeed, considerable energy is expended by prefacers in an effort to prove either the inherently moral character of novelistic events, or, barring that, their moral usefulness to the reading public. Marivaux's spokesman alerts us to the central importance of moralizing in Marianne's discourse; Challes' advertises Les Illustres Francoises as the incarnation of "une morale plus naturelle & plus chrétienne." Prévost's extols the benefits to be derived by "les personnes de bon sens" from "un exemple terrible de la force des passions;" Crébillon's calls, in a more general way, for novels to resume, where classical comedy left off, "la censure des vices et des ridicules."12

To these epistemological and ethical preoccupations, I would, with Bernard Gagnebin, add a third, more avowedly practical, focal point of prefatory attention, "interest," and its approximate synonyms,
agreeableness," "pleasurableness," and so forth.\textsuperscript{13} The prefaces of both \textit{Manon Lescaut} and \textit{Les Égarements} endorse the classical prescription that l'utile be married to l'agréable. The "Avertissement" to \textit{Marianne} begins with an oblique assertion of the ensuing narrative's power to please: "...on pourrait soupçonner cette histoire-ci d'avoir été faite expres pour amuser le public...."\textsuperscript{14}

This last statement is noteworthy for a second reason: it proposes to define the prefaced text negatively, by explaining what it is not, rather than what it is. Diderot's ironic title, \textit{Ceci n'est pas un conte} (1772), sums up, paradigmatically, the common eighteenth-century practice of phrasing affirmations about truth, morality and interest as denials of fiction, immorality and tedium. Such position by opposition constitutes a special case of the antithetical attitude which permeates the whole of the prefatory corpus, and which is rendered explicit by formulations like the following from the liminary pages of \textit{Les Illustres Françoises}: "Si j'avois écrit des fables, j'aurois été maître des incidens que j'aurois tourné comme j'aurois voulu; mais ce sont des véritez, qui ont leurs règles toutes contraires à celles des romans."\textsuperscript{15}

Thus, the typical Preface unfolds as "un jeu entre deux oppositions exclusives dont la nomination changera...mais qui auront toujours le même axe sémiotique (positif/negatif)."\textsuperscript{16} Structure takes precedence over semantics: anterior to both the positively charged notion of "véritez" and its negative counterparts, "fables," "romans," is the disjunctive relationship which binds them one to another.

In short, together with their respective antonyms, the ubiquitous notions of "truth," "morality" and "interest" combine to produce what
could, in the terminology of the recent *Rhétorique générale*, be called a "degré zéro local." On the one hand, the literary space articulated by these three coordinates constitutes already a significant departure from the hypothetical "degré zéro absolu" which could be realized only in the total absence of rhetorical conventions. On the other, with respect to individual, empirical prefaces, this space becomes a second nature, an implicit norm from which further rhetorical trajectories will deviate in turn.

One might still ask, however, whether the mere coexistence of vérité, moralité and intérêt, or even the encompassing play of antithetical structures alone suffice to account in full for the impression of sameness conveyed by successive variations on the prefatory theme. Indeed, it would seem more accurate to describe the topoi in question, not simply as "coexisting," but as "comingling" in a closed semantic system where energy is transferred from one concept to another and, ultimately, conserved. By this, I mean that no one topos pursues an independent course through the diachronic development of preface-writing; the fate of "truth," for instance, is inextricably bound up with those of "morality" and "interest." Already, May's Scylla/Charybdis metaphor bears witness to a complicated mutual interaction among the topoi which is confirmed by the four major prefaces cited here. The novel's several attributes may be seen, from a prefatory standpoint, as reinforcing one another (Prévost and Crébillon assume that a single train of events can both "amuse" and "instruct"\(^\text{18}\)) or, less patly, as working at cross purposes. To paraphrase Marivaux's preface, had Marianne's story been fictional, it would have been more
amusing, but less moral; in itself, the manuscript's wordiness is both a threat to interest and a guarantee of veracity.19

Implicit in such convoluted logic is a value judgment regarding the relative importance of truth, morality and interest as criteria for novelistic excellence.20 To a significant degree, then, differences between prefaces result from shifts in the tenuous equilibrium among these criteria. Preserving the stability of the overall system often requires that one or more of its component parts be neutralized through sometimes sophistic redefinition. As examples of this tension-reducing activity, we might single out De La Salle's endowing the notion of "truth" with neo-Platonic overtones (since nothing in and of this world is really "true," his fictional Mémoires will be no less so than any others), or Restif's contending, in Les Françaises (1786), that fidelity to human nature represents the only valid prerequisite for novelistic truthfulness.21 In each case, the prefacer achieves what might be deemed a pyrrhic victory: the category of "truth" is so broadened as to include his novel, but to exclude little else.

However facile, such strategies illustrate a universal need on the part of novelists from the second half of the century to write themselves out of linguistic corners in which their precursors had more or less circumscribed them. Indeed, we might now venture a fourth hypothesis about the literary situation of Rousseau's Préface de Julie: it appeared in 1761 as if summoned forth by a major internal crisis within the prefatory code; the "timeliness" of Julie's preface far exceeds the author's concern for timing its publication to the day. By mid-century, it had become both necessary and possible for the Preface to
take stock of its own priorities and presuppositions: on the one hand, claims of truth, morality and interest had been reduced by perfunctory reiteration to little more than empty slogans; on the other, the code had attained sufficient coherence that, if manipulated by individuals of unusual lucidity, it could yield such brilliant exercises in demystification as the "Préface annexe" to Diderot's *La Religieuse* (begun in 1760) and the two mutually contradictory forewords to Laclos' *Les Liaisons dangereuses* (1782).

And yet, these exceptional texts notwithstanding, the general course of eighteenth-century preface-writing after *Julie* remains somewhat anticlimactic. As Jacques Merlant has noted, some of the most promising prefaces from the so-called "Pre-Romantic" period suffer a loss of credibility by virtue of their having been affixed to mediocre novels. Meanwhile, enthusiastic imitation of prefacer Rousseau by such professed disciples as Restif, Baculard d'Arnaud and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre scarcely exempts them from distorting his thought through gross over-simplification. Rather than raise questions, their own prefaces celebrate a relatively unproblematical, even complacent synonymy between truth and goodness, goodness and pleasure, and so forth. Nothing better exemplifies this reduction of Rousseau at the hands of Rousseauists than the preface accompanying Brument's sequel to *Julie, Henriette de Wolmar* (1768). One might wish to assume that a work exploiting the popularity of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* would also profit epistemologically from the parent novel. If such were the case, however, prefacer Brument could not with such apparent ease revert to the very claims of literal veracity which Rousseau's spokesman "R." had
repeatedly called into question and, ultimately, refused to make; he could not, by simply declaring that "[I]es Wolmar, dont [Rousseau] proteste n'avoir jamais entendu parler dans les environs de la petite ville où il place ses amans, étoient très-connus sur les frontières du Piémont," so completely undo his model's anxiety-ridden transmutation of "truth" from rhetorical commonplace to ontological reality.  

At the same time that it discourages our thinking of the Préface de Julie as having altered the course of preface-writing once and for all, a regressive text like Brument's enables us to appreciate the radical nature of Rousseau's often misunderstood enterprise. Thus far, we have concentrated on verifying that by 1761, the time was ripe for the Preface to reevaluate its own considerable heritage. It remains to ask in what ways and in what measure that heritage would be transformed through mutual interaction with the Préface de Julie.  

By way of response, the pages to come will portray the "R."/"N." dialogue as doubly exhaustive with respect to established prefatory conventions. We shall see, first, that, when it comes to cataloguing, prefacer Rousseau rivals botanist Rousseau for thoroughness of coverage: just as the latter would dream of describing every "poil d'herbe," every "atome vegetal," in his island universe, so too the former would, in his own practice, neglect none of the themes and structures which we have identified as belonging in theory to a composite language of the Preface. Besides this encyclopedic breadth, we shall discover a depth of treatment rarely undertaken by other prefacers, before or after Julie. We might anticipate that no prefatory topos would be accepted at face value by an author who, from the initial moment of
recasting the question posed by the Academy of Dijon, had made a career of challenging the givens. In fact, our attention will be diverted almost immediately towards some highly visible instances of demystification and demythologizing whereby the Précé de Julie strives, from within, to reveal and (hence) to subvert the rhetorical degré zéro local of novel-preface writing. What Jacques Derrida has affirmed with regard to the Essai sur l'origine des langues holds true for the Précé de Julie: "Rousseau, comme d'habitude, fait jouer les pièces empruntées dans une organisation parfaitement originale."27 Preface to prefaces, Rousseau's text not only informs but originates a reading of those which, empirically speaking, have gone before.

For, and against, an Anatomy of Novel Prefacing

"Je commencerions d'abord par expliquer nettement le sujet que je me propose, définissant avec soin les idées et les mots nouveaux ou équivoques que j'aurais besoin d'employer, non pas successivement en forme de dictionnaire à la manière des mathématiciens, mais comme par occasion et enchâssant adroitement mes définitions dans l'exposition de mon sujet."

--Rousseau, "Idées de la méthode dans la composition d'un livre"

Indeed, the mere difficulty of disentangling the "pièces empruntées" from their "organisation parfaitement originale" testifies to the pervasiveness of both in the Précé de Julie. For purposes of
clarity, however, our interpretation will consider sequentially two questions rendered virtually coextensive by a text whose every corner they inhabit together. Only after listing the many items on its agenda which qualify Rousseau's dialogue as a more or less definitive colloquium on prefatory practices, shall we wonder by what specific means a far-reaching critique doubles and deconstructs this apparent conformity to convention. We have already predicted that thematic quotations from the hypothetical master text might be couched in antithetical terms and centered on the notions of "truth," "interest" and "morality" or, more precisely, on the triangular semantic space generated by their mutual interaction. A simple checklist will enable us now to test our expectations against the actual contents of Rousseau's preface, and vice versa.

Even as we enumerate, such an approach will reveal itself to be both important and inadequate. On the one hand, without the dissecting gesture which will have isolated particular representations of the code's key concepts, we might fail to recognize the inherently rhetorical nature of those concepts. None, in fact, remains identical to itself; rather, each traverses the discourse in an ever-expanding repertoire of linguistic disguises; each comes to name a highly-developed semantic field comprising the various shades of its meaning: synonyms, antonyms, etymons, component parts, causes and effects, and so forth. The novel preface is disclosed to have dealt not so much in "truth," "interest" and "morality" as in figures thereof. An entire history of gradual rhetorical displacement will have been recapitulated in condensed and chronologically distorted form within the *Preface de Julie*. On the
other hand, at the same time that it recounts this history, the Préface adds another chapter to it. No wonder, then, that, reduced to their most elementary terms, so many of the "typical" figures appearing in the forthcoming catalogue will bear, already, the ineradicable imprint of Rousseau's action on them. The Préface de Julie thwarts its own anatomical impulses, and ours.

Figures of "Truth"

In what ways, first, does Rousseau's preface honor precedent by linking the prefaced text to the notion of truth? Positioned at intervals throughout the text, the actual words vérité(s), vrai, vraiment and véritablement function, whatever the specific context, as immediately recognizable symptoms of a general preoccupation. It little matters in this regard that the adjective vrais appears in conjunction with secondary substantives like plaisirs (p. 21) or campagnards (p. 22); the sum total of such usages refers ultimately to the central importance of truth as a criterion for the letters themselves.

Other pertinent figures can be seen as participating in two main activities: telling and showing. They may either declare the correspondence to be true, or derive its truth from intratextual evidence (already, we discover a univalent notion of truth fluctuating on command between the poles of literal veracity and verisimilitude). Occupying a murky middle ground are various supplementary narratives fabricated to account for a manuscript's having come into the possession of a self-styled "editor." Paradoxically, then, absolute denials of fictionality where the principal text is concerned depend on mini-texts which are
themselves almost never verified or verifiable and thus, answerable only to objections of inverisimilitude. This paradox will not go unnoticed, or unchallenged, by prefacer "R.," who, for his part, will insist not so much on telling the novel into truth as on telling the truth about the "truth" of novels. Making Julie true concerns him less than being true himself at all times and in all places ("être toujours vrai," [P. 27]), even in that prefatory space where, by more or less universal consent, the ordinary laws of truth-telling had been temporarily suspended. If the prefacer answers for the truth of the novel, who will answer for the honesty of the prefacer? Hitherto suppressed, this question is brought out into the open by "R.'s asking "N.": "qui peut dire si je ne suis pas dans le même doute où vous êtes? Si tout cet air de mystère n'est pas peut-être une feinte pour vous cacher ma propre ignorance sur ce que vous voulez savoir?" (p. 29).

But in that case, can Rousseau be counted on to introduce Julie as a "dépôt sacré," or as the result of some "hasard romanesque?" Not exactly, but he does in fact borrow on several occasions from those precursors who, to fellow-novelist Béliard's bemusement, "se sont mis l'esprit à la torture pour inventer quelque circonstance capable de persuader que l'ouvrage qu'ils s'étaient bien donné de la peine à faire n'était pas d'eux." It will be recalled, for instance, that "R." receives La Nouvelle Héloïse "initially" by virtue of "N.'s handing it over to him in manuscript form. (p. 9). Obviously much better versed than his interlocutor in the protocol of prefacing, "N." later raises the possibility of "R.'s having had direct personal contact with the Clarens community during the course of his travels.
(p. 29). Indeed "R." seems to take the cue: he begins promisingly enough by acknowledging that he has visited Vevai "[plusieurs fois;"
but he proceeds, in the next breath, to disavow the very circumstances he has been called upon to confirm: "et je vous déclare que je n'y ai point oui parler du Baron d'Etange ni de sa fille." The ensuing development is so structured that on the heels of every assertion there follows a corresponding denial. "R." claims to have been in the right place: "J'ai été à Clarens;" nevertheless, "je n'y ai rien vu de semblable à la maison décrite dans ces Lettres." Moreover, he was there at the right time: "J'y ai passé, revenant d'Italie, l'année même de l'événement funeste;" and yet, "l'on n'y pleuroit ni Julie de Wolmar, ni rien qui lui ressemblât, que je sache." Each assertion serves as a reminder of the code's potential; each denial reinforces "R."
's unwillingness to exploit that potential fully.

Lip service is paid as well to equally prevalent portrayals of the manuscript as foundling. Only, "R." imagines, not the "editor" himself, but future readers, specifically a couple of countryfolk, as beneficiaries of a "windfall" Hélöise: "Pourquoi n'oserois-je supposer que, par quelque heureux hasard, ce livre, comme tant d'autres plus mauvais encore, pourra tomber dans les mains de ces Habitans des champs...?" (emphasis added, p. 23). In this case, as in that of the donation from "N." to "R.," the figure's survival is contingent on transplantation to a different context. The anticipated author-to-author exchange is reported here as taking place between two readers.

These narrative fragments aside, the Préface de Julie also deals discursively with multiple variations on the theme of veracity. "R."
unequivocally confirms the editorship status assigned Rousseau by the proposed title page: "Je suis l'Editeur de ce livre et je m'y nommerai comme Editeur" (p. 26). At this point, he has already counseled "N.," in no uncertain terms, against taking Julie for a novel: "vous jugez ce que vous avez lu comme un Roman. Ce n'en est point un; vous l'avez dit vous-même" (p. 13). Prefatory logic would dictate that he reinforce and complete these assertions with what were commonly assumed to be its "synonyms." After all, could we not expect the composite statement: I am the editor of this non-novelistic text, to be virtually interchangeable with such other figures of truth as: 1) I am not the author, and 2) the Lettres de deux amans are truly the letters of two lovers?

Apparently not. Something has gone amiss: barring capricious inconsistency, a major discontinuity has been injected into the representational chain. Yet, if "R." makes no definite pronouncements on either score, his failure to do so can scarcely be attributed to lack of opportunity. Especially where the issues of authorship and authenticity are at stake, "N." serves throughout as a kind of prompter for a "prefacer" too ignorant? too willful? or too proud? to play his role comme il faut. Indeed, "N." comes ever closer to putting the familiar words into "R.'s mouth:

Quand je vous demande si vous êtes l'auteur de ces Lettres, pourquoi donc éludiez-vous ma question? (p. 27)

Certainement si tout cela n'est que fiction, vous avez fait un mauvais livre: mais dites que ces deux femmes ont existé; et je relis ce Recueil tous les ans jusqu'à la fin de ma vie....Elles ne sont plus? Elles furent donc? (p. 29).
Thus, undaunted by "R."'s peremptory dismissal of his earlier efforts, the man of letters insists at the last on that question of veracity which more "normal" prefacers would have leapt to answer, supposing it to be uppermost on their readers' minds: "A des lecteurs réclamant toujours la vérité, les auteurs répondaient complaisamment en leur offrant toujours la vérité."31

These same "normal" prefacers also appreciated the value of insinuation. They sometimes substituted condensed claims of veracity like "cette histoire," for the more blatantly assertive: "ceci est une histoire vraie et non pas un roman." Once again Rousseau can be shown to have respected the formula while modifying its contents. "Histoire" does not even figure in his prefatory lexicon.32 Rather, if "R." shuns no opportunity to call the prefaced text by something other than its proper name, his indetermination regarding Julie's ontological status is reflected by a purposeful choice of terms applying as well to "fiction" as to "non-fiction": livre, écrit(s), ouvrage, recueil, lettres. The last, to which he resorts most often, constitutes somewhat of a special case: whereas "book" and "work" owe their deployment here to an inherent generality of meaning, "letters" designates a more topical, more problematical ambiguity. The activity of letter-writing had come, in Rousseau's day, to bridge the gap between literature and empirical reality. That pseudo-epistles were permitted to mingle freely with the genuine article in eighteenth-century anthologies epitomizes a widespread absence, among letter readers, of the will or the power to discriminate between fact and fiction.33
Meanwhile, these distinctions were further blurred by the evolution of letter-writing into a full-fledged, albeit minor, literary genre. The resultant rhetoric, what "N." understands by the term "style épistolaire" (p. 13), could then be transferred intact to authentic correspondence. But once precepts of purely literary origin had been instituted as artificially natural standards by which actual letters could be interpreted, categorized and ultimately judged, it became as appropriate to ask to what a letter might be true, as to wonder whether it were truly a letter. Thus, it happens that the figure lettres, as privileged by Rousseau, participates equally in the codes of veracity and verisimilitude, and marks a point of tangency between them. Questions of truth touch on questions of true-seeming within a term whose own morphology (lettre + s) suggests the notion of a divided whole.

The economy of Rousseau's Préface de Julie says as much. As we have already remarked, discussions of literal veracity are blocked almost immediately by "R. ", "je ne puis satisfaire à votre question" (p. 11). Choosing, however, to ignore this impasse, "N." reiterates the alternatives: either Julie existed, or the manuscript constitutes only "une fiction." (p. 12). When "R." offers no resistance to this second hypothesis, "N." spells out its (to him) damning consequences: "En ce cas, je ne connais rien de si maussade: Ces lettres ne sont point des Lettres; ce Roman n'est point un Roman; ces personnages sont des gens de l'autre monde" (p. 12). If a fiction, then not a novel? How can this be? "N."'s tirade makes sense only if the debate has somehow been permitted to change registers. The novel can be allied with truth against fiction only insofar as truth itself has been implicitly
redefined as "resemblance to truth." In fact, it is the ambivalence of "Lettres" which all but imperceptibly channels a concern for Julie's existential reality as artifact towards consideration of its literally determined "realism" as text. The absence of logical articulations between the clauses of "N."'s demonstration dissimulates a deliberate movement from absolute to relative notions of truth—in short, from veracity to verisimilitude. "R." has good reason, therefore, to alert us that "N."'s "curiosité" is taking a major "détour" (p. 12).

The transition made, "N." wastes no time in leveling the expected charges of infidelity to real life against La Nouvelle Héloïse. To a certain extent, his objections of inverisimilitude echo those voiced by detractors of the novel from Huet to Jacquin. Except that "N."'s general allegiance to what "R." calls "tous vos romans" (p. 19) is never in doubt. "N." reserves his attacks for so extraordinary a pretender to novelistic status as Julie. Indeed, were we to ask the man of letters himself to solve the riddle of his name, he might well respond that "N." (the letter and the man) stands for normalité or, better still, for nature. By denying "R."'s "fous" a place "dans la nature" (p. 12), he sets himself up as a high priest of human nature, dedicated to protecting her temple against invasions from without. In the name of "nature," "N." will subject both the characters and their language to exclusionary ridicule. (The novel's "events" will be spared temporarily, their crimes having consisted not so much in inverisimilitude as in tedium and immoralism. Matching specific criteria with specific elements of the novel was doubly advantageous to the critics upon whom "N." is modeled: while suggesting that the whole should be held liable
for the faults of the parts, such a tactic rendered global counter-
offensives virtually impossible.) What kind of deviant, "N." asks
without asking, is this so-called man Wolmar, "mari débonnaire et hos-
pitalier empressé d’établir dans sa maison l’ancien amant de sa femme"
(p. 13). And even granting a minimal resemblance of such "personnages"
to "la nature," who could claim as much for their language?: "avouez que leur style est peu naturel?" (p. 13).

"R."'s best and most innovative defense against these accusations
consists in turning them inside out, in diverting the reader's doubts
away from Julie, towards "N."'s (mis)use of the figure nature, and
beyond that, towards the underlying mimetic theory which that (mis)-
usage implies. If "N." joins the ranks of countless previous prefacers
by invoking "nature" as though there were no possible question as to
her identity, prefacer "R." proves more skeptical: he scrutiinizes
"N."'s "nature" and, from the start, finds her altogether too narrow.
"Qui est-ce qui ose assigner des bornes précises à la Nature," queries
"R.," "et dire: Voilà jusqu’où l'Homme peut aller et pas au-dela?" (p. 12).

It is only later, however, that this particular question will shed
its own rhetorical trappings, and elicit an answer from its asker.
"Qui est-ce qui ose...?" (emphasis added); the guilty parties, those
who dare to define, and thus, to confine, "la Nature" are revealed
with time to include the entire literary establishment: "[1]es Auteurs,
les Gens de Lettres, les Philosophes" (p. 20). Their shared partiality
is appropriately conveyed by a synecdochic formulation: "à les entendre,
on croiroit qu’il n’y a des hommes qu’où il y a des pensions, des
académies et des dînés." Thus, the "nature" to which "N." subscribes
is rendered coterminous only with the institutions of big city life. In terms of the Second Discours, he has committed "la faute de ceux qui, raisonnant sur l'état de la nature, transportent les idées prises dans la société.""35

But this geographical parochialism also functions metaphorically to unmask parochialism of another sort, the exclusively literary derivation of "N."'s "nature." If a part has come to represent the whole of reality, it is because that substitution has been condoned by a vast accumulation of printed words. If "le peuple de la campagne" appears not even to exist, it is because no novelist has yet recorded their existence: "Les gens du bel air, les femmes à la mode, les grands, les militaires; voilà les acteurs de tous vos romans" (p. 19). What "N." called "nature" is reduced by "R." to an already written version thereof. According, then, to the level on which "R."'s demonstration is understood, there are two equally correct answers to the question: where have the "N."'s of this world circumscribed human nature? In Paris, to be sure, but also—and, on this level, the verb "circumscribed" reverts to its etymological sense—within the covers of books.

Further interplay between these two orders of significance unfolds with such complexity as to exceed both the means and the ends of our present anatomy. Still, insofar as it yields a corrective or correc­tives to "N."'s inadequate "nature," this interplay should at least be sketched here. It follows from "R."'s expose of prefatory "nature" as essentially, and doubly anti-natural that the authentic subject matter of novels must lie elsewhere. But "elsewhere," in terms of the polarities already in place, means either outside literature or outside the
capital. Whereas the rhetorical convergence of two confined spaces, textual and geographical, served to dramatize the narrowness of "N."'s "nature," it is the divergence of their respective others which makes "R."'s own "nature" so elusive an entity. In itself, the nature/literature antithesis is hardly problematical, or original. It corresponds, on the contrary, to the fundamental precept of mimetic theory whereby art seeks always to imitate, not prior art, but reality, from which it nevertheless differs irremediably. If, as "R." asserts, the "Habitans des champs" are as yet unrepresented by novelistic counterparts, then to provide these rural folk with "une image des plaisirs d'un état tout semblable au leur" (p. 23) constitutes an exemplary mimetic enterprise.

And yet, neither "R." nor the newly converted "N." contents himself with this definition of nature according to exclusively esthetic criteria. Rather, both exploit the proven translatability of the nature/literature antithesis into the poles of nature and society, or, as "N." puts it, "la nature" and "les choses d'institution" (p. 21). Thus, a rhetorical sleight of hand is largely responsible for the fact that what purports to be a discussion about novels includes within its sphere of relevance more than a passing addendum to the First and Second Discours. Be that as it may, the context of this latest reference to "la nature" makes one thing unmistakably clear: it is as the goal ("le but," p. 21), not the source, of "ouvrages d'imagination" that "la nature" figures here in opposition to "les choses d'institution." Within the framework of "R."'s second antithesis, rural life as it exists in the here and now of eighteenth-century France can no longer be considered absolutely natural, only
relatively so with respect to more highly developed forms of civilization. Not only does this nature defy localization in cities; it defies any localization whatsoever, and functions, rather than exists, as the elsewhere to all empirical reality.

By itself, the geographical antithesis proves unequal to the task of representing this absolute otherness. In elucidating a program of activities to be undertaken by future novels, the discussion moves tentatively into a third, temporal dimension:

\[\ldots\text{éloigner toutes les choses d'institution; ramener tout à la nature; donner aux hommes l'amour d'une vie plus égale et simple; les guérir des fantaisies de l'opinion; leur rendre le goût des vrais plaisirs; leur faire aimer la solitude et la paix; les tenir à quelques distances les uns des autres;...(p. 21).}\]

The net result of this displacement is to heighten confusion. Semantic ambiguity accrues to the enumeration as a whole by virtue of ambiguities within each of the infinitives listed: ramener partakes of time and space, past and future; rendre, and probably guérir, of past and future; tenir, of present and future; and so forth. It is increasingly impossible to assign a precise "where" or "when" to that which nevertheless presides over this entire segment of dialogue: "nature" figures everywhere and forever in absentia as the ultimate moral imperative.36

The establishment of this moral imperative does not, however, invalidate that other "nature" which is the artist's model. By weaving the two into an apparently seamless fabric, the text signifies an unwillingness to choose between them. Only the closest of
inspections reveals that figures peculiar to the Préface de Julie have forged a new relationality between two portions of the prefatory heritage, between the figures of "truth" and those of "morality."

But we anticipate. Noteworthy though these developments may be, they concern us less immediately than do the implications of a deconstructed "nature" for the prefatory topos of true-seeming. With the exposé of "N."'s "nature" as already written, comes a necessary collapse of the representational system upon which he has based his charges of inverisimilitude. "R." suggests in retrospect that all the while his critic was proclaiming Julie untrue to nature, he was, in reality, denouncing its failure to resemble other novels. His perceiving the "belles âmes" of Clarens as nothing more than a "beau mot" (p. 13) depended on blindness to the fact that his own criterion, naturalness, was itself a literary construct, in short, a beau mot. By a further irony, "N."'s unwitting defense of the literarily natural will involve him on the side of "R." in conventional strategies aimed at inducing the manuscript's "truth."

"Point de gens parfaits: voilà la chimère" (p. 12). As "R."'s retort suggests, the operative figures here have to do with imperfection and non-literarity. They are predicated on the two-fold assumption that perfection denotes literarity, and that, nature and literature being mutually exclusive categories, to find something imperfect and hence, not literary, would be virtually equivalent to finding it natural. With artistic excellence thus sacrificed to verisimilitude, "editors" pointed proudly to minor stylistic deficiencies: errors in grammar, spelling and diction, regionalisms, archaisms and general
awkwardness of expression, as proof positive of their own non-inter-
vention. Rousseau's "N." does the honors for Julie, protesting that no 
man of letters, not even "le dernier barbouilleur," could have authored 
a "recueil" so full of "déclamations," "répétitions" and "rabâcheries" 
(p. 28). It should be noted, though, that "N."'s is no random list of 
defects for their own sake. He specifies, on the contrary, that various 
errors of excess are responsible for the novel's falling short of per-
fection. In this case, at least, too much signifies too little. This 
paradoxical sign system linking overabundance to inadequacy and, ulti-
mately, to authenticity has already been developed by "R." in a lengthy 
defense of his characters' language. Of the lover he has said: "Son 
coeur, plein d'un sentiment qui déborde, redit toujours la même chose, 
et n'a jamais achevé de dire," (p. 15), thus promoting the topos of 
stylistic insufficiency from rhetorical commonplace to philosophical 
basis for a definition of natural language.

Finally, lest we convey the false impression that all in Rousseau's 
treatment of true-seeming imperfection is new, different and profoundly 
dislocative, we should mention a straightforward case of borrowing from 
the corpus. Like so many prefacers before him, Rousseau makes a some-
what anachronistic jab at the prefacer's favorite strawman, the so-
called "roman romanesque." By the mid-eighteenth century, opposing 
one's own less than perfect characters to the idealized "Pasteurs d'Ar-
cadie" (p. 21) was no longer pertinent or persuasive. In fact, the 
only thing which saves this latter-day recourse to the topos from sheer 
banality is evidence, garnered elsewhere, of strong affective ties 
between "Rousseau" and the very "romans romanesques" his Julie intends
to contradict.\textsuperscript{37}

Figures of "Interest" and "Morality"

By its thorough-going eclecticism, in sum, Rousseau's preface already tells certain truths about the "truth" of novel-prefacing. Extensive, often emphatic quotation from the prefatory corpus represents that "truth" as far from univalent and, in fact, analyzable into various figures of veracity (fictions of origin, guises of editorship, declarative epithets), and figures of verisimilitude, each of which articulates implied differences between art and nature. On every level of its investigation into the prefatory topos of vérité, the Préface de Julie discloses as dual that which passed previously for unity. Not one, but two notions of "nature" engender two opposing theories of verisimilitude. Their dialogue, in turn, evokes metaphorically the tacit metaphoricity of verisimilitude itself as "truth-to-ness," rather than truth pure and simple. Even this last is divided against itself by the conflicting claims of verisimilitude and literal veracity.

If, by an arrangement whose significance transcends this preliminary enumeration, "truth" becomes both the first and the last order of business for debaters "R." and "N.," we must look elsewhere for the literal center of their discussion. Indeed, if Julie's past relationship with a scriptor or scriptors preoccupies them at the peripheries, it is concern for the novel's potential influence on prospective readers which dominates the interval of deferment and, in so doing, (re)activates figures of "interest" and "morality." Beyond this common grounding
in the prefaced text's future life, complex rhetorical associations be-
 tween the two topoi warrant, and even demand, their co-presentation in
 a single catalogue.

On this score, Rousseau makes strikingly clear what previous pre-
facers had suggested more or less obscurely: within the prefatory micro-
cosm, interest and morality are as intimately and uneasily related one
to another and, together, to the notion of truth, as the characters in
the most tautly constructed classical drama. An initial formulation of
the "question de Julie" functions exactly like the exposition to such a
drama:

Un Portrait a toujours son prix pourvu qu'il ressemble,
quelqu'étrange que soit l'Original. Mais dans un
Tableau d'imagination, toute figure humaine doit avoir
les traits communs à l'homme, ou le Tableau ne vaut
rien. Tous deux supposés bons, il reste encore cette
différence que le Portrait intéresse peu de Gens; le
Tableau seul peut plaire au Public (p. 11).

With a few bold strokes, "N." identifies the protagonists and sets in
motion a series of inevitable conflicts within each and among them all.
Only, this particular double bind engages, not human actors, but rhetori-
cal concepts, as its pawns: truth and true-seeming are represented by
the extended metaphor of portraiture; interest, by the verbs intéresser
and plaider; morality, by the marketplace ethics of prix, vaut and bons.
Further condensed and displaced by "R.,” this same series of conflicts
attains the status of an authentic dilemma: "Je vous suis. Si ces
Lettres sont des Portraits, ils n'intéressent point: si ce sont des
Tableaux, ils imitent mal" (p. 11). The intentionally expository
nature of these rejoinders is confirmed each time that the debate
circles back to reanimate another of their rhetorical couples. Identities, as well as antimonies, will be opened to discussion. New relations will emerge, for example, from the implied synonymy of *intérêt* and *plaire*, and from the apparent translatability of morality into economic terms.

Within the composite Preface, figures of interest occupy a volume considerably slimmer than those devoted to the admittedly more noble aims of verity and virtue. Less quantitative than qualitative, less thematic than purely rhetorical, the importance of "interest" to prefatory strategies derives from its having been privileged to participate metonymically in each of the other primary topoi. An archetypal two-act scenario featuring "interest" as intermediary between "truth" and "morality" might unfold something like this: if true, or, alternately, true-seeming (in the expositional passage cited above, "N." opts for the latter), a narrative could succeed in interesting the novel-reading public; thus committed to their reading, the interested parties would then be vulnerable to the text's moralizing intentions. To illustrate this second before-after relation, "R." borrows a medical metaphor from Tassius. As translated by J. Baudouin, this metaphor lends an air of life and death to the oft-reiterated assumption that for a book to do good requires first that it prove interesting:

> C'est ainsi que pour faire prendre une médicine à un enfant qui se trouve mal, l'on a coutume de lui frotter le bord de la coupe de quelque douce liqueur. Lui cependant avale cet amer breuvage et regoit sa guérison de la tromperie qu'on lui a faite (p. 1349).
In one sense, these verses apologize for novel-writing as such: they justify a pleasure-giving medium as more capable generally than discursive treatises of gaining access to the potential recipients of a given moral message. Nevertheless, to the extent that coupé designates, not the genre, but an individual work like Julie, the quotation leaves certain questions of interpretation unanswered. Should localization of douce liqueur on the cup's bords be taken literally? Is "R." content to limit pleasurability to the initial stages of reading? And if so, does he not expose Julie to the criticism of disunity advanced here by "N." and consecrated by Lanson's all-too-famous formula, "un rêve de volupté redressé en instruction morale"? It appears indeed that prefacer "R." has inherited a rhetorical problem, the absolute chronological disjunction of interest and morality as novelistic criteria. One equally rhetorical solution will consist in postponing the advent of interest to a later stage in the reading of Julie. However dubious given the novel's beginning in medias res, his assertion that the "lettres n'intéressent pas tout d'un coup: mais peu à peu elles attachent" (p. 18), does permit him to rewrite as relative, conventional distinctions between the interesting and the moral, between immediate gratification and deferred returns on reading time invested.

But in what precisely, besides the obvious dose of sensory titillation, is narrative interest presumed to consist? The signs by which interest would have manifested itself are enumerated obliquely by "average reader" "N." in a paragraph commencing "Quant à l'intérêt..." (p. 13), which deplores the absence of such signs and hence, the nullity of interest in La Nouvelle Heloïse. Here again,
polysemanicity is partially obscured by syntactical parallelism: the negative cast of the rejoinder as a whole dissumilates an ongoing process of figuration whereby meanings of the governing concept are gradually displaced. If a single coherent basis is to be found for "interest" according to "N.," that basis would lie in the notion of "conflict." "N." stipulates, first, that the characters be divisible into good and evil factions, the implication being that readers would ally themselves with the former against the latter. "Interest" can be provisionally understood in this context as "concern" or "solicitude." With regard to novelistic events, "N." continues, interest would be contingent on the possibility of sudden reversals. By exploiting contrasts between expected and actual plot development, novelists could play on that more elementary brand of interest which is simple curiosity; with the narrative's outcome perpetually in doubt, readers would be well advised to read ahead. Divisions operating exclusively on the level of content (good vs. evil characters) dissolve in this way into divisions on the level of reader-text relations (foreseeable vs. unforeseeable events).

In turn, "N."'s final query ("Est-ce la peine de tenir registre de ce que chacun peut voir tous les jours dans sa maison, ou dans celle de son voisin?") totally removes the axis of conflict from within the prefaced text to a position between text and extra-text. The interest of novels is further redefined as directly proportional to the distance separating their substance from the stuff of empirical reality as experienced by the reader. "Interest," for "N.," has become more or less interchangeable with "diversion;" lack of interest, with
"sameness." In addition, by a curious realignment of Pascalian polarities, diversion has been deemed worthwhile; sameness, superfluous.

"Est-ce la peine...?" demands "N.," in whose eyes failure to transport the reader away from self deprives a book like Julie of any valid reason for being.

It is inevitable, however, that as spokesman for an ardent champion of amour de soi, "R." will oppose this latest "conflict of interest." To this end, he will reactivate, at a later point in the discussion, the displacing gesture whose ostensible destination consisted for "N." in diversion. For his part, "R." will contest the finality of this destination: any such divorce between the self-interest of novels and that of their readers cannot help but engender yet another, most pernicious divorce, this one within the reader himself. In "R."'s retelling of it, diversion moves from the terminus ad quem of pleasure to the terminus a quo of madness:

En montrant sans cesse à ceux qui les lisent, les prétendus charmes d'un état qui n'est pas le leur, ils [les Romans] les séduisent, ils leur font prendre leur état en dédain, et en faire un échange imaginaire contre celui qu'on leur fait aimer. Voulant être ce qu'on n'est pas on parvient à se croire autre chose que ce qu'on est et, voilà comment on devient fou (p. 21).39

Given the tendency of eighteenth-century thought towards formulating any and all ethical problems in terms of human sexuality, it is clear, from "R."'s depiction of diverting novels as agents of seduction, that figures of interest have crossed over once again into the domain of morality. Failure to interest its public vitally constitutes sufficient
grounds for convicting a narrative of immoralism. Only in those cases where books act ultimately to preserve or to restore the reader's own selfhood will authentic interest have been attained:

Il faut que les écrits faits pour les Solitaires parlent la langue des Solitaires: pour les instruire, il faut qu'ils leur plaisent, qu'ils les intéressent; il faut qu'ils les attachent à leur état en la leur rendant agréable (p. 22).

In order to interest, writing must instill being with value. By promoting to the status of desirability that which is, already, such writings would achieve nothing less than the domestication of desire itself.

But "R." refers, in this delayed rebuttal, not to "Lecteurs," but to "Solitaires." The fact of his having specified a readership introduces a parenthetical complication. Just as additional figures of truth were generated by the question: true to what?, so now, the question: interesting to whom? supplements the catalogue of interest. The conclusion of "N."'s mini-essay "Quant à l'intérêt,..." bears rereading in this light: "Est-ce la peine de tenir registre de ce que chacun peut voir tous les jours dans sa maison ou dans celle de son voisin?" (emphasis added). Up to this point, "R." has gone along with "N."'s implicitly portraying Julie's virtual reader as a kind of Everyman, replaceable by the most indefinite of pronouns. Many prefacers had elected, like "N.," to suppress the question of clientele by advertising their product either as interesting in and of itself or as equally interesting to "all." But many others had not.
Perhaps they sensed what "R." will make explicit here: like the literarily-based myth of "Nature," the myth of a universal Reader is just that, a myth propagated by the literary establishment for purposes of disguising their own prejudices as objective truths. Accurate or not, "R."'s warning to "N." and his fellow men of letters ("vous croyez donner le ton à toute la France, et les trois quarts de la France ne savent pas que vous existez" [p. 22]), makes it advisable, even necessary, for prefacers of good faith to ask: interesting to whom? If "R." deplores the dividing of individual readers against their better selves, he also acknowledges the sociological status quo of a divided readership.

By no means, in any case, did the Préface de Julie invent the practice of addressing novels to sub-publics determined demographically on the basis of age, sex, marital status, occupation or place of residence. But no previous preface, to my knowledge, had deployed so many of these variables or, as a result, yielded so detailed a profile of the designated addressees. This profile emerges out of yet another cluster of antitheses: Julie's constituency is posited at every turn by opposition to those whom "N." mistook for the entirety of the novel-reading population. "R." locates the literarily disenfranchised "dans les Provinces," not "à Paris." More specifically, he continues, they are countryfolk of long-standing, not transplanted "beaux esprits." Their households are isolated, not only from the capital, but from each other: "on vit isolé." They earn their living, not by "affaires," but by "agriculture;" nor do they disdain to participate directly in cultivating "le patrimoine de leurs pères." Modest means ("une fortune étroite") dictate a life of "simplicité," lacking in
"l'appareil du luxe" or in the attendant "raffinement du goûtp. Thus, inevitably, the originating geographical distinction takes on moral overtones: no prior knowledge of Rousseauist ethics is required to recognize "la simplicité des mœurs rustiques" and "les manières et les plaisirs du grand monde" as figures for the polar opposites of goodness and evil (pp. 19-22).

Thus far, the juxtaposition of "R."'s own chosen readership and that which "N." is revealed to have chosen while pretending otherwise has unfolded with almost manichean straightforwardness. Only one area of doubt remains: does "R." himself believe in the literal existence of his agrarian public? will a soon-to-be-distributed Julie find such a public already in place?

What we have in fact lost by isolating the traits of "R."'s reader from their immediate context is the uncertainty on this score which arises out of subtle shifts in temporality. As the text vacillates among present, future and conditional, so too its substantives may designate either the actual, the probable or the merely possible. Eventually, however, this haphazard alternation gives way to a more purposeful ordering of tenses. The same precisions which will bring "R."'s profile into even clearer focus also serve to inscribe that profile within the chronology of desire. Whether or not Julie possesses a special appeal for faithful, family-oriented spouses, "[...]es maris, les femmes, les meres de familles...", "R." admits to wishing it did: "J'aime à me figurer deux époux lisant ce recueil ensemble..." (p. 23). No sooner said than a wish-fulfilling fantasy begins to take hold: a change in tense from the conditional to the
future overlaps with changes from the subjunctive to the declarative, and from the interrogative to the affirmative, by way of the negative:

Comment pourraient-ils [les époux] y contempler le tableau d'un ménage heureux, sans vouloir imiter un si doux modèle? Comment s'attendriraient-ils sur le charme de l'union conjugale, même privé de l'amour sans que la leur s'affermisse? En quittant leur lecture, ils ne seront ni attristés de leur état, ni rebutés de leurs soins. Au contraire tout semblera prendre autour d'eux une face plus riante...(p. 23).

There follow no fewer than seven categorical statements detailing further positive effects of reading Julie on the lives of the deux époux. By the rejoinder's end, "R." has quite literally talked himself into belief, and his hypothetical readers into existence. And yet, the "reality" to which the overall fantasy alludes is not so much that of the deux époux as that of the desire which called them into being. Psychological truth takes precedence over the objective variety thereof and, in so doing, further amplifies not only the catalogue of intérêt but that of vérité.

This revision in the ontological status of "R."'s readership goes a long way towards determining his answer to "N."'s next query: "Jusqu'ici tout va fort bien. Les maris, les femmes, les meres de famille...Mais les filles; n'en dites-vous rien?" (p. 23). Granted, it had long since become standard practice for prefacers to forbid the reading of their novels by "the eighteenth-century equivalent of Mr. Podsnap's daughter, that formidable 'young person' whom a novelist was under no circumstance to cause to blush, and who blushed with such alarming readiness."

But this pro forma censorship is here rendered all the more appropriate by the immediately preceding
identification of readers as imaginary objects of the prefacer’s own desiring. As long as indissoluble couples constituted its sole objects, this desiring could be considered perfectly chaste, and its subject, absolved of the guilt attendant on sexual fantasies. However, the transfer of desiring onto young girls would be tantamount to undoing sublimation, and must be avoided if the subject is to protect himself against charges of seduction. In fact, this need to institute and sustain a desexualization of desire explains what might otherwise be deemed a discrepancy between "R."'s present position ("Une honnête fille ne lit point de livres d'amour") and one which he advocated earlier in the debate: "Quand j'ai tâché de parler aux hommes on ne m'a point entendu; peut-être en parlant aux enfans me ferai-je mieux entendre;..." (p. 17). The age/youth antithesis holds only up to the point where the hitherto neuter "enfans" is articulated internally by the distinguishing marks of gender. And yet, does not "R." rewrite these same marks into invisibility by nominating as his quintessential reader, Julie, that is, a member of the very sub-public, les filles, whom he has just laid under the interdiction of non-readership? It seems impossible to decide whether or to what extent sexuality makes a difference in the Préface de Julie.

This is but one of the unsolved problems which precludes our closing once and for all the parenthesis opened by the question: interesting to whom? Provisionally, though, we can emphasize the completeness and the complexity of "R."'s response. By the discussion's end, he has endowed those to whom it may concern with that "caractere assez bien marque" (p. 14) which "N." found lacking in the
novel itself. But he has also made it difficult to know whether the models for that *caractère* should be understood as objectively real or as really imagined by him. The second possibility enables us to read "R."'s agrarian readers as so many figures in an allegory of interest which would counterblance "N."'s "Quant à l'interêt." If, when abstraction is made of all demographic particulars, "N."'s "interest" derives from diversion, and "R."'s, from self-sameness, this fundamental polarity organizes the particulars themselves. It is essential to "R."'s fantasy that his *deux époux* experience *Julie* in their own homes, "[durant les longues nuits d'hiver, dépouvrus de sociétés..." (p. 22). Insistence on this physical setting for readership parallels equal insistence on the spiritual state of being *chez soi*. Meanwhile, moving *hors de soi*, or alienation, translates into a dire, twice-repeated prediction that the siren call of diverting fiction will precipitate literal migrations, and result in a piling up of people "sur quelques points du territoire," with "tout le reste" left "en friche et en désert" (p. 20). The individual's self-interest is assimilated in this way to that of society at large. Metaphors of spatialization provide a rhetorical meeting ground for the sociology of interest, and its psychology: proximity to home signifies proximity to self, and vice versa. As told by "R.," two principal story lines—how novels interest, and whom they interest—are inextricably bound up one with the other.

On whatever level we interpret it, "R."'s tale of interest contains a considerable dose of moralizing. It does not suffice that *Julie* please some people somehow; it must appeal to the right (right-thinking) people in the right way; it must valorize, not the exotic, but the
familiar. That it does (or will, or would) is one argument among many forwarded by "R." in fulfillment of the prefacer's highest obligation, proving the prefaced text's moral goodness. Indeed, Georges May, for one, has concluded from his research that, as a sine qua non for novel-prefacing, the topos of "morality" surpassed even that of "truth:"

"le refrain le plus persistant que chantent les préfaciers du temps est celui qui vante l'incomparable profit moral que le public ne pourra s'empêcher de tirer du roman." It goes without saying that Rousseau will lend the voices of "R." and "N." to this general chorus. But into what specific leit-motifs, besides those we have already identified, does the Préface de Julie decompose the refrain of "morality"? However often they recur, these leit-motifs nevertheless remain relatively few in number, and their orchestration decidedly less complex than that involving the ideas of "truth" and "interest." After all, as Julia Kristeva has observed, it is in the nature of morality to abhor linguistic ambiguity of any kind.

On two fundamental points, there could be no arguing with the corpus: usefulness as instructional tools constitutes a goal to which all novels must aspire, and which good novels may attain. Reiteration had so indelibly inscribed these assumptions in the prefatory master text that "R." does not even bother to state them formally, but rather proceeds immediately to their corollaries. A phrase like this one: "[p]our rendre utile ce qu'on veut dire,..." (p. 27) takes for granted the possibility of rendering useful. Nowhere was it written that art for its own sake might represent a viable alternative to art for edification. And so, just as he gladly sacrificed beauty to truth, so now
"R." favors usefulness over beauty, to the point of implying an inverse proportionality between the two: "si l'on pouvoit espérer quelque succès pour ces Lettres, je suis très-persuadé qu'elles feroient plus de bien qu'un meilleur livre" (p. 25). Even here, though, the context suggests that "meilleur" itself be understood in a moral sense (in a "better" book, the characters would behave more perfectly). Unimportant at best, esthetic criteria are, at worst, totally irrelevant in determining the goodness of novels.

Instead, the sole "effet" (p. 19) which novels must be shown capable of producing in the reader is that of influencing his conduct for the better. So emphatically, in fact, had prefacers insisted on this power of art to modify life, that they appear to be overcompensating for uncertainty. With phrases learned by rote, they strove to exorcize a nagging doubt: can reading really lead to ethical revolutions? In the face of substantial evidence to the contrary, "R." takes another cue from his precursors: he declares the moral efficacy of *Julie* to be at least partially contingent on certain conditions which must be met, not by the novel, but by the reader. The latter would then have only himself to blame if, after his reading, the promise of moral regeneration remained unfulfilled.

Such strategic transfers of responsibility were commonplace, but the specific conditions for readership laid down by the *Préface de Julie* are pure Rousseau. These conditions can be inferred from the arguments enumerated by "R." to justify his contention that "[e]n matiere de morale, il n'y a point selon moi, de lecture utile aux gens du monde" (p. 18). Where this particular audience is concerned, he
envisions an entire series of circumstances beyond his control as conspiring to render his Julie morally impotent. Its message will be neutralized, first, by the contradictory precepts of other novels, "parce que la multitude des livres nouveaux qu'ils [Les gens du monde] parcourrent, et qui disent tour-à-tour le pour et le contre, détruit l'effet de l'un par l'autre et rend le tout comme non avenu" (p. 18). Even supposing that these literary adversaries did not exist in such proliferation, it would be unrealistic to hope that Julie could do battle on equal terms with life itself. With the readership long since attached to the "vices de la société, par des chaînes qu'ils ne peuvent rompre" (p. 19), its remedies cannot help but be too little, too late. This argument, like so many in the Préface de Julie, does double duty: not only does it excuse in advance a potential failure to affect positively, but it also eliminates the possibility of affecting negatively. "R." insists in passing that whatever damage novels might do has already been done: "s'ils soutiennent les maximes du monde, ils sont superflus" (p. 18). The same basic chronology imposed here on society at large will apply as well to the case of the individual maiden who would persist in reading love stories: "Le mal était fait d'avance; elle n'a plus rien à risquer" (p. 25). How, in either case, could Julie be held liable for crimes committed before its birth or rebirth through reading? It is essential to the novel's alibi that witness "R." testify to its having arrived on the scene after the fall, at a moment when virginity, literal or figurative, had already been lost.
Among les gens du monde, then, the prefaced text is precluded from good and bad works alike. In order that Julie have a positive moral effect, its subjects must be recruited "elsewhere." It should come as no surprise to find the signifiers for this "elsewhere" identical with those which, in the catalogue of truth, designated "nature," and, in the catalogue of interest, designated Julie's chosen readership. Once again, the notion of approach to an ideal is conveyed indirectly by the image of progressive movement away from urban centers: "Plus on s'éloigne des affaires, des grandes villes, des nombreuses sociétés, plus les obstacles cessent d'être invincibles, et c'est alors que les livres peuvent avoir quelque utilité" (p. 19). Somewhere on the map of France, there is a theoretical point which might be labeled "the threshold of moral usefulness." Beyond that point,

comme on ne se hâte pas de lire pour faire parade de ses lectures, on les varie moins, on les médite davantage; et comme elles ne trouvent pas un si grand contrepoids au-dehors, elles font beaucoup plus d'effet au-dedans (p. 19).

Thus, a single cause-effect relation is made to explain the absence of conditions which would reduce Julie's speech actions to an ineffectual babble: not only are fewer books read, not only are readers less corrupted, but fewer books are read precisely because readers are less corrupted. And a final recombination of the passage's underlying structural motifs: the inside/outside metaphor (au-dedans/au-dehors), and the principle of inverse proportionality ("elles ne trouvent point un si grand contrepoids"/"elles font beaucoup plus d'effet") defines the only readership situation in which "R." would not exempt novels
from initiating permanent moral change.

Already, there are indications that the editor feels less sure about Julie's goodness than he would have his interlocutor believe. Were that goodness really indisputable, he would have no need to place the onus of efficacity on the reader. Nor would he digress from his announced topic, positive moral action, into defenses against immoralism. The fact of his resorting to both these strategies supports George May's perception of a fundamental discrepancy between what prefacers meant to say about morality in the novel, and what, despite themselves, they really said: "on peut dire qu'entre 1725 et 1761 les bons romanciers qui n'entonnent pas le refrain moral sont rarissimes, mais que ceux qui le firent sans mauvaise foi aucune furent du moins aussi rares." At the root of this mauvaise foi, lies the moralizing prefacer's most difficult problem: how to reconcile being bad with doing good. It would be futile to pretend that none but acts of exemplary morality were recounted in those romans which had become virtually synonymous with livres d'amour ("R." himself uses the two terms interchangeably). The mere fact of "N.'s citing the bosquet and cabinet scenes makes it impossible for "R." to deny outright that his manuscript abounds in "situations vives" and "sentiments passionnés" (p. 25).

To be sure, many of his predecessors had chosen to mitigate the influence of such scenes by elaborating a policy of containment. Had he adopted this policy, "R." would have held one or two designated "villains" entirely responsible for whatever evil lurks within the novel. By "N.'s own admission, however, no such "méchant homme qui fasse craindre pour les bons" (p. 13) figures in the cast of Julie.
Rather than single out specific criminals, "R." concentrates on reducing the seriousness of crimes in which all are implicated. He does so at the outset in a series of thumb-nail sketches whose impressionistic aspect belies an underlying unity of purpose:

Une jeune fille offensant la vertu qu'elle aime, et ramenée au devoir par l'horreur d'un plus grand crime; une amie trop facile, punie enfin par son propre coeur de l'excès de son indulgence; un jeune homme honnête et sensible, plein de faiblesse et de beaux discours; un vieux Gentilhomme entêté de sa noblesse, sacrifiant tout à l'opinion; un Anglais généreux et brave, toujours passionné par sagesse, toujours raisonnant sans raison...(p. 12).

These sketches serve less to individuate the dramatis personae than to acquit the entire ensemble of willful wrongdoing. Moreover, everything from the order of presentation to the particulars of diction and syntax tends towards gradually redefining the protagonists' imperfection as other than strictly moral. Initially, that is, where Julie and Claire are concerned, the notions of "crime" and "punishment" still pertain. To portray their conduct in a favorable light demands that extenuating circumstances be invoked and that both be shown to have sinned out of weakness, not evil as such. Even here, however, we can discern the beginnings of movement towards ever greater exculpation: whereas Julie's crime is said to enter into direct conflict with her love of virtue, Claire's consists only in loving to excess.

This movement becomes especially pronounced when the focus shifts to the male characters. Weakness may still be the key to "R."'s defense. It is noteworthy, in this regard, that "R." abandons the prevailing participial construction only in the case of Saint-Preux: he
who might otherwise be considered the novel's primary agent of immorality neither initiates nor receives action. The preface omits to mention how he behaves; it tells us instead how he is: "...honnête et sensible, plein de foiblesses et de beaux discours."

But what, precisely, does "R." mean by "foiblesses"? Left purposefully vague in the case of Saint-Preux, the notion of weakness, as ascribed thereafter to M. d'Etange and to Milord Edouard, takes on definite intellectual overtones. The former's obstinacy, the latter's sophistry represent errors of the spirit rather than sins of the flesh. Thus, "N."'s completing the gallery with his portrait of Wolmar ("Un mari débonnaire et hospitalier empressé d'établir dans sa maison l'ancien amant de sa femme...") amounts to walking into an artfully set trap. Such irony as "N." indulges in here is possible only where intellectual, not strictly ethical, standards have been violated. Just how far the discussion has strayed from the initial defense of Julie becomes evident when we consider that the only scandal in which Wolmar is acknowledged to participate is a scandal to the mind, and further, that this scandal inheres precisely in the character's appearing too good to be true. Read with attention to its underlying dynamics, this brief passage reveals itself to be a tour de force of prefatory exoneration.

And yet, like the more standard policy of containment from which it derives, this particular tactic can succeed only relatively. Once the essential being of some or all characters has been more or less dissociated from crimes committed in their names, it still remains to the editor to explain away his own guilt in publishing those crimes.
Hence, the need, here as elsewhere, for strategies which would so motivate the part of immoralism within the novel as to render the impurity of its subject matter compatible with the purity of its intentions. Of the four principal variations on this theme distinguished by Georges May and identified by him as having been adapted from the prefaces to classical drama, all figure to some extent in the Préface de Julie. In the course of his apology, "R." either invokes or explicitly refuses to invoke each of the following: "l'argument du tableau de la vie humaine," "l'argument fondé sur la supériorité de l'exemple concret sur la théorie," "l'argument de la justice immanente," and "l'argument des pièges dénoncés." That no one of these arguments is deemed sufficient to write the editor into blamelessness provides yet another indication of the uneasiness which, despite himself, he shares with his precursors. Following their example, "R." attempts to compensate quantitatively for the absence of a single irrefutable proof of Julie's goodness.

On the one hand, he contends, the goal of moral instruction requires that certain concessions, however distasteful, be made to the depravity of life as it is. In terms of the overall prefatory economy sketched above, this means that "morality" must defer to "truth" insofar as efficacious sermonizing can originate only in an accurate depiction of the status quo. Pragmatically speaking, an idealized heroine would be powerless to educate an eighteenth-century readership with which she had nothing in common. To those "sublimes auteurs" who would equate perfection with persuasiveness, "R." points out the error of their ways:
rabaissez un peu vos modeles, si vous voulez qu'on cherche à les imiter. A qui vantez-vous la pureté qu'on n'a pas souillée? Eh! parlez-nous de celle qu'on peut recouvrer; peut-être au moins quelqu'un pourra vous entendre (p. 25).

On this score, his reasoning differs only in degree from that of countless other prefacers: as described by "R.," the vie humaine of which his Julie is compelled to render a tableau so far exceeds in wickedness the standard portrayals thereof as to justify practically any impropriety which the novel might care to recount. Given what "R." sees as a state of moral emergency—"des temps d'épidémie et de contagion, quand tout est atteint dès l'enfance" (p. 25)—a novel like Julie might in fact be applauded for exercising admirable restraint. Notwithstanding this apparent consolidation of a familiar position, the argument itself must, from the perspective of devil's advocate "N.," remain inadequate. While acknowledging "R."
's "maximes" to be "assez justes," the man of letters nevertheless concludes this round of debate with a warning to that effect: "on ne vous fera pas moins un crime d'avoir dit ce qu'on fait, pour montrer ensuite ce qu'on devroit faire" (p. 26).

How then will "R." supplement this necessary but insufficient defense? One option which he has already exercised, if only in passing, consists in proclaiming narratives as a general rule to be more efficacious morally than abstract treatises. Whereas in the previous argument instruction was conceived of as a by-product of truth-to-ness, the operative pairing in this instance is that of morality with interest. The writer must prove as realistic in his understanding of readership as in his choice of subject matter.
Having espoused a particular public, he must take into account that which, according to "R.," he cannot change, long-standing preferences on the part of that public for one form of expression over another. To be sure, we have only "R.'s word to vouch for the information that eighteenth-century countryfolk favored novels to the exclusion of all other reading matter:

Dans leur simplicité grossière, ils ne se piquent ni de littérature ni de bel-esprit; ils lisent pour se désennuyer et non pour s'instruire; les livres de morale et de philosophie sont pour eux comme n'existant pas: on en feroit en vain pour leur usage; ils ne leur parviendroient jamais (p. 22).

But even were such not really the case, "R." is rhetorically bound to proceed as if it were. (In this regard, "N.'s tacit agreement provides invaluable assistance in turning what might otherwise be deemed a debatable assertion into a seeming fact of life.) That public whose true identity as a collective object of desire is disclosed elsewhere in the preface must be assumed here to partake of objective reality. Only then can the editor claim limited personal responsibility for having chosen to transmit his message in so morally suspect a medium as the "Lettres de deux amans."

Meanwhile, by pretending that the uprightness of the message more than offsets whatever misdeeds are related in the course of its elaboration, "R." resorts as well to the third argument cited by May, that of immanent justice. According to this time-honored principle, what makes the characters' various offenses against virtue tolerable and even desirable is the very fact that such offenses are implicitly adjudged by the novel itself to be intolerable. The prefacer's task
consists in demonstrating that, as his plot unfolds, rewards and punishments are meted out with such equity as to render goodness increasingly attractive, and evil, increasingly repugnant. Indeed, prefacer "R." wastes no time in initiating an apologetics of immanent justice. Already at work in the sequence of thumb-nail sketches whose purposeful ordering we discussed above, this apologetics pertains especially to the case of Claire, who is presented here as "une amie trop facile, punie enfin par son propre coeur de l'excess de son indulgence" (p. 12). Reducing the character's entire itinerary to such a two-step formula enables the editor to insist on a cause-effect relationality between crime and punishment, and, beyond that, on the appropriateness of one to the other. That Claire herself should fall hopelessly in love with Saint-Preux is only fitting since she has wrongly encouraged the hero's illicit liaison with Julie. A further effect of the formula is to reveal the more particularly Rousseauist bias whereby no retribution which society at large might choose to exact can match that demanded of the wrongdoer by her own conscience. The justice done in Claire's case, as in that of Julie herself, "[u]ne jeune fille offensant la vertu qu'elle aime" (p. 12), is found to be all the more severe because its penalties are to such a large degree self-inflicted.

But surely the crime and punishment of an accessory like Claire remain peripheral to the central drama of seduction which leaves as its trace the novel's single most troublesome source of potentially negative instruction. Nowhere, in fact, does "R." make a systematic attempt at interpreting that drama in terms of immanent justice. We can only speculate as to his reasons for relegating the topos to so limited a
sphere of relevance. On the one hand, his unwillingness to admit in so many words that the lovers' initial conduct is as truly "répréhensible" as "N." declares it to be (p. 17), on the other, his desire that their eventual reform be read as coming more from within than from without, combine to subvert the conventional discontinuity between crime and punishment. Indeed, to the extent that they underscore the problematical nature of this discontinuity, "N."'s remarks disclose a fundamental weakness within the prefatory politics of immanent justice.

Supposing that the deconstruction of bad by good were so complete as to render the following assertions absolutely true: "Les détails de la vie domestique effacent les fautes du premier âge: la chaste épouse, la femme sensée, la digne mere de famille font oublier la coupable amante" (p. 17), then, he argues, the bad would have no logical reason for being in the novel. His rhetorical question: "Ayant à montrer des gens raisonnables, pourquoi les prendre avant qu'ils le soient devenus," confronts his interlocutor with two equally unattractive alternatives: "R." can either admit that the later stages of Julie do not entirely undo its beginnings, or risk allowing those beginnings to be understood as utterly gratuitous.

And yet, ever generous when it comes to sharing topoi from the corpus by which his adversary's argumentation might benefit, "N." himself points a way out of this dilemma. Having neutralized the efficacy of immanent justice, he nevertheless holds open the possibility of appeal to May's fourth argument, that of "pièges dénoncés." The opportunity is "R."'s to exploit once "N." has posed the leading question: "Mais les filles: n'en dites-vous rien?" (p. 23). From the
standpoint of prefatory rhetoric, all that would be needed to rescue
the editor from charges of condoning illicit acts or, worse still, re-
counting them for their own sake would be a few lines extolling the
virtues of novel-reading as vicarious experience. Why not promote the
love letters of Julie and Saint-Preux as places where young people could
learn the lessons of life through the mistakes of others, without actual
harm to themselves? After all, by "R.'s own admission, this argument
continues to hold considerable sway among his fellows: "On a voulu
rendre la lecture des Romans utile à la jeunesse" (p. 24). No sooner
said, however, than he refuses in no uncertain terms to extend this prac-
tice to his own Julie. "Je ne connois point de projet plus insensé," he
declares. "C'est commencer par mettre le feu à la maison pour faire
jouer les pompes" (p. 24). Contrary to popular belief, a little fore-
knowledge here becomes a dangerous thing.

This indirect celebration of blissful ignorance is a harbinger of
many things to come, among them the educational theories of Emile, and
the autobiographical accounts of psychic damage supposedly done to Jean-
Jacques himself by precocious novel-reading. More immediately, though,
it introduces a curious passage where "R." comes closer than anywhere
else in the preface to pointing a moral for the overall correspondence.
The arguments on which we have seen him relying up till now serve
exclusively to describe the conditions under which education of readers
by novels might take place. These conditions would be met if, for
example, the public were not already hopelessly corrupted, if novelistic
events bore some resemblance to real life, if evil in the novel did not
go entirely unpunished, or goodness, unrewarded, and so forth. What
these arguments have failed to state in so many words is the specific course of instruction available to readers of Julie. In similar circumstances, it was far from unusual for prefacers to reinforce the promise of a moral message with some indication as to what, precisely, that message might be. Obviously, the degree to which such a lesson might be spelled out varies considerably from preface to preface.

The Préface de Julie, for one, must be numbered among the instances of maximum obliqueness. At no time, does "R." make a formal announcement of intentions to establish a one-to-one correspondence between the novel as signifier and some abstract moral truth as signified. On the contrary, the moralizing impulse engendered by his rejection of "pièges dénoncés" quickly comes to designate an object distinctly other than Julie itself. The further elaboration of his reasoning proceeds by successive displacements from the world of Clarens, to that of the novelistic corpus, and beyond, to that of empirical reality:

Unquestionably, the maxim which closes this rejoinder: "Quand les femmes feront leur devoir, soyez sûr que les filles ne manqueront pas au leur," derives in full from "R."'s observations of real life, rather than from his reading of Julie. Even if the immediate context did not make this clear, the facts simply do not fit: there is nothing whatsoever in the
correspondence to suggest that the heroine's fall from virtue might be attributed to a model of marital infidelity furnished by her mother.

And yet, if we have learned anything at all about the implicit ground rules by which language perpetuates itself in the *Préface de Julie*, it is that ambiguity of reference arises at every turn from a rhetorically-based ease of interpenetrability between the characters' domain and the reader's. Pending a full investigation into this system of mutual metaphoricity (see Chapter IV), we can profit already from warnings implicit in the symmetrical figures of Julie the reader and the empirical reader as *solitaire*. Such figures alert us to the possibility that, at any moment, discussion between "R." and "N." may become doubly pertinent, and that what appear at first glance to be remarks about life either inside or outside the novel might better be read as applying equally to both.

The passage currently under examination is an exemplary case in point. In replying to his interlocutor's comments about real-life mothers and daughters, "N." contends that "chez les peuples qui ont des moeurs," fornication constitutes a lesser offense against virtue than adultery (p. 24). But "R." has already suggested as much in his initial assessment of Julie as a "jeune fille offensant la vertu qu'elle aime, et ramenée au devoir par l'horreur d'un plus grand crime" (emphasis added, p. 12). There can be no doubt that the greater crime in question is that of infidelity to Wolmar. Thus, "N."'s rejoinder serves in part to reinstitute a point of tangency between text and extra-text. The stage has been set for "R." to deliver a message as relevant to Julie's fictional world as to the real world into which he
would now introduce her.

Having begun with a promise of reparation towards womankind, this message evolves gradually into a bitter denunciation of parenthood as practiced in eighteenth-century Europe and more particularly, if our inferences are correct, by the novel's own matchmaking father, M. d'Etange:

Depuis que tous les sentiments de la nature sont étouffés par l'extrême inégalité, c'est de l'inique despotisme des peres que viennent les vices et les malheurs des enfans; c'est dans les noeuds forçés et mal assortis, que victimes de l'avarice ou de la vanité des parents, de jeunes femmes effacent par un désordre, dont elles font gloire, le scandale de leur première honnêteté...(p. 24).

Nonetheless, given its insistence that far-reaching moral reform "dépend absolument des peres et meres," this lesson seems strangely at odds with strategies employed elsewhere in the preface, and with conclusions which might be drawn from an independent reading of the novel. In the light of "R."'s previous refusal to point the finger of blame at any one individual, and his attempts at so diluting the novel's residue of immorality as to render the entire cast virtually blameless, we cannot help but wonder what prompted the present diatribe against paternal despotisme. Nor does this diatribe seem consistent with the lengths to which Rousseau has gone within the correspondence proper to endow the baron with motives more noble than those of avarice and vanité. Why should the exculpation of some suddenly have become contingent on the indictment of others?

Only in Chapter V will a fundamental change in the terms of our inquiry permit us to reformulate, and perhaps to resolve, this problem.
of paternity. At that time, we shall discover the full extent to which positive and negative images of fatherhood inform our overall reading of the preface. In the meantime, however, we need not digress from the business at hand—reading the Preface de Julie as an exhaustive catalogue of prefatory topoi—to suggest a possible reason for "R."'s striking out with such violence against the notion of paternal authority. Bearing in mind that this segment of dialogue began with the editor's acknowledgement of a literary progenitorship: "On a voulu rendre la lecture des Romans utile à la jeunesse" (p. 24), might we not interpret his anti-authoritarian posture as expressing a prefacer's ambivalence towards that specifically prefatory heritage which he finds it both necessary and impossible to deny? Might not the pre-existing corpus represent a threat of oppression no less real to Rousseau than that posed by any flesh-and-blood father? Might not the verbal patricide committed by his spokesman compensate in some small way for his own frustration at the inadequacy "of a shared language, and a common rhetoric to express his own personal truth"?45

In any event, we have seen how everything in the Preface de Julie abuts on considerations of morality. Above and beyond the elaboration of figures peculiar to the topos, debate on the figures of truth and interest remains incomplete until it has assumed a moral dimension. But even having said this much, we risk underestimating the scope of prefacer Rousseau's moralizing activity. If, as Jonathan Culler has declared, the poet-critic's "fundamental ethical problem is to recognize signs wherever they are; that is to say, not to mistake signs for natural phenomena, and to proclaim them rather than conceal
them, then the Précis de Julie must be deemed an ethical triumph of the first magnitude. Without pretending that Rousseau's spokesmen are empowered to recognize signs absolutely "wherever they are," or that they themselves do not indulge at times in willful mystification, we can still appreciate the value of their joint contribution towards denaturalizing the novel preface. How close they have come already to full disclosure of the intertextual sign system which identifies the archetypal Preface as a kind of rhetorical degré zero local.

Reopening the Question, I: Techniques of Demystification and Demythologizing

"I remember Yeats: 'I have spent the whole of my life trying to get rid of rhetoric...I have got rid of one kind of rhetoric and have merely set up another.'"

--Ezra Pound, Making It New

We have concentrated thus far on the "what" of this disclosure; it is time now that we turn our attention to the "how." Our reading to this point has remained as strictly analytical as possible. It has left us with a considerable precipitate of discrete correlations between the Précis de Julie and that hypothetical master Preface whose existence and attributes we postulated at the outset. What little organization we have imposed on the data-gathering process has been limited almost exclusively to the area of thematics. Only to the extent that we have isolated three primary foci of shared concern--truth,
interest and morality—and further subdivided each of these, have we
avoided an utterly random encounter with the prefatory heritage.

Our logical next step will consist in examining the ways and means
of that encounter. Rather than continue to resist the text's own urge
to synthesis, we shall review our accumulated findings with an eye
toward answering a couple of general questions about them. Does Rousseau
deal with prefatory topoi on nothing more than an individual basis? Or
can he be shown to have exploited a finite number of (anti)-rhetorical
techniques?

We need not even have considered the evidence to appreciate in
advance just how important this line of inquiry will be to our under­
standing of the preface. Were we to discover in fact that its point-by-
point interaction with the corpus does not follow any discernible
pattern, we would be forced to draw certain conclusions about the
nature and scope of Rousseau's enterprise. It would appear in that
case that disclosure constituted an end unto itself, to be achieved by
whatever means proved most effective in each particular instance. If
all that mattered were that an equal and opposite reaction counter
every last bit of prefatory action, then the preface would already have
achieved its purpose. With the subversion of prefatory norms the only
constant requisite to success, the Préface de Julie would best be
characterized negatively, as a kind of anti-preface. Our own critical
discourse would, in short order, be silenced by the knowledge of frag­
mentation as a dead end, rather than a stage along the way of inter­
pretation.
If, on the other hand, a consistent *modus operandi* could be abstracted from Rousseau's various violations of the code, then that methodology would itself define an additional field of inquiry. The possibility of enhanced meaning would dictate that we decipher a second rhetorical code, this one more or less of Rousseau's own making. The object of our renewed investigation would differ from the intertextual sign system on which it is grafted only insofar as classical rhetoric honors a fundamental distinction between *tropes d'usage*, on the one hand, and *tropes d'invention*, on the other. By analogy with the linguistic model, literary figures particular to the author would have been superimposed on those figures which we have already identified as belonging to a composite language of the preface. In short, where previously we read with Rousseau from the prefatory master text, we would, in this second stage, attempt to read his reading, and our own.

The two eventualities outlined above might also be phrased in terms more directly pertinent to the problematics of exegesis. Wondering whether a coherent second-degree rhetoric does or does not articulate the basic prefatory code would be equivalent to asking if the text's tendency to demystification is all-inclusive or, alternately, if there is room in the *Préface de Julie* for that other interpretative activity which, since Bultmann, has gone by the name of "demythologizing." As posited in opposition one to the other by Paul Ricoeur, demystification "seeks to destroy the symbol as the representative of a false reality," while demythologizing "deals lovingly with the symbol in an effort to recover a meaning hidden in it." Where Rousseau's preface is concerned, demystification would
correspond to disclosure for its own sake. That which the text would signify ultimately would be the inability of prefatory symbols to signify truly. It would suffice that these symbols be stripped of ill-gotten meaning; little or no thought would be given to compensating for the resultant loss of illusory plenitude.

But what if Rousseau's preface were to engage as well in de-mythologizing? It would seek, in that case, not to abandon, but to salvage the prefacer's stockpile of apparently out-moded symbols. Rather than discontinue, it would displace: the prefatory master text would be made to signify anew, in ways compatible with the author's own version of true reality. Thus reanimated, its vestigial figures could, with good reason, be numbered among those mots which Rousseau is reputed to have endowed with entrailles.49

That the preface will in fact counter rhetoric with rhetoric, and couple demystification with demythologizing is suggested by the residue of unanswered questions amassed in the course of our original analysis. With respect to the archetypal Preface, this residue constitutes what might be termed "the Rousseauist increment." In retrospect, the many instances when manifestations of the increment resisted our attempts at straightforward enumeration, and caused discussion of a particular figure to conclude "inconclusively" argue against taking unqualified subversion of prefatory norms for the preface's final word.

An additional impetus towards reopening the discussion is provided, on another level, by the implications of the "R."/"N." dyad. We have long since assigned the status of minimal textual enigma to the single consonant which alone designates the editor's partner in debate (see
Chapter II, p. 39). As such, the question of "N." may be linked emblematically to the overall "question of Rousseau's Préface de Julie." What we have not as yet stated formally is the assumption that the two enigmas are further related as part to whole, such that any clues to the identity of "N." will also inform our reading of the larger textual mystery which the mystery man of letters reflects in miniature. Where this riddle within a riddle is concerned, even false leads need not be discounted in the production of meaning. We have intimated as much in showing how development of prefatory true-seeming hinges here on "R."'s campaign to invalidate an implied expandability of "N." into "Nature" (see pp. 68-73). From now on, we shall make a point of exploiting this mutual interaction between major and minor enigmas: for each partial interpretation of the preface, we shall propose a corresponding guess as to what lies behind the initial "N."

Why should this particular letter have been chosen over all the other non-"R."'s at Rousseau's disposal? What comes to mind at this stage of our inquiry is an observation about initial consonants made by Mallarmé in his Les Mots anglais: "En elle [la consonne initiale] gît la vertu radicale, quelque chose comme le sens fondamental du mot." Viewed in this light, the initial "N." would be privileged as a carrier of meaning regardless of what additional letters would have suppressed in forming the abbreviation. But how does an initial "N." signify, if not as a quasi-universal indicator of negation? In every single Indo-European language, "N." stands for one half of the basic polar antithesis between "yes" and "no." In the Préface de Julie, this association of "N." with abstract negativeness is reinforced on
several levels by linguistic behavior specific to the speaker so designated.

We have already noted that, in objecting to Julie, he makes liberal use of negative syntactical constructions. Whatever its precise object, his criticism tends towards such strings of privatives as "En ce cas je ne connois rien de si maussade: Ces lettres ne sont point des Lettres; ce Roman n'est pas un Roman..." (p. 12), or:

Quant à l'interet il est pour tout le monde, il est nul. Pas une mauvaise action; pas un méchant homme qui fasse craindre pour les bons. Des evenements si naturels, si simples qu'ils le sont trop: rien d'ino- piné, point de coup de Théâtre (p. 13).

Moreover, to the extent that his discourse is endowed with a characteristic tone, that too identifies "N." as an inveterate nay-sayer. He specializes in sarcasm, in irony, in the kind of word play which depends on deliberately misunderstanding his interlocutor, and thus, makes further discussion difficult at best. He relies heavily on wit to score debating points. The slightly inappropriate punch lines which, with feigned naïveté, he so gleefully tacks on to extended analyses by "R." would constitute as many disruptions to dialogue were it not for the editor's exemplary patience. What "R." says on one such occasion: "Raillez. Moi, je persiste" (p. 22), could stand as a motto for his comportment throughout the preface. Time and again, he staves off the threat of foreclosure posed by "N."'s witticisms, even those which unite negativity of tone with an equally characteristic ethical nihilism. When, in the following rejoinder, the man of letters (mis)takes for an open invitation to licentiousness "R."'s contention that novelists bear no responsibility
for corrupting the already corrupted: "A merveille! Auteurs érotiques, 
venez à l'école: vous voilà tous justifiés," the editor responds in kind, 
but with an underlying seriousness not entirely devoid of pomposity:
"Oui, s'ils le sont par leur propre coeur et par l'objet de leurs écrits" 
(p. 23).

Thus, with the establishment of "N." as a repository of negation, 
the semantic promise of the initial consonant is fulfilled. He who, on 
the surface, says "no" to Julie is at the same time saying "no" to the 
perpetuation of dialogue with "R." To be sure, "N."'s discourse also 
abounds in categorical assertions. There exists no more staunch defen­
der than he of prefatory norms. But when abstraction is made of his 
specific positions on the issues, "N."'s general attitude remains that 
of the demystifier. More parasitic than inventive, more destructive than 
creative, he deals almost exclusively in the words of others. Rather 
than forge a personal language, he contents himself, whether deliberately 
or unwittingly, with distorting beyond retrievability that which has 
already been said, either by previous prefacers or by his current partner 
in debate. Implicit in his various barbs is the constant message: "The 
matter is closed." On every point, he would have the final say, if 
only "R." would allow it to be so.

And yet, "R." fails to heed "N."'s message; he "persists" (the 
verb is his own), and, in so doing, reminds us that "N." and "R." are 
dialectically linked as negative to positive. The demystification for 
which "N." furnishes a global sign represents only one aspect of the 
meta-prefatory activity carried out by the Préface de Julie. The con­
sonant "R." functions throughout as a written guarantee of the
Rousseauist increment, of that second-degree rhetoric which supports and structures the supplementary activity of demythologizing.

But how, precisely, does this rhetoric operate? For an initial insight into its underlying principles, we shall postpone reexamining our inventory of prefatory topoi until after we have considered the one-paragraph "Avertissement" which itself prefaces the published version of Rousseau's *Préface de Julie*. Read in conjunction with the *Rhétorique générale* elaborated recently as a collaborative effort of the so-called "groupe µ," the "Avertissement" yields more information than it would appear at first glance. Like the actual preface, this seemingly utilitarian text combines apologetics with exegesis: not only does it justify the text to come; it acts as that text's first reader. Along with a prehistory of the preface, it provides, though less obviously, a guide to future interpretation. While purporting to tell only how a certain text came to be made public, it also tells something about the ways in which that same text might, henceforth, be made meaningful.

It is in order that these ways not elude us, that we shall look with and beyond Rousseau's "Avertissement" to the full-blown theory of the *Rhétorique générale*. What makes this work of particular relevance is the authors' attempt, in their final chapter, at forging an analogy between language and literature such that a fixed body of rhetorical operations could be transferred intact from the first domain to the second. In general, they hold that violations of a given literary genre (they themselves concentrate on the narrative) can be patterned on violations of the overall linguistic code. Just as figures of speech diverge from ordinary language, so, "étant donné une norme ou degré zéro..."
de tel type de discours, le rhétoriqueur s'en écarte pour produire des sens ou effets spécifiques." More specifically, on whatever level this divergence takes place, its basic modes can be reduced to four: suppression, adjonction, suppression-adjonction and permutation. It is possible to derive all those figures which classical rhetoric referred to as being "of the author" from the quasi-mathematical operations of addition, subtraction—whether singly or in combination—and mutual exchange.

This possibility does not go unacknowledged by the Préface de Julie. On the contrary, the "Avertissement" predicts obliquely, and the preface's main body emphatically confirms, that responsibility for instituting a second-degree rhetoric lies with the same four operations whose universality would be officially proclaimed at an interval of over two hundred years.

Before relinquishing the floor to debaters "R." and "N.,” an anonymous voice, evidently that of editor "Rousseau" speaking in his own name, addresses itself as follows to the real-life reader:

Ce Dialogue ou Entretien supposé étoit d'abord destiné à servir de Préface aux Lettres des deux Amans. Mais sa forme et sa longueur ne m'ayant permis de le mettre que par extrait à la tête du recueil, je le donne ici tout entier, dans l'espoir qu'on y trouvera quelques vues utiles sur ces sortes d'écrits. J'ai cru d'ailleurs devoir attendre que le Livre eût fait son effet avant d'en discuter les inconvénients et les avantages, ne voulant ni faire tort au Libraire, ni mendier l'indulgence du Public. (p. 9).

Tendered under the title of "Avertissement," these remarks thus constitute what Littré defines as a "petite préface pour attirer l'attention
du lecteur sur quelques points particuliers." Relatively speaking, this "little preface" is prefixed to the Préface de Julie in much the same way that the latter text may be said to have been prefixed to the overall corpus of pre-existing prefaces. The "points particuliers" to which, in hindsight, the greater and lesser prefaces draw attention correspond, in the first case, to the interpersonal topoi of novel-prefacing, and, in the second, to the conventions underlying a specifically Rousseauist transformation of these topoi. An implied intertextuality between the Préface de Julie and its heritage is both displaced and disclosed by the actual juxtaposition of "Avertissement" and Préface. Preface to Rousseau's preface to prefaces, the "Avertissement" contains warnings, not about prefatory rhetoric per se, but about the second-degree rhetoric of demystification and demythologizing.

The warnings come as a by-product of the "Avertissement"'s ostensible purpose, which is to motivate the deferred publication of a second preface to Julie. To that end, editor "Rousseau" presents an official version of circumstances which we have already pieced together from the private writings of correspondent Rousseau (see my Introduction, pp. 13-16). The two accounts are in basic agreement as to the broad outline of events: originally slated to occupy the liminary space of La Nouvelle Héloïse, the Préface de Julie was nevertheless replaced there by a derivative preface in monologue form; only now that the novel itself has been widely circulated, will the dialogue appear intact, but in isolation. Thus, although short on detail (no mention is made of the jettisoned project to publish the Préface in tandem with the Imitation théâtrale), and lacking in temporal precision (when,
exactly, was the Préface written? abandoned? resurrected? and finally published?), the "Avertissement" remains reasonably faithful to the facts of the matter and to their ordering.

And yet, to recite those facts is already to interpret them. However succinct, the "Avertissement" gives a decidedly different slant to the prehistory of the preface than does the Correspondance. Nowhere is this tendency toward interpretation more evident than in that final sentence where the "editor" elaborates on the fact of delay by painting himself as the noble martyr who would at once sacrifice Julie's interests to those of his publisher, and himself refrain from crass solicitation. Significant though this posturing may be, both in itself and because it foreshadows the prefacer's own moralizing behavior, it concerns us less directly here than does some striking phraseology employed earlier in the "Avertissement."

"Ce Dialogue ou Entretien supposé étoit d'abord destiné à servir de Préface aux Lettres des deux Amans." From the outset, a question is raised about the dialogue's right to continue to bear the title of Préface. Once a preface, always a preface? Rousseau's wording would seem to indicate, on the contrary, that the text's prefatory status has been jeopardized by its dislocation from the novel's main corpus. The title Préface de Julie persists as a reminder of what might have been, had not the "Entretien supposé" been precluded from functioning as a preface by its own physical deformities: "...sa forme et sa longueur ne m'ayant permis de le mettre que par extrait à la tête du recueil...". The phrase is so structured as to absolve the editor of any active role in the initial decision not to publish. Knowing as we do that this step
was in reality freely taken, we must assume that Rousseau had his reasons for depicting it here as having been forced upon him by some undesignated third party. The "Avertissement" would have us believe the Préface de Julie to be in such direct violation of unwritten prefatory norms as to render banishment by tabu, or at least extensive censorship, the only permissible course of action.

In other words, those of the Rhetorique générale, a gesture of suppression (silencing the dialogue through non-publication) has been necessitated by an original act of adjonction whereby both the number of speakers (la forme) and the number of words (la longueur) had come to exceed the legal limits for prefatory discourse. This adjonction has been undone in another way by the less drastic suppression which consisted in allowing the preface to stand par extrait at the head of La Nouvelle Héloïse. Now that a censored version has acceded to the status of legitimate preface, to make public the Préface de Julie in its entirety will constitute a further violation by adjonction. With respect to the preface/novel dyad already in place, the Préface de Julie cannot help but be de trop. Finally, even if it were possible to disregard the monologic preface, there would be something fundamentally abnormal about the Julie/Preface de Julie relation. The editor himself insists on the fact that the usual order of publication has been reversed: "J'ai cru d'ailleurs devoir attendre que le Livre eût fait son effet...". Thus, the preface will follow the novel into print as a result of that specific brand of permutation which the "groupe μ" rhetoricians have discussed under the subheading of "inversion chronologique."
In sum, the preface's eventful journey from conception to publication is understood here to have been articulated by each of four operations which, in another context, would be singled out as the essential elements of second-degree rhetoric. What the "Avertissement" does by way of warning is to measure the Préface de Julie against a series of provisional norms or degrés zéro locaux: the hypothetical master Preface, the actual "first" or monologic preface, the intertextual system of preface and novel. In every case, the Préface de Julie is found to be involved in significant deviation from those norms, whether by suppression, adjonction, suppression-adjonction, or permutation. More often than not, such deviations are seen as functions of the preface's very being, regardless of its contents. It is as a single rhetorical unit that the dialogue has first been subtracted from, then added to, the basic equation: preface + novel = norm. It is as a single unit, likewise, that the conversation has changed places with the correspondence to yield the inequality: novel + preface ≠ norm.

In two important instances, however, what has happened to the preface is directly linked to what happens within it. The "Avertissement" establishes a cause-effect relation between internal excesses of form and length, and the external fact of suppression. Conversely, the fact of adjonction is explained by the preface's containing "quelques vues utiles" which, by implication at least, exceed whatever the monologic preface alone could have told us about "ces sortes d'Ecrits." Responsibility for silencing the Préface de Julie as object in the world lies with additions to convention by the Préface de Julie as text. The eventual decision to lift the ban of silence, and to recall the
preface as object from nullity into being, stems from a conviction that certain things which the preface as text has to say might themselves be classified as "additional information." The net effect of this insistence on causality is to endow the four basic rhetorical operations with a continuity of jurisdiction which would extend uninterrupted from the whole of Julie's preface to its parts. If adding a second speaker is understood to involve precisely the same kind of illicit activity as does adding a second preface, then it would seem that the equally illicit activities of subtracting and interchanging must also play a role in differentiating the "before" of individual prefatory topoi from the "after" of their transformation by Rousseau. That being the case, the "Avertissement" could be said to warn allegorically: it will have recounted the various accidents which formerly befell the Préface de Julie as a way of predicting what manner of rhetorical displacements the Préface itself holds in store for the degré zéro local of novel prefacing.

This reading of the "Avertissement" is confirmed by a further warning made from within the preface's main body. The debate has only just gotten under way; its ground rules, explicit and implicit, are still being established. The speaker is "N.;" the specific topic under discussion, prefatory "nature;" the terms in which he censures his antagonist's iconoclastic interpretation thereof, the following:

Avec ce beau raisonnement les Monstres inouis, les Géants, les Pygmées, les chimeres de toute espece; tout pourroit être admis spécifiquement dans la nature; tout seroit défiguré, nous n'aurions plus de modele commun? (p. 12).
Thus, in order to dramatize the perils of deviation from human nature, the man of letters calls on metaphors of physical deformity. Those fictional characters whom he would accuse of abnormality are painted here as either larger ("les Géans") or smaller ("les Pygmées") than a literally determined "modele commun." A third category of freaks, "les chimères de toute espece," owe their exclusion from "N."'s nature to the fact of their possessing normal traits in abnormal combinations.

Parallels between these three deformities—nature enhanced, nature diminished, nature rearranged—and the corresponding rhetorical processes of adjonction, suppression and permutation are obvious, and become even more so with "N."'s use of the verb défigurer. The metaphorical disfiguration of which Julie here stands accused applies in another, more literal sense to Julie's preface. Just as the novel distorted human nature beyond the point of recognition by "N.," so now the current dialogue acts to dis-figure that hypothetical master Preface whose very identity derives from institutionalized figures of truth, interest and morality. It is significant in this regard that the preface should describe its own task as one of disfiguration, even though performing that task involves the further figuration which corresponds to elaboration of a second-degree rhetoric. Adding to, subtracting from and recombining the prefatory figures already at hand are conceived as means to the end of eliminating rhetoric altogether, and of rejoining that other "nature" from which "N."'s constitutes a seemingly irreversible departure.

Thus, the preface itself echoes and further elucidates the allegorical warning made by its "Avertissement." To the reader who would
heed that warning, the possibility is raised of regrouping the preface's multiple infractions against the code according to the nature of each such infraction. The rhetorical operations of suppression and adjonction cut across the thematic categories of truth, interest and morality, to account for the subversion of all by infra- and ultra-prefatory figuration. Obvious instances of adjonction include the annexation of amour de soi to the official list of approximate synonyms of novelistic intérêt, and the extended parenthetical developments occasioned by modifying the obligatory questions: "true?" "interesting?" and "instructive?" to read: "true or what?", "interesting to whom?" and "instructive under what circumstances and in what way(s)?". Adjonction of another type occurs whenever the preface contradicts itself by presenting two divergent views on the same basic issue. Whether or not enfans of the female gender are to be included among Julie's chosen public, whether or not "R." intends the heroine's father to bear moral responsibility for her downfall, one thing remains clear from a rhetorical standpoint: in cases like these, where plural uses are made of a single figure, one or the other must be considered excessive with respect to prefatory norms.

Explicitly announced by such telling formulae as "je ne puis satisfaire à votre question" (p. 11), adjonction's opposite, suppression, may be either total, as when the argument of "pièges dénoncés" is rejected out of hand, or partial, as when limitations in scope are placed on that of "la justice immanente." In other words, the preface may fall short of specific expectations either through complete and
utter silence (e.g., the absence throughout of direct assurances that "editor" Rousseau is not also the author of Julie), or less drastically by adopting a posture of unwonted reticence (e.g., the lengths to which "N." must go to extract information about "R."'s first-hand knowledge of Vevai). Combining some degree of suppression with adjonction results, meanwhile, in the substitution of a particularly Rousseauist variant for the standard figure which might otherwise have appeared in its stead.

Where the parent Preface said "histoire," the Préface de Julie says: "lettres;" where former prefacers linked verisimilitude to superficial stylistic incorrectness, Rousseau's establish a three-step relationship among verisimilitude, verbosity and an inherent inadequateness of language to experience; where previous editors defended against immoralism by concentrating blame in one or two designated villains, "R." chooses to dilute that blame throughout the entire cast of characters.

And so forth. We need not have assigned each and every figure to a rhetorical sub-group to appreciate one advantage of such recategorization. By enabling us to distinguish among figures on something other than a thematic basis, the interpretative method currently under elaboration makes possible a more accurate description of the Préface de Julie's progressive unfolding than that which our initial enumeration could only suggest. The inadequacy of that enumeration derived in part from its having neglected the preface's temporal dimension. As long as we concentrated on respecting the prescribed repartition of figures among the topoi of truth, interest and morality, we found ourselves isolating individual figures from the preface with little regard for the actual order of their appearance. And almost invariably, when we
did follow in the text's own wake for any length of time, we remarked how easily figures from a single *topos* merged with one another, or became contaminated from without by notions more closely associated with one of the other *topoi*. In this regard, the ubiquitous rhetorical operations of adding and subtracting compensate by their indifference to thematics for the latter's indifference to questions of diachrony.

More specifically, our difficulties in superimposing semantic order on the dialogue point symptomatically at yet another important aspect of its deviation from the norm. Given a hypothetical master Preface which, however great its insistence on the interrelationality of *topoi*, tended to treat these *topoi* successively, that is, one at a time, the *Préface de Julie* must be charged with further abnormality on the grounds of permutation. Prefatory figures are so (dis)ordered by Rousseau that, rather than exhaust one question before taking up the next, his spokesmen circulate freely from topic to topic and back again. Their ability to do so is guaranteed from the start by the decidedly expositional nature of their first few rejoinders. The same function of setting up parameters for future discussion is accorded "N.'s seemingly definitive tirades on *vérité/vraisemblance* (p. 12) and *intérêt* (p. 13). Precisely because they appear at first glance to say everything that could possibly said on a given topic, such attempts at closure are instrumental in our eventual realization that the complete *Préface de Julie* will have said much more. After all, we must look almost to the preface's final words for the actual close of discussion on truth and true-seeming. As for questions of interest, they too will be deferred until later points in the debate. On one such occasion, "R.'s "Si
les Romans n'offroient à leurs Lecteurs que les tableaux d'objets qui
les environnent,...les Romans ne les rendroient point fous, ils les
rendroient sages" (pp. 21-22), answers "N."'s "Est-ce la peine de tenir
régistre de ce que chacun peut voir tous les jours dans sa maison...?"
(p. 13) at an interval of twenty-four often lengthy rejoinders. A
further configuration uniting interest with truth emerges out of "N."'s
making the characters' reality a pre-condition for enthusiastic reader­
ship: "...dites que ces deux femmes ont existé; et je relis ce Recueil
tous les ans jusqu'à la fin de ma vie" (p. 27). Thus, extensive per­
mutation transforms the once rare repetition of individual figures and
general topoi into a more or less commonplace occurrence.

However, lest we mistake the results of this permutation for the
random comings and goings of casual conversation, the preface itself
alerts us that such is not in fact the case. Rather, despite the insti­
tution of temporal distances between semantically related figures, the
overall system is said to develop cumulatively such that, at any given
moment, the discourse may be held accountable for all that has preceded.
Digress though they may, the speakers warn each other early on that any­
thing said in a provisional present can and will be used against them in
that present's future. When first "R.": "vous l'avez dit vous-même,"
then "N.": "je crois l'avoir dit aussi" (p. 13) harken back to the
latter's previous testimony, their dialogue as a whole is explicitly en­
dowed with the capacity and the responsibility for remembering its own
past. That this capacity approaches the limit of total recall is con­
firmed when, almost at the last, "N."'s "Et les belles âmes, les
oubliez-vous?" (p. 27) reminds his interlocutor of an interchange which,
in the transcript of their "entretien suppose," will have taken place fourteen pages earlier.

In the light of this small-scale but insistent intertextuality among all its adjacent and non-adjacent segments, the preface's acts of permutation assume a purpose other than that of fidelity to the vagaries of actual conversation. Why, in the matter of "interest" cited above, does Rousseau delay "R."'s response to "N.," if not to strengthen the case against diversion? The ultimate success of "R."'s rebuttal hinges on his putting the interval of deferment to good use. Time spent on the seemingly unrelated task of identifying the novel's true readers, those who would profit by self-sameness and perish by diversion, pays off in enhanced complexity and moral import. "R."'s eventual refutation of specific charges against Julie benefits from the introduction of new evidence which adds breadth and depth to what previously passed for a simple question of taste in readership.

Thus, were it to be charted geometrically, the Préface de Julie's overall course would differ markedly from the relatively straight but twice-broken line described by the hypothetical master Preface and reproduced by our own enumeration on the basis of "truth," "interest," and "morality." It would differ as well from the haphazard array of points which would have been left as a trace by an utterly random permutation of prefatory figures carried out in the absence of intertextual memory. Nor, despite its beginning and ending with questions of literal veracity, could the preface's special brand of disorder be adequately conveyed by the notion of circularity. It is the spiral which comes closer than any other visual aid to describing how figures recur
in the *Préface de Julie*. The dialogue is, of course, forever circling back; but at the same time, it is drawing ever nearer to that ideal of full disclosure whose attainment will have been proclaimed by "N.": "Les éclaircissements nécessaires y sont tous" (p. 30).

Thus, permutation does as much to the relations among figures as do suppression, adjonction and suppression-adjonction to their substance. In the process of defining and developing a second-degree rhetoric, all four operations participate globally. No detail of prefatory etiquette seems too trivial or too well-established to be exempted from the influence of at least one among them. But, apart from the sheer number of their objects, there is another sense in which these four may be thought of as global operations. In certain instances, the particular *degré zéro local* which is added to, subtracted from or recombined transcends not only individual figures, but even complexes of a vertical (*topoi*) or horizontal (units of dialogue) nature. Of these instances, which will preoccupy us in the remainder of this chapter, one involves adjonction: the "R."/"N." dyad exists in continuous violation of unwritten laws calling for one speaker per preface. Another is a function of suppression as applied systematically to that constant preoccupation with truth-telling which becomes not only a topic but a requirement for discussion. Yet another raises the general question of why the overall order of *topoi* should have been so disrupted by permutation that the first goes last, and vice versa. And a fourth can be extrapolated in the form of a "characteristic" allegorical impulse from the text's many invitations to substitute one level of significance for another by means of suppression-adjonction. To each of the four
basic rhetorical operations, there thus corresponds what might be termed a paradigmatic manifestation. Each is responsible for committing at least one major infraction against the code at large. Together, these infractions and their respective implications go further even than the sum of localizable misdemeanors towards articulating the difference between Rousseau's *Preface de Julie* and its interpersonal heritage.

What measure of change is instituted, first, by the leap from monologue into dialogue? The division of discourse between two speakers touches off an epidemic of dualism which infects and informs the preface at every level. On the one hand, such overt dualism constitutes a means to demystification through formal acknowledgement of the code's heretofore tacit premises. The adversary relationship between "R." and "N." calls to mind the monologic Preface's own reliance on antithetical expression. This reliance had often been partially obscured by such standard formulae as "ceci n'est pas une fiction," or "ceci est une histoire vraie," which, although derived from the truth/fiction antithesis, elected a priori to emphasize only its positive pole. Such partiality is no longer possible given a debate format which, in itself, ensures that the pros, the cons and, beyond both, the conventional necessity of deciding between them, are exposed to full scrutiny by readers of the third party. The editor's name is by no means the only thing to be spelled out "en toutes lettres" (pp. 26-27) by the *Preface de Julie* in defiance of trends towards mystificatory condensation. On the contrary, disagreement between "R." and "N." actualizes that process of weighing alternatives which, in the monologic Preface, tended to take place between the lines. In this regard, a further instance of doubling
whereby the already-written preface is granted an illusion of orality permits the debaters' give-and-take to pass for a stylized reenactment of deliberations which may be supposed to have preceded the writing down of all previous prefaces. Fictional reversion to language's more primitive mode serves to reunite the Preface with its prehistory, and to re-present that which ordinarily would not have survived the translation into final form.

The formalization of dialogue means also that, at long last, the questions for which countless prior prefaces had already submitted answers will themselves be enunciated in so many words. Played elsewhere by those virtual entities addressed in the second person as "chers lecteurs," the questioner's role was most likely that of a silent partner to pseudo-dialogue with the prefacer. Under the terms of an implicit prefatory contract, "I" would divulge to "you" what "I" knew "you" wanted to hear; "you" was seldom, if ever, consulted and then only rhetorically when words like "Vous voulez savoir..." were put into a nonexistent mouth. Played here by "N.," this same role achieves existential parity with that of the answer-giver. By permitting the man of letters to ask questions in his own name, the Préface de Julie is in effect lending concrete presence to the abstraction known as "horizon of expectations." Rather than dissert on the basis of what he might assume these expectations to be, prefacer "R." must deal with "N."'s telling him face to face what in fact they are. "Tout le monde aura la même curiosité que moi," warns the man of letters (p. 29), thereby explicitly asserting his right to stand in for the totality of "chers lecteurs."
Thus, provisionally at least, "R." is deprived of absolute control over the discourse (ultimately, of course, the accuracy or inaccuracy of transcription is left entirely up to his good faith as sole scriptor; that he will have heeded "N.'s final words of advice and left "les choses comme elles sont" [p. 30] can be assumed, but never verified). And yet, whatever danger lies in according free speech to the inquisitor is turned to the defendant's advantage by a further logical consequence of adjonction. Once the Preface's anthologized answers have been formally prefixed by their respective questions, then these last may be prefixed in turn by questions about the questions; once the reader's expectations have been incorporated in full within the discussion, then it becomes as valid to inquire about the propriety of these expectations as to determine whether they are met by the prefaced novel.

The tactic of questioning questions comes into play, for example, when the issue of Julie's fidelity to nature is complicated by "R.'s wondering how so highly literate and socialized a personage as his partner in debate could presume to know enough about nature to ask the question in the first place. As it turns out, the Préface de Julie will have quite a lot to say about "Rousseau"'s own state of nature. First appearances to the contrary, this supplementary material is far from extraneous. Rather, it constitutes a necessary outgrowth of "R.'s second-degree question and, more precisely, a kind of proof by opposition that, as it stands, "N.'s original question is not nearly so straightforward as to warrant a direct response. Before Julie's relation to nature can be definitely described, it must be understood
by all concerned that there will be no condoning the use of "nature" as a euphemism for "status quo." Detailing those other uses of the term which he deems to be correct is "R."'s way of persuading "N." (and us) to find the latter's "nature" unacceptable.

In fact, it is at this level of annexation that adjonction itself assumes a second dimension: questioning the questions becomes a privileged means, not only to demystification, but also and especially, to demythologizing. Adding to the corpus becomes a matter of more than simply intensifying the old idiosyncracies; its results as well in authentic innovation. The fate of "nature" illustrates an unwillingness on the part of Rousseau to content himself with exposing to view that which had already transpired, more or less unseen, in previous prefaces. Instead, he goes beyond exposure to the establishment of an alternative "nature," one which, if not entirely unfamiliar to his own habitual readers, is certainly without precedent in the more specialized annals of novel prefacing.

In short, the Préface de Julie abounds in derivatives of the all-encompassing "R."/"N." dialogue: its answers do not stand alone, but appear in conjunction both with their opposites and with the questions which called them into being, questions which need only be voiced to reveal their own latent ambiguities. It would seem that a potentially infinite regress of dialogism has been halted only artificially by the move out of speech and into print. Yet, even on this level, the preface refuses a clear-cut choice between alternatives. By writing an illusion of orality, it accomplishes the paradoxical feat of preserving precarity. Inscribed within the fixity of written language is a fiction
of open-endedness, an unreal possibility of perpetual revision culmi-
nating only in questions of the $n^{th}$ degree.

From the rhetoric of doubling, there thus emerges an increase in
the preface's capacity for doubt and self-doubt. By its pairing of
"R." with "N.," the interrogative with the affirmative, the written
with the oral, and so forth, the Préface de Julie violates not only
the letter, but the spirit of prefatory law. And, as usual, the fact
of transgression makes it easier to discern what exactly it is that
has been transgressed. "What" in this case corresponds to a tacit
coincidence of two axes, that separating certainty from doubt, and
that between preface and novel. The Preface had evolved into a privi-
leged locus of certainty, a place where the author could resolve once
and for all whatever questions might be raised by an untutored reading
of his novel. Whether by painting characters or by pointing morals,
the liminary text undertook to anchor free-floating signifiers from
the main corpus in ultimate signifieds. Eschewing ambiguity of any
kind, the Preface thereby renounced any claims it might have made to
share in the Novel's literarity.

Despite the large dose of invention required for fictions of
editorship and the like, the very fact of their being permitted to
verify without themselves being verified signals a fundamental discon-
tinuity between such fictions and those of the Novel proper. Only
the latter were acknowledged to be problematical; the former were
entrusted with putting an end to problems. Ostensibly at least, the
prefacer's was a utilitarian, rather than a poetic, use of language.
Such doubt as did at times invade the Preface's stronghold of
certainty tended to be modest in scope and attributable to authorial
caprice. The only issue on which prefacers admitted to uncertainty
with any degree of regularity was that of literal veracity, and even
then, it was often a question of their withholding supposedly available
information from the reader, of pretending to know, but preferring not
to tell. The feigning of ignorance turned outwards as a technique of
provocation, rather than inwards as a genuine source of malaise; doubt
emanated from the prefacer, but did not involve him.

But doubt does—or, more appropriately, may—involve prefacer
"R." He says so in replying as follows to "N.'s contention that the
epigraph alone constitutes irrefutable proof of the editor's author-
ship:

Je vois qu'elle [l'épigraph] ne dit rien sur le
fait en question: car qui peut savoir si j'ai trouvé
Cette épigraph dans le manuscrit, ou si c'est moi
qui l'y ai mise? Qui peut dire, si je ne suis point
dans le même doute où vous êtes? Si tout cet air de
mister n'est pas peut-être une feinte pour vous
cacher ma propre ignorance sur ce que vous voulez
savoir? (p. 29).55

Once again, "R." disorients the conventional chain of signification by
adding another link to it. Where habitual usage dictated that certainty
masquerade as ignorance, here ignorance itself is proposed as a possible,
but by no means automatic, signified for "tout cet air de mistere." It
is no longer a simple matter of the editor's withholding what he is
supposed to know, but rather of his refusing to state whether or not he
knows anything at all. By invoking a third-party arbitrator, the "Qui"
of "Qui peut dire...?", "R." abdicates the prefacer's responsibility
for omniscience, and threatens to situate himself, with reader "N.," on the side of ignorance. By introducing that third party as the pronomial subject of a query to which the correct response might well be: "Personne," he makes the "elsewhere" of certitude as abstract an Other as bona fide "Nature." In short, a massive infiltration of ambiguity into prefatory space invalidates the implicit homology whereby the preface would relate to its novel as answer to question, certainty to doubt, and prosaic to poetic uses of language. Though the voice may be "N."'s, it is the overall _Preface de Julie_ which affirms its extraordinary nature with the words: "Je ne conclus pas; je doute,..." (p. 29).

In concrete terms, removing the axis of antithesis from its accustomed position between novel and extra-novel yields the image of a single page, that bearing the epigraph, whose present uniformity belies the possibility of dual origin. "N." has perhaps been over-hasty in assuming the title page to be entirely "of the editor." It may belong in part, not to liminary space, but to the main corpus, not to "R.," but to some prior reader. How better than by this literal blurring of boundaries to reopen the question of whether, and where, figurative lines should be drawn between the "prefatory" and the "novelistic"—a question which will preoccupy us throughout our next chapter.

With this promotion of doubling from rhetorical phenomenon to philosophical problem, our investigation into global instances of _adjonction_ has come to an end. Nevertheless, a further clarification is in order. En route from the "R."
"N." to the Preface/Novel dyads, we have described as additives to the Preface some elements which might better be
discussed as functions of suppression. The reasons for this apparent paradox become logical enough given a realization that in order for absence to be perceived as such, the possibility of presence must somehow be acknowledged. Translated into the specifics of Rousseau's preface, this means that, were it not for "N.," with his insatiable curiosity and relentless cross-examination, there would be almost no way of representing "R.'s tendencies toward evasiveness. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine a solitary preface so impolitic as to draw attention to the very issues which he most desired to skirt. From a strictly rhetorical standpoint, the fact of suppression is secondary here to that of adjonction. Something must have been gained in order that something else seem to be lost. The near-total suppression which consists in reducing the speakers' names to initials has, as its necessary if not sufficient cause, the original commitment to dialogue. Moreover, in terms of results yielded, subtracting a positive element is no different from adding a negative one. Activities carried out under the sign of "N." may be variously described as negating certainty or as affirming uncertainty. Only on the level of perception do distinctions between the two operations become meaningful: for figures to be felt as truly and uniquely suppressive demands that the discourse itself interpret them that way. Suppression comes into its own in the process of the text's acknowledging a sense of loss.

It is just such a sense which is conveyed by "N.'s growing frustration with his inability to elicit from "R." the expected claims of literal veracity. Unlike other, more random omissions from the master Preface, those pertaining to Julie's origins are denounced from
within and in so many words. The fact of "N."'s posing the meta-prefatory question: "Quand je vous demande si vous êtes l'auteur de ces Lettres, pourquoi donc éludez-vous ma question?" (emphasis added, p. 27) renders such omissions both singularly glaring and suspiciously purposeful. From this point, "R."'s lapses into silence can no longer be seen as improvised (earlier, he had been on the verge of telling all, and had changed his mind only in mid-sentence: "Je pourrois.....Non, je vois le détour que prend votre curiosité," [p. 12]), or as entirely imposed from without, as had been the case when "N." neglected to let him get a word in edgewise (p. 13). Nor, in retrospect, is there anything at all coincidental about the editor's refusal to take such bait as the man of letters had cast his way in passing: "Si vous êtes l'auteur, l'effet est tout simple. Si vous ne l'êtes pas, je le conçois encore" (p. 18). On the contrary, the possibility of oversight is negated by the certainty of evasion; once it has been named and, further, named as a characteristic posture, "R."'s silence becomes a problem in its own right.

To speak, or not to speak: that, then, is the question whose pros and cons are debated in the following interchange:

N. Quand je vous demande si vous êtes l'auteur de ces Lettres, pourquoi donc éludez-vous ma question?
R. Pour cela même que je ne veux pas dire un mensonge.
N. Mais vous refusez aussi de dire la vérité.
R. C'est encore lui rendre honneur que de déclarer qu'on la veut taire: Vous auriez meilleur marché d'un homme qui voudroit mentir..... (pp. 27-28).

"[C]es Lettres" figure only incidentally here as the pretext for a collision between two antithetical attitudes toward truth-telling. What
begins as yet another attempt at prodding "R." into pronouncements about the main corpus quickly turns into disagreement about the secondary text in progress. "N." files charges, not against Julie, but against her guardian; he objects, not to what the lovers did, but to what "R." himself is doing or, more precisely, failing to do. Nothing short of full disclosure will satisfy the man of letters. It is evident from his choice of verbs, *éloigner* and *refuser*, that he regards "R."'s silence as negative both in fact and in value. Rhetoric and morality join forces to condemn that silence as a sin of omission. Withholding information about authorship is not only less than prefatory but less than truthful.

"R."'s defense, meanwhile, depends on his so divorcing rhetorical from ethical criteria that negative operations may be endowed with positive value, and vice versa. If "N." opts for verbs whose semantic negativity is inherent, "R." imposes negativity from without on the positive *vouloir*. On the one hand, "N." views silence as a violation by *suppression* of interpersonal prefatory norms; on the other, "R."'s personal norms for truth-telling are such that breaking his silence would constitute an instance of violation by *adjonction*. The less said, the better, once a phrase like "dire un mensonge" has established an automatic equivalence between speaking and lying. The only positive use to which further speech may be put is that of formalizing the fact of suppression. Declaring a will to silence becomes "R."'s chosen way of re-instituting compatibility between linguistic and moral affirmation.

Thus, by deflecting discussion into the realm of lived morality, "N." has succeeded only in placing the double standard of prefatory
truth-telling into greater relief. Words invested in arguments of literal veracity end up profaning the very truth which "R." would now honor through silence. Where "N." sought to moralize the prefatory code, "R." rejects it in favor of opposing values to which he subscribes not only as a prefacer but also and primarily as "un homme qui [ne] voudroit [pas] mentir" (emphasis added). Stooping to the task of novel-prefacing does not exempt the superior individual from exercising his customary integrity. Rather, to the extent that they interfere with the global project of being "toujours vrai" (p. 27), conventions specific to this or any other established literary form must be written out of Rousseau's adaptations thereof.

A further indication of how seriously the Préface de Julie takes the problem of truth-telling is provided by traces of large-scale permutation. The more usual course of action would have been to dispense at the outset with questions of literal veracity, whether by a simple declaration, by a fiction of editorship, or by a combination of both. Even were some portion of the supporting evidence to be withheld temporarily, prefacers tended to waste no time in getting their basic claims on the record. It is perhaps a measure of the readership's willingness, even desire, to be deceived that vérité figured as the initial item on so many variants of the prefatory agenda. In any case, given the ambiguous status of novel-writing, it makes sense that status-conscious literati should have seized the earliest available opportunity to stage the ritual suicide of their novelist selves, and to reincarnate those selves in the more intellectually acceptable guise of editorship. The priority of "truth" might be justified as well by the internal logic of temporality
(telling how the prefaced text came to be is an obvious way of beginning "at the beginning"), or by that of cause and effect (from the axiom of "truth," derive both the corollary of "interest" and grounds for a standard defense against immoralism). For whatever reason, avowed or implicit, the Preface had made questions of origin its original questions. Successful elaboration of an overall prefatory program demanded that these questions be resolved as swiftly and straightforwardly as possible.

Their importance as rhetorical cornerstones by no means guaranteed and even guarded against their being taken seriously as bona fide inquiries. So blatant and yet so orthodox was the deceit, and so comfortable the prefacer in his knowledge of it, that his discourse rarely bore traces of the genuine uneasiness which, as May reminds us, surfaced almost invariably with the transition to issues of morality.56 Those lines which the prefacer found easiest to deliver were precisely those in which he believed not at all. For the duration of his soliloquies on "truth," he did not grapple, but merely gestured. The simple fact of his emitting signs of "truth" proved enough to make him—and, it would appear, his audience—oblivious to an utter detachment of those signs from objective correlatives. And as long as he neglected substance for surface, any long-windedness on his part might better be characterized as indulgence in virtuosity than as an inadvertent admission of bad faith.

Such is the rationale which "R." now throws into disarray by his pointed refusal to let "truth" lead off the parade of prefatory topoi. "N."'s dismay at this turn of events is obvious and understandable.
As spokesman for the established order, the man of letters begins by singling out the question of literal veracity as the essential prerequisite to exegesis (p. 11). It is the one question upon whose resolution his "jugement" of Julie depends so absolutely that, from the outset, he employs extraordinary means to prompt "R." into taking a stand. However understated, "N."'s conditions amount to a kind of blackmail pact whereby "R." would pay up in figures of truth, or else. Delay disclosure of Julie's origins, "N." warns, and you risk losing me as a partner in debate; fail to state first things first, and I shall have no choice but to counter your selective silence with a global silence of my own. For "N.," in short, the moment of truth is now or never.

"R.," however, sees things in a different light. He rules out disclosure at this time: "...je ne puis satisfaire à votre question...," but not necessarily once and for all. To "N."'s "now or never," he thus replies, "not now, maybe never." This clash of imaginary wills lends dramatic presence to yet another tacit confrontation between, on the one hand, the incipient Préface de Julie, and, on the other, that hypothetical master Preface which Rousseau, through "R.," would now disorder. Underlying "N."'s insistence that, without a basis in claims of literal veracity, there can be no dialogue, is an indication to real-life readers that, with permutation disrupting the master text at its point of origin, what follows will in no way resemble a "normal" preface. Rather, it will differ from previous members of the species in appearing to have been born headless.

"R." does, however, make certain concessions to "N." and Rousseau, to normalcy. The memory, if not the substance of "truth"'s
priority is kept alive by the following exchange:

N. Oh! si elle [Julie] avoit existé!
R. Hé bien?
N. Mais sûrement ce n'est qu'une fiction.
R. Supposez.

Rather than ignore "N.'s speculation entirely, "R." engages in two rounds of verbal shoulder shrugging. He doubtless intends to impress "N." (and us) with the irrelevance of authorship as a criterion for judgment, a position which he has already stated in so many words: "Je ne vois point la conséquence. Pour dire si un Livre est bon ou mauvais, qu'importe de savoir comment on l'a fait?" (p. 11). And yet, with each shrug, he further defeats what seems to be his own purpose. So carefully does he avoid the traps which "N." has baited with tempting morsels of desire ("Oh! si elle...") and provocation ("Mais sûrement...") that "truth," the ever-elusive prey, cannot help but increase in fascination. By making such a point of silence, he surrounds the most commonplace of topoi with an unwonted (unwanted?) air of mystery. In the face of what "N." will later call "ces petites subtilités" (p. 29), the reader's need to know extends beyond the basic question of Julie's origins to such related problems as why "R." should have characterized disclosure as an impossibility rather than as a conscious choice. If only he had delivered what his audience, in the person of "N._" wanted to hear, they would not want so actively or so much.

And if he had seized the allotted moment of truth to eliminate either fact or fiction, the alternative could not now survive the
transition to other topoi, to verisimilitude and beyond. Instead, since neither hypothesis can be discounted, the two persist like a pair of parallel lines for the duration of dialogue. "Truth" as origin has been dispersed throughout the entire preface: it is the nagging doubt which colors assertions about "interest" and "morality," the invisible Other which at any moment may pop back into view. Proof positive of this last is furnished at the dialogue's mid-point, when, in the context of discussions about language and readership, "N." suddenly refers back to the original alternative: "Si vous êtes l'auteur, l'effet est tout simple. Si vous ne l'êtes pas, je le conçois encore" (p. 18). Like "N.,” the empirical reader is everywhere compelled to sustain two separate lines of reasoning: a normal prefacer would have asked only that his novel be read as if it were true; Rousseau now demands that La Nouvelle Héloïse be read as if it were either true or false.

Eventually, however, "truth" does reemerge from between the lines of the Préface de Julie. In fact, from the moment of "R."'s declaring that he will name himself as editor (p. 26), it gradually becomes the primary focus of attention, and remains in the forefront until just before the last. Only the overtly meta-prefatory coda stands between truth and the absolute closure of dialogue. Everywhere present in absence during the interval of deferment, the question of origins thus regains actual presence at the interval's end. It might be said, therefore, that permutation operates in two distinct, but compatible ways: the figurative dispersion of "truth" throughout and its literal displacement to the preface's latter stages work together to endow the topos with a new finality. It is significant in this
regard that "R." now consents to talk, even if only to justify his continued sphinx-like silence. Apparently, he finds the time to be riper now than ever before for taking a stand. No longer first among equals, authorship has become the ultimate question: despite, or rather because of an initial loss of strategical priority, prefatory "truth" has come to acquire an eschatological dimension.

Permutation thus reinforces suppression in disfiguring "truth" through second-degree figuration. The two operations combine to transform a closed, rhetorical question into a real, open-ended inquiry. As a result, what the Préface de Julie has to say about truth-telling can and should be situated on a par, philosophically, with the postures adopted elsewhere in Rousseau's oeuvre. It is to those postures that we shall turn in order to understand better and to assess what "R.,” stand-in for a sometime prefacer and fulltime truth-seeker, proposes here as a definitive formula for personal integrity, that of honoring truth through silence. What exactly motivates this stance? What are its connotations, its practicality, its ethical validity? In accordance with the intratextual model of deferment, we shall leave such questions dangling until the more appropriate moment when our frame of reference will have been displaced from the prefatory, to the Rousseauist master text.

It remains at present to discover how systematic application of a fourth rhetorical principle, namely suppression-adjonction, further articulates the difference between this and preceding prefaces. In turning aside from suppression and permutation, we shall not, however, be completely dismissing the matter of Julie's origins. Far from it:
once we have understood the revised rules by which semantic substitution operates within the *Préface de Julie*, we can use that understanding to catch "R." in the act of revealing more than he "means to" about how his book was made ("comment on l'a fait," [p. 11]).

The rules to which I refer form the basis for that aspect of the Rousseauist increment which manifests itself as a constant impulse to allegory, or better, to metaphorization. For if the *suppression-adjonction* involved in allegory goes always in the same direction, from the more immediate to the "deeper" level of meaning, metaphorization is, by convention, more nearly reversible. Theoretically, "A" can as easily replace "B" as be replaced by it. Where Rousseau's preface is concerned, "A" and "B" correspond to the worlds of Julie and Julie respectively. Contact of a purely metaphorical nature is maintained at all times between the Clarens community and the outside world, such that it often becomes difficult to know precisely which the speaker has in mind or even if the ambiguity of reference is deliberate. The same sort of confusion presides, on the one hand, over "R."'s anti-paternalistic moral (does it apply only to empirical society, or is the novel's father figure implicated as well?) and, on the other, over those representations of an ideal readership which, by all appearances, do double duty as reminders of the very values most highly cherished at Clarens: solitude, simple agrarian pleasures, faithful if loveless marriage, and so forth.

An instructive contrast could be drawn between this mode of figuration, and the insistence of other prefices on linking the two worlds *metonymically*, by showing the characters, and perhaps the editor, to
have actually participated in both. Such participation is here denied in spectacular fashion by "R.'s refusal at the last to acknowledge direct personal contact with the intra-textual community (p. 29). So near and yet so far: despite his having passed through Vevai in the year of Julie's death, the expected point of tangency between his course and the characters' has failed to materialize. Above and beyond its specific manifestations, suppression-adjonction thus works in the Préface de Julie to replace a fundamental relation of contiguity with one of mutual, though partial, resemblance.

But given that contiguity was established through fictions of literal veracity, what sort of fictions, if any, come into play with the shift in emphasis from contiguity to resemblance? Based on such evidence as the two separate occasions when Rousseau makes readers the protagonists of adventures which formerly befell "editors," the answer would seem to be: fictions of readership. By casting readers "N." and "R." in the ritual manuscript exchange which normally took place between a character (or his intermediary) and the "editor," and by replacing the "editor" with ideal readers as the potential, not past, beneficiaries of a windfall Héloïse, the Préface de Julie sets up parameters for translating the entire creation story into one of consumption.

Within the framework of this semantic transferability, "R.'s highly detailed, even obsessive, image of a new readership takes on added significance. This image, it will be recalled, is born of frustration: it is "R.'s way of compensating in advance for the inevitable misunderstanding of Julie by the urban elite which, he claims, monopolizes taste and constitutes the novel's only established constituency
In explaining his need for an alternative to the "N.'s of this world, he might well have used the words: "L'impossibilité d'atteindre aux êtres réels me jetta dans le pays des chimeres." Revery thus becomes an antidote to real failure foreseen. "R.'s desire attaches, not to actual readers, but to acknowledged figments of his own imagination (e.g., "J'aime à me figurer deux époux lisant ce recueil ensemble...," p. 23). The pleasure which he derives from such imagining is habitual, as indicated by the "eternal" present of "J'aime." His vision has as its central figures a couple ("deux époux") seen at first more or less in the abstract but later anchored by an abundance of concrete detail "dans un séjour qui leur convient." The detail itself is uniformly positive; the ensemble, so close an approximation to the state of nature that its elaboration might well have been guided by a wish not to "ternir ce riant tableau par rien qui dégrade la nature." Finally, the longer it persists, the more real the image becomes in the eyes of its beholder. Purged of unreal elements by the movement from conditional to future, and interrogative to affirmative, "les fictions se fixent" to such a degree that elsewhere in the preface they pass for indisputable truths.

By now, it should be evident that what we have done is to borrow language from Book IX of Rousseau's Confessions to retell "R.'s invention of a readership in the Préface de Julie. That this borrowing can be accomplished so systematically and with so little distortion to either text betokens a fundamental similarity between the two versions of creation, the one involving Julie's ideal public, the other centered on Julie itself. To a significant extent, the preface looks
ahead to Rousseau's looking back in loquacity on that question of origins which suppression and deferment have left unanswered on the preface's literal level. Creating readers in the present becomes a metaphor for what will later be told as character creation in the past.

It would be pointless to ask whether or not the author consciously intended "R."'s first-person account of writing a reader to be interpreted as a veiled allegory for the novel's own gradual accession to being. Nor, without unduly privileging the Confessions, can we credit the preface with anticipating the "whole truth" about Julie. Superimposing the two accounts does, however, yield enough points of coincidence to suggest significant continuity in Rousseau's use of fiction to (re)present the experience of fiction-making. And, in the process of fleshing out the sequence of events common to both, the later text does further illuminate the earlier version of that experience. With their greater insistence that the writer's role remains almost entirely passive throughout the preliminary stages of creation, the Confessions, more than the Preface, furnish a possible solution to the mystery of "R."'s reluctance to define his past relationship with Julie. In one sense, would it not be misleading for him to claim authorship of a fiction over which Rousseau later remembers (or pretends to remember) having had no initial authority, a fiction which itself took hold of his imagination and refused to let go until he had leant it his active cooperation? Indeed, this notion of original alienation may already be part of "R."'s meaning when he nominates himself only as editor in order not to "appropriate" (p. 27) that which, from the first, he did not rightly possess. Only, what the Confessions will have developed into a coherent apologetics
of fiction-writing figures in the *Préface* as but one possible response among many to the fundamental problem of truth-telling. The preface is privileged in retrospect as a time for trying on attitudes from which a "final" selection will have been made in accordance with the specific requirements of an avowedly confessional project. By reducing the issue of authorship to a least common denominator of semantics (what matters finally is to distinguish properly between correct and incorrect usage of the term "author"), the autobiographer will have sacrificed to self-justification the complex of inconclusive conclusions which we shall endeavor to recuperate in our further dialogue with the "truth" of Rousseau's *Préface de Julie*.

To recapitulate: the rhetorical operation of *suppression-adjonction* establishes a framework for metaphorical cross-reference between the world in *Julie* and *Julie* in the world. One important outgrowth of this redefinition of formerly metonymical relations between the two spheres is an insight into the unique creative process which Rousseau holds equally responsible for peopling his imaginary universe, here with readers and elsewhere with characters. The process remains constant, whether we feel the text on readership to be an allegorical reenactment of the as yet unwritten text on authorship, or whether—as is equally (in)valid—we view the *Confessions* account as having actually been modeled on that of the preface. Whatever external affiliation, if any, linked the two acts of recording birth, so marked are their internal similarities that little more than the names have changed in the interval between the preface's "deux époux," and the autobiography's "deux idoles de mon coeur." And where divergence does occur,
it serves to relativize both accounts, and to open the meaning of each to that of its other. An impulse to allegory thus enables the preface to speak in figurative terms to the very questions of "truth" whose literal importance to the prefacer is affirmed in absentia by simultaneous impulses to doubt, to silence and to delay.

Notwithstanding these far-reaching implications of suppression-adjonction, to accord it absolute preeminence among factors contributing to the preface's second-degree rhetoric would be to ignore the lasting impressions left by adjonction and suppression alone, and by permutation. And yet, more nearly than any other single operation, that of suppression-adjonction, abstracted now from any specific content, sums up the multifarious techniques under consideration in the second half of this chapter. As a measure of difference between the Préface de Julie and previous novel prefaces, the compound notion of suppression-adjonction graphically unites the fact of saying "no" to tradition with that of saying "yes" to revitalization of tradition's outmoded conventions. At the point of articulation between negation and affirmation, an all-important hyphen bridges the gap between demystification for its own sake and demythologizing for the sake of renewed significance. Not only the ends but the means of Rousseau's project are conveyed by this internal disruption of unity. In order to eliminate rhetoric entirely, he must rhetorize to excess; in order to dis-figure, he must figure more markedly. Rhetorical nullity (le degré zéro absolu) or its illusion can be achieved only by doubling and redoubling that other degré zéro--local and thus, only apparent--which the Préface de Julie has inherited from the prefatory corpus. "vel duo,
vel nemo" (p. 11), either two, or none: taken out of context, the quo-
tation from Persius says as much about the prefacer's own dilemma as
about the prospects for a future readership of Julie.

Indeed, just about every rejoinder in the Préface de Julie in-
forms the text's rhetorical situation with respect to past efforts at
combining "truth," "interest," and "morality" in a definitive formula
for novel prefacing. Either by realizing the task of reformulation,
or by commenting on it, the (meta)-prefatory remarks of "R." and "N."
refer almost constantly to an implied dialogue between Rousseau's
preface and its heritage. But this reference is hardly exclusive, or
exhaustive. Rousseau's enigmatic initials preside over the fact of
intertextual dialogue, but make the precise identity of its partici-
pants a matter for conjecture. Having singled out the prefatory mas-
ter text as a likely partner in debate for the Préface de Julie, we
cannot rule out the possible coexistence of other dialogues involving
other master texts. On the contrary, the preface's own well-documen-
ted commitment to demythologizing promises semantic repercussions in
excess of our power to explain them in terms of a univalent preface-
to-Preface relation.

Putting aside for a moment those repercussions which can best be
treated in the overall context of Rousseau's œuvre, we are left with
those which elucidate a divided whole within that whole, the present
preface/novel dyad. Our focus in the upcoming chapter will be on
dialogue between Julie's preface and Julie itself, dialogue whereby
the parochial issue of eighteenth-century novel-prefacing will have
become a pretext for inquiry into the greater philosophical problem
of prefacing per se. So relentlessly, in fact, does Rousseau interro-
gate the very preface-to-prefaced relation which defines each and
every preface in its "relatedness," that he might just as well have
asked outright whether and on what basis prefaces should be accorded
full-fledged generic status, and novel prefaces like his own, promoted
to the status of sub-genre.
NOTES TO CHAPTER III

1 The rechristening of the novel is dramatically recounted by Bernard Gagnebin on p. lxviii of his introduction to the "Pléiade" edition: "À la fin de mars 1759, lorsqu'il se mit à rédiger une nouvelle copie de son œuvre, le romancier inscrivit enfin sur la première page, à la suite du bref prénom qui avait suffi jusqu'ici à la désigner, les trois mots destinés à devenir illustres: La Nouvelle Héloïse."


6 Mornet, La Nouvelle Héloïse de Jean-Jacques Rousseau, I, 323-25. Appearing in this enumeration are the forewords to the following narratives: Les Égarements du coeur et de l'esprit, Desfontaines' Anecdotes galantes et tragiques de la cour de Néron (1735), Duclos' Histoire de Madame de Luz (1744), Jourdan's Le Guerrier philosophe (1744), l'abbé Lambert's Mémoires et aventures d'une dame de qualité (1741), De La Solle's Mémoires de deux amis (1756), Le Noble's Ildergerte, reine de Norvège (1694), Marini's Les Desespérés (1732), De Mouhy's Le Financier (1755) and the anonymous Theresa, histoire italienne (1745). What is more remarkable, however, than Mornet's and other implicit acknowledgments of the prefaces' theoretical importance, is an equally prevalent disregard for their specificity, a failure to consider that, as prefaces, they have ways of theorizing about novels which remain more or less unique to them. For further discussion of this idea, see Chapter IV.

Marivaux, pp. 5 and 7. The "necessity" of their own ensuing remarks is proclaimed from the outset by both of Marivaux's fictional middlemen, the self-styled "publisher" ("...je crois devoir avertir...") and the supposed "finder" of the windfall manuscript: "Avant que de donner cette histoire au public, il faut lui apprendre comment je l'ai trouvée" (emphasis added).

Stewart, Imitation and Illusion. See especially Chapters I ("Fiction's Historical Guise"), II ("Fiction as Autobiography"), III ("Editor and Narrator"), VI ("Nothing but the Truth") and VII ("The Novel and History").

Crébillon fils, p. 9; Marivaux, p. 5.


Marivaux, p. 5; Challes, p. lix; Prévost, p. 1219; Crébillon, p. 9.

Gagnebin, p. lxiii.

Prévost, p. 1220; Crébillon, p. 9; Marivaux, p. 5.

Challes, p. lxii.

Kristeva, p. 45.


Prévost, p. 1220; Crébillon, p. 9. As a further instance of such efforts to postulate compatibility among the criteria, consider Defoe's making truth, or its illusion, a necessary prerequisite to interest, "there being no possible pleasure in reading a story which we know to be false." Cited by Day, p. 84.

Marivaux, p. 5.

The preoccupations specific to novel prefaces can be seen, in this regard, as reflecting what appears to have been a widespread belief among Rousseau's fellow political theorists that the future of society itself hinged on value judgments of this nature. Such at least is the message which emerges from the list of questions d'Académie compiled by Lester G. Crocker, and especially from individual questions like the following, proposed in 1750 by the Academy of Marseille: "Lequel des deux est plus nuisible à la société, des vices du coeur ou des erreurs
de l'esprit?”. See "Truth and Falsehood in the Age of Enlightenment," 
Journal of the History of Ideas, 14, No. 1 (1953), 595.

21 Jacques Rustin, "Mensonge et vérité dans le roman français du 
dix-huitième siècle," RHFL, 69, No. 1 (1969), 22; Coulet, Le Roman 
justqu'à la Révolution, I, 423 and II, 159-60.

22 Le Roman personnel de Rousseau à Fromentin (Paris: Hachette, 

23 Coulet, Le Roman jusqu'à la Révolution, II, 159-60, 168-72.


25 Réveries du promeneur solitaire, in Les Confessions, autres 
textes autobiographiques, Vol. I of his Œuvres complètes, ed. Bernard 

26 Discours sur les arts et les sciences, in Du contrat social, 
écrits politiques, p. xxxiv.

27 De la gramma

28 Such proves to be the case for intérêt (intéresser) and morale 
(mœurs, moral) as well. In fact, it was the possibility of automatic 
associations between these terms and the thematics of novel-prefacing 
which endowed the terms with considerable exchange value, and permitted 
the more superficial prefacers to pass them off as serious inquiries 
into the underlying concepts.

29 May, Le Dilemme du roman, p. 144.

30 Cited by Stewart, in Imitation and Illusion, p. 27.


32 Granted, this particular epithet seems better suited to 
straightforward memoirs than to epistolary narratives. Yet, Mari­
vaux's prefacer, for one, had not hesitated to apply it in the case of 
Marianne. See Marivaux, p. 5.

33 See Day, Told in Letters, p. 66.

In itself, the use of initials for the ostensible purpose of 
"protecting" both innocent and guilty parties was a common practice 
among novel prefacers, and, in terms of the prefatory code, an addi­
tional guarantee of the narrative's veracity. It is significant, for 
specific reasons to be elaborated below, that Rousseau visits this 
guise of anonymity on his reader and critic, rather than on his charac­
ters, or even on his "editor" (after all, in the course of the preface, 
"R." clearly identifies himself as Jean-Jacques Rousseau en toutes 
lettres," p. 27).
There is a certain irony in the unmistakable resemblance of this "nature" to that elaborated more fully in the previously published works of Rousseau. Indeed, what prevents our seeing "R."'s "nature" as no less already-written than "N."'s? This is among the questions which we shall put to the Précis de Julie in Chapter IV.

Resemblances between this passage and the autobiographical accounts of Rousseau's own novel-reading are unmistakable, and will be dealt with in Chapter V.

That this choice was far from automatic is suggested by evidence from the Correspondance. In fact, Rousseau testifies there to having given considerable thought to the question of how to indicate changes of speaker. More particularly, he expresses the wish that initials could have been dispensed with altogether: "Je voudrois qu'on pût distinguer les interlocuteurs sans avoir besoin de lettres initiales, mais j'ai grand peur que cela ne se puisse pas, assis intel­ligemment." See "To M. Guérin," 8 Jan. 1761, Letter 963, Correspondance générale, V, 325. This reluctance to use any initials whatsoever may be explained in part by a desire to emulate as nearly as
possible the classical model of dialogue alluded to directly in the rejoinders from Persius' first satire. Not only does that particular dialogue work without benefit of initials, but as Andrieu has demonstrated, in his *Dialogue antique*, "les sigles par initiales" must in general be considered "des éléments tard venus dans la tradition." See J. Andrieu, *Le Dialogue antique* (Paris: "Les Belles Lettres," 1954), p. 324. In any case, it would seem logical that the same concern which had gone into the eventual decision to use initials might have carried over into the process of their selection.


53 Dubois et al., pp. 158, 49 and 155-56.

54 Dubois et al., pp. 143-44.

55 Purposeful vagueness on the part of both interlocutors as to the precise nature of the "fait en question" leaves open the possibility of suspecting character "Saint-Preux," as well as editor "R.," to be successive pseudonyms for a single individual, author Rousseau.


58 Rousseau, *Confessions*, p. 430.


60 Rousseau, *Confessions*, p. 431.

61 Rousseau, *Confessions*, p. 430. It may, in fact, be significant that the nuclear couple is comprised in one instance of man and wife, and in the other of the single-sex dyad formed by Julie and Claire. For discussion of biology's ambiguous role in constituting the Rousseauist couple, see the section of Chapter V entitled "Writing a Loss."
Chapter IV. A QUESTION OF STATUS: MODALITIES OF INTERACTION BETWEEN
PREFACE AND NOVEL

"Mais que font les préfaces? La logique n'en est-elle pas plus suprénante?"

--Jacques Derrida, "Hors livre"

Thus far, distinctions between the prefatory and the anti-prefatory in the Préface de Julie have been made on a purely historical basis. As elaborated above, the so-called "master Preface" which has been discovered to mediate the novel/preface relation could not be further removed from pretensions to abstract universality. The configuration of topoi from which that "Preface" derives its hypothetical identity reflects only the requirements of a particular genre, the novel, at a particular moment of its evolution, the mid-eighteenth century. Existentially rather than essentially "prefatory," that same configuration might just have well appeared, and to some extent did appear in such other forums as the theoretical treatise and the critical essay. If it so happened, historically speaking, that the "Preface" became the chosen medium for transmitting certain messages about novels, it does not necessarily follow that those messages should in turn be considered as fundamentally and forever constitutive of the medium. On the contrary, the simple fact of its having undergone significant,
even drastic modifications with the advent of nineteenth-century "real­
ism" is but the most immediate indication of the "Preface"'s inability to account even for the totality of novel prefaces, to say nothing of prefaces to poetical, dramatic or philosophical works.

And yet, it is a further accident of history which permits a text like the Préface de Julie to assume a trans-historical dimension, and to interrogate a second "master Preface," one no longer anchored in generic or temporal contingencies, but rather coextensive with the very fact and possibility of writing prefaces. As Derrida has observed, that fact and that possibility have a history of becoming subject to question at precisely those moments when the internal evolution of one or another type of preface has attained "une sorte de perfection technique" and "une certaine absurdité préfacière."¹ To the list of names which Derrida has associated with such moments, Hegel, Marx and Lautréamont among them, we might now add that of Rousseau. The anatomy undertaken in our Chapter III clearly situates his Préface de Julie at a point of crisis in the course of early novel prefacing: his fictional spokesmen's every word either acknowledges or strives to avert the kind of fall into formalism which Derrida cites as the perennial prerequisite to a deeper self-consciousness. Out of questions put by Rousseau to an historically particularized version of the prefatory master text, there emerge such general queries as "Mais que font les préfaces?", "Mais une préface existe-t-elle?", and so forth.²

While there can be no telling for sure whether the author himself intended the text's field of inquiry to be so enlarged, the wording of his "Avertissement" would seem to suggest as much. In explaining the initial suppression and eventual publication of the forthcoming
"dialogue ou entretien supposé": "...sa forme et sa longueur ne m'ayant
permis de le mettre que par extrait à la tête du recueil, je le donne
ici tout entier, dans l'espoir qu'on y trouvera quelques vues utiles
sur l'objet de ces sortes d'écrits" (emphasis added, p. 9), the editor
establishes what may well have been a deliberate ambiguity of ref-
erence. Does the catch-all phrase "ces sortes d'écrits" indicate only
Rousseau's unwillingness to locate Julie either inside or outside the
corpus of romans? Or does the fact that the substantive romans has
not yet come into play suggest that the promise of "vues utiles" is
being made here with respect not so much to novelistic as to prefatory
writings? The former reading is supported by what we might infer
Rousseau's meaning to have been; the latter, by the actual syntax of the
text in question. Rather than choose between the two, this study would
affirm the validity of both: having already developed the first sugges-
tion, we shall now act upon the second.

Thus, the remainder of this chapter will be devoted to determining
how the broader questions of prefacing per se are formulated and, event-
tually, answered by the Préface de Julie. How, first, does the above-
recorded debate on the topical issue of "editor"/novel relations trans-
late into a mutually illuminating dialogue between the underlying
categories of "the prefacing" and "the prefaced"? How is each such
category defined in terms of the other? What does this or any preface
do for (to, with, in) the prefaced text and vice versa? Which, if any,
of the above prepositions is (are) best qualified to articulate the
prefacing/prefaced relation?
The general nature of these questions would seem to preclude their being seriously or satisfactorily addressed by so idiosyncratic an instance of "prefatoriness" as the Préface de Julie. For if the text's anatomical impulse fulfills the necessary condition of maximum rhetorici-
city, its simultaneous impulse to de-rhetorization might be seen, in combination with the unusual circumstances of its publication, as disqualifying it from speaking of any but its own experience. Paradoxically, though, it is precisely to that which in and about the Préface de Julie seems most unusual by eighteenth-century standards that we must look to discover a more or less universal philosophy of prefacing. Precisely when it appears to be acting as something other than a preface, the "R."/"N." dialogue accords a high degree of visibility to the "truth" about what prefaces do, and what, if anything, they are.

There is no more emblematic instance of this revealing clash between prefacing's eighteenth-century dialect and its "essential" lan-
guage than that involving the naming of Rousseau's belated preface. The very delay which transformed this so-called "preface" into an actual postface, and thus raised important questions of timing to which we shall attend presently, also ruled out the isolated text's appearing under one of the simple headings favored by eighteenth-century usage: "Préface," "Avertissement" or "Avis au lecteur." Unlike those other titles, the complex Préface de Julie or Préface de la Nouvelle Héloïse spells out the relatedness of preface to novel, and renders explicit the intertextual dialogue which mere juxtaposition could only imply.

En route to articulating further that relatedness and that dia-
logue, we shall consider first what has been gained, epistemologically
speaking, from the duplication of prefatory effort in (the case of) La
Nouvelle Héloïse. What does it matter that the Préface de Julie should
have coexisted almost from the start with another text, called simply
Préface, which, of the two, would seem to conform the more closely to
unwritten laws for novel prefacing? In short, does the difference
between the two texts make a difference in terms of our gaining a better
appreciation of that prefatory status to which, despite their differences,
both pretend?

Reopening the Question, II: First and Second Prefaces; the (In)visible Interspace

There are in fact three separate levels on which the Préface/
Préface de Julie difference might be expected to signify. The reader
is confronted almost immediately by the objective reality of non-identi-
ty, secondarily by such divergencies in form and content as result from
a detailed textual comparison, and finally by the contrast between
respective roles with regard to a common other, the novel itself.
Partial meanings accumulate around the complex statement that two pref-
aces exist which neither look nor act alike.

By their very coexistence, first, regardless of what one or the
other might say, the pair open up the possibility of talking in abstract
terms about the specifically "prefatory." In order that this or any
category be considered significant, it must be shown to include a mini-
mum of two elements. It is not on the basis of a single preface that
the matter of what prefases in general are can be settled or even
raised. Only when a second preface has joined the first as a further case in point can the question of prefacing occur in any but an accidental way. Thus, in the present economy of La Nouvelle Héloïse, Préface and Préface de Julie come together as a visible reminder of the concept's necessary emergence out of empirical multiplicity. At the root of Rousseau's (and our) speculation about the prefatory is the spectacle of concrete intertextuality between a preface and its double.

It should be emphasized in this regard that, on the surface at least, neither text purports to function as a preface to the other: each is a préface pure and simple, a preface of the first degree; neither, an avowed préface de préface. Prefatory doubling has nothing to do here with the deliberate effect of mise en abîme which results in Marivaux's Marianne from the multiplication of extra-novelistic voices or, in Louvet's Amours, from the sheer fun of "editorial" garulousness. Nor in the present instance can the fact of duplication be adequately explained—as it is in numerous cases of prefaces to second, third and fourth editions—by a need to update in accordance with such changes of heart and mind as the passage of time is felt to have caused either in the prefacer himself or in the reading public. Even had the Préface de Julie not been written first, its official appearance a mere two weeks after the Préface precludes the kind of historical perspective whereby each successive preface would have participated in an exclusive one-to-one relation with the novel at a given moment in time. In sum, to characterize the two prefaces to La Nouvelle Héloïse solely as items in a chronologically determined series would be as misleading as to subordinate the one to the other. It is as rival claimants to one and the same prefatory space that the two draw attention to themselves
as prefaces and beyond, to the desirability of mapping that space as an autonomous region of literary language.

That the rivalry should be played out on the level of manifest content and decided on the basis of intrinsic merit was a development endorsed by Rousseau himself. As attested by the Correspondance, it was he who took the lead in translating the implied philosophical question: which of these texts is the more prefatory? into terms of literary excellence: which of these texts is the better? Writing to Mme de Luxembourg, Rousseau professed a personal preference for the Préface over the Préface de Julie, and wondered whether and why (not) the public would agree. Coincidentally or not, the aspects of inter-prefatory difference which have evoked the greatest amount of commentary by readers beginning with Mme de Luxembourg herself are precisely those involving, not general definitions, but details of substance or elaboration. To date, less has been made of the overcrowding of prefatory space than of the internal discrepancies between texts which just so happen to be called Préfaces.

Denis Robitaille, for one, has detected subtle shifts in diction which render the "editor"'s invitation to identify "Rousseau" with "Saint-Preux" more suggestive even in the Préface than in the Préface de Julie. Having defined the Préface as "essentially a resumé of the ideas of the Entretien" (i.e., what we have been calling the Préface de Julie), Robitaille nevertheless proceeds to collect a body of "purposely ill-disguised clues," which, in the Préface, are "intended to let the reader 'discover' that Rousseau was perhaps something more than either the editor or the author of La Nouvelle Héloïse." The critic's
point seems well taken, especially when we consider, for example, that the Préface's first sentence: "Il faut des spectacles dans les grandes villes, et des Romans aux peuples corrompus" (p. 5), one of few which has no obvious counterpart in the rejoinders of the Préface de Julie, so nearly resembles Saint-Preux's own "Les Romans sont peut-être la dernière instruction qu'il reste à donner à un peuple assez corrompu pour que toute autre lui soit inutile" (p. 277). Equally seductive is the fact that, whereas the "R." of the Préface de Julie contents himself with claiming not to have heard tell of the baron or his daughter (p. 29), the editorial voice of the Préface recites a virtually complete cast of characters: "je n'y ai jamais ouï parler du Baron d'Etange ni de sa fille, ni de M. d'Orbe, ni de Milord Edouard Bomston, ni de M. de Wolmar" (p. 5), from which only the ("editor"'s own?) name of Saint-Preux is noticeably absent.

Of far lesser subtlety is the shift in prevailing tone remarked by, among others, the "Pléiade" editors of La Nouvelle Héloïse. One need only recall the initial pronouncement cited in our preceding paragraph ("Il faut des spectacles...," and so forth) to appreciate the validity of their distinguishing the Préface from the Préface de Julie on the basis of the former's "ton oratoire, agressif, orgueilleux, finalement peu convaincant" (p. 1345). I would, however, go one step further than they, and consider the Préface's characteristic mode of address, unpleasant though it may be, not as an isolated phenomenon, but rather as one indication among many of what must, in terms of the explicitly dialogic Préface de Julie, strike the reader of both prefaces as a more or less calculated retreat from dialogue.
The further implementation of that retreat and some possible reasons for it will be discussed in our Chapter V, when the Préface de Julie will be reread in the light of Rousseau's lived experience and of his later dialogues, Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques.

For the moment, though, our focus is on those particulars of the preface-to-preface confrontation which somehow initiate the quest for a sense of the prefatory. In that regard, with the possible exception of the monologue/dialogue opposition noted above, it is the criterion of size which most obviously differentiates the less than two-page Préface from the almost twenty-page Préface de Julie. In his personal correspondence, Rousseau himself set a precedent, one which his contemporaries would duly follow, for alluding, on the one hand, to his petite preface and, on the other, to la grande. What is implied by this reduction of difference to the antithetical epithets of petite and grande? Were the question to be put to Hegel, as interpreted by Derrida, the answer would consist in a bitter denunciation of mathematical formalism as that which replaces "meaningful" relations with "la relation privée du concept, la relation de grandeur." Is it not, however, precisely such a falling away from being into the alien realm of mathematics which we have seen Derrida defining elsewhere in the "Hors livre" as the historically proven concomitant to radical re-evaluation? Western metaphysics proceeds on the assumption that the qualitative deteriorates periodically into the quantitative, only to be born again into a higher degree of self-awareness.

Thus, the underlying short/long antithesis confirms what we have suspected to be true from observing the longer preface itself in action.
For the *Préface de Julie* to mark certain clichés of novel-prefacing as having been totally emptied of meaning implies a state of the art so far gone into formalism as to warrant the ultimate indignity, differentiation on the sole basis of overall length. At this level, then, the inter-prefatory dialogue uses hyperbole to clarify the existential conditions under which the intra-prefatory version has to operate: an impasse must surely have been reached when only counting would seem to count.

Interestingly enough, of the two parties to dialogue between prefaces, it is the *Préface* which, in various ways, reflects the more exclusive preoccupation with the demise of novel-prefacing as meaningful linguistic action. That demise is in fact reproduced allegoricaly in what has become the spatialized interval between the older *Préface de Julie* and the more recent *Préface*. Few statements by Rousseau are as easily proved as his contention that the former text is everywhere present "par extrait" (p. 9) in the latter. Virtually the entire fabric of the "little" preface has been pieced together out of direct (e.g., "S'il y a du mal, qu'on me l'impute; s'il y a du bien,...

honneur," [p. 5 and 27]) and almost direct (e.g., "Que n'ai-je vécu dans un siécle ou je dusse les lettres jeter au feu," [p. 5], for: "O! que ne suis-je né dans un siécle ou je dusse jeter ce recueil au feu!", [p. 26]) quotations from its "big" counterpart. A looser paraphrase here (e.g., "Jamais fille chaste n'a lu de Romans," [p. 6], for: "Une honnête fille ne lit point de livres d'amour," [p. 23]), and an original thought there (e.g., the "unprecedented" "A qui plaira-t-il le livre donc? Peut-être à moi seul," [p. 6]) scarcely detract
from the general impression which prompted Robitaille's assessment of the Préface as "essentially a resumé."

For the reader familiar with the Préface de Julie, there can be no ignoring the extent to which the Préface passes off the other's already written words as its own. By today's more rigorous standards, plagiarism would not be too harsh an accusation, were not Rousseau known to be responsible for both the original and its superficially disguised derivative. Forgetting for a moment that he was, and that he "had his reasons" for whatever revisions took place in the preface-to-preface transition, we cannot help but be intrigued to find so many lines from the Préface de Julie ever so slightly misquoted in the Préface. What more pointed indication of the wholesale imitation which was going on among Rousseau's fellow-prefacers with but a bare minimum of personal input on the part of each. Borrowing from self here becomes a metaphor for large-scale borrowing from the corpus.

Even those sentences, the first two, which stand out as having originated with the Préface (the possible "Saint-Preux connection" notwithstanding) speak directly to the problem of excessive formalism. In typically Rousseauist fashion, an initial declaration of cataclysmic import is unleashed with sudden furor as if from the void: "Il faut des spectacles dans les grandes villes, et des Romans aux peuples corrompus. J'ai vu les moeurs de mon temps, et j'ai publié ces lettres" (p. 5). The Préface serves notice from the outset that, in the most general way, humanity is no longer privileged to participate in the life of essences. A pseudo-life on the level of forms ("spectacles," "Romans," and so forth) replaces that which, at the moment
of beginning to write, has already been condemned to silence. It is too
late now to verbalize the implied alternatives to "grandes villes" and
"peuples corrompus." "[c]es lettres" have been published in the be-
lief that the only remaining antidote to formalism lies in the purifi-
cation of forms themselves.

From the state of the world to the state of the preface, the leap
is, admittedly, enormous. And yet, the central event of a fall into
formalism presides over both the larger history and the footnote to it
which is the history of novel-prefacing. As the paradigmatic instance
of incipient formalism, the written word disrupts not only the global
evolution which the Préface recounts (or would have recounted, had it
been possible to re-present life as it was before the fall), but also
the localized intertextual evolution to which the Préface as preface
adds another chapter. The same beginning in medias res which deplores
the advent of a scriptural age also inaugurates such an age in the
prefatory space of La Nouvelle Héloïse. The Préface is inscribed in
the irremediable aftermath of the Préface de Julie's ostensible orali-
ty. At a double remove from the (fictional) immediacy of speech it-
self, the Préface thus becomes, by Rousseau's criteria, all the more
essentially derivative. To have quoted from the Préface de Julie is
one thing; to have silenced the Préface de Julie, an act of quite
another magnitude. Above and beyond whatever specific traces the
grande préface has left in la petite, the two together embody (and
the latter interprets) the momentous question of what precisely it
means to leave a trace.°
Obviously, however, much more than the plentitude of speech has been lost in the interval between Précis de Julie and Précis. Noteworthy in its own right as a symptom of quantitative differentiation, the intervening drastic reduction in length begs the further question: what measure of sacrifices have been made in the course of that reduction? at the expense of what has the "original" been condensed to yield a text one tenth its size? As will be demonstrated below, the cost of condensation is high in terms of both the fact and the spirit of dialogue. But beyond that, the Précis would appear to have been denied access to all those elements which, in the Précis de Julie, work together to liberate that text from the meaningless redundancy of a convention-turned-commonplace. What has become of "R."'s extended musings about ideal readers in states approaching that of nature? Where are the lessons in how to read from an enthusiastic initiate in the language of true love? Both developments have gone the way of creation metaphors, deeper "truth," ambivalent anti-paternalism, enlightened self-interest, and the like. Little remains of the Précis de Julie's considerable potential for reshaping a prefatory mold grown altogether too narrow and too rigid.

With the "Rousseauist increment" reduced to a shadow of its former self, the Précis, especially in its early stages, could pass for a prototype, or better still, a parody, of early novel prefacing. Were it not certain that Rousseau is proceeding in all seriousness, there would be something almost amusing about the alacrity with which the Précis runs down the list of required topoi. Why publish? who wrote? who cares? how authentic? who profits?--the "right" questions
are all there, though Rousseau's answers are often dead wrong by eighteenth-century standards.

But it is cadencing, more even than the mere concatenation of unsurprising questions and surprising answers, which causes the Préface to verge on unwitting parody. Predominately short sentences combine to form predominately short paragraphs which in turn tend to be highly isolated, semantically speaking, one from another. The overall effect is that of a grocery list. Literature has lapsed into enumeration; prefacing has become a pro forma exercise, performed without enthusiasm and, in the present instance, with a good deal of reader-directed rage. What Bakhtine has said of another reluctant party to dialogue, Dostoevski's Stavroguine, could be said as well of the editorial persona which takes over in the Préface for the Préface de Julie's "R." and "N.": "[11] nous tourne le dos en quelque sorte après chaque mot qu'il nous jette."² The Préface's defiant anti-prefatoriness would not, however, have nearly the same impact did not its companion piece, the Préface de Julie, afford a lingering look at the alternative unorthodoxy of being prefatory and then some. Needless to say, the reverse is also true: by sticking to superannuated forms, the Préface itself lends relief to the Préface de Julie's various attempts at escape from formalism.

So markedly, in short, do the two texts differ one from the other that reading them in tandem is enough to dispel any confusion between the essentially and the empirically prefatory. The fact of divergence is confirmed by its internal elaboration. If the concrete presence of two prefaces presupposes a notion of the prefatory which would encompass
them both but coincide with neither, so too does the sum total of discrepancies with respect to length, tone, diction, and so forth. Against a backdrop of implied convention, the Préface plays the part of ultra-conformist to the Préface de Julie's conscientious objector. Each new episode in their exemplary head-to-head serves to widen the margin of difference in which duplication has already installed the question of what makes a preface a preface.

Still, nothing we have learned thus far guarantees that this question will not be reduced to the more trivial what makes an eighteenth-century-novel preface? The task of providing such a guarantee falls to a third and final aspect of inter-prefatory difference. In focusing exclusively on the dynamics of one-to-one interaction between Préface and Préface de Julie, we have lost sight temporarily of the more fundamental ties which link each in turn to La Nouvelle Héloïse. It is time we realized that, along with its characteristic rhythms and tones of voice, each member of the preface/preface dyad has a characteristic way of relating to its designated other.

Not that the mere writing of a second preface would have resulted automatically in two significantly different versions of the preface-to-prefaced relation. In fact, where La Nouvelle Héloïse is concerned, the circumstances of publication prove more decisive than those of composition in defining the nature of each such relation. Or rather, by a kind of semantic transfer, which Rousseau himself seems most eager to endorse, the particulars of "making public" come to replace and reflect those of "making" itself. The same individual who compensates for silence on the score of authorship by insisting so heavily
in the Préface on his role as publisher (e.g., such formulae as "j'ai publié ces lettres," and "Tout honnête homme doit avouer les livres qu'il publie," where publier can be seen to function as a code word for écrire, p. 3), never speaks so eloquently to the problem of prefacing's ontological status as when he speaks not at all, but rather acts to defer publication of the Préface de Julie. Instead of writing out the problem in so many words, he causes it to be played out allegorically in the interval between published preface and published preface.

Given that the Préface and the Préface de Julie might conceivably have appeared together at the public debut of La Nouvelle Héloïse, the fact that they did not looms large as a criterion of difference between the two. If doubling the preface itself alone suffices to raise questions of relative legitimacy (which is the more rightful preface to Julie?), it is doubling the prefatory moment which dictates the terms in which such questions may, legitimately, be phrased. We are led to inquire whether the more rightful is the preface which precedes or the one which follows La Nouvelle Héloïse. The two-to-one preface-to-prefaced ratio only invites the reader to choose; the ratio's temporal dimension offers him something (more definite) to choose between.

As a basis of comparison between preface-to-prefaced dialogues, the timing of publication thus ranks among the most fundamental. The prefaced text is furnished both with a "before," the Préface, and an "after," the Préface de Julie. One version of the prefatory anticipates, if only by a matter of moments; the other supervenes at what
Rousseau considered to be a "decent" interval of two weeks. Not only is the conventional order of events opposed by its mirror image, but the extraordinary time lapse involved in completing the Julie/Preface de Julie dyad serves retroactively to endow the Preface/Julie dyad already in place with an essential chronology, one which might easily have gone unnoticed in the very ordinary confusion of simultaneous publication. Instead, a context has been established in which the pré- of préface can no longer be taken for granted. With the prefix reasserting its right to signify in the face of a challenge from beyond the novel, we cannot help but recast the age-old philosophical riddle of chickens and eggs: which really came first, the preface "itself," or the novel prefaced?

It is not enough, however, to wonder when. Temporally speaking, such asymmetry as persists between the Preface/Julie and Julie/Preface de Julie pairings remains a matter of degree: with respect to a common prefaced, the one preface is less prior than the other will have been subsequent. The transition from relative to absolute difference comes about as a result of replacing the criterion of time with that of space. Of the two pretenders to prefatory status which flank La Nouvelle Héloïse, only one, the Préface, has been incorporated from the first within the covers of the novel. Having been condemned to separate publication, the Préface de Julie thus began its public life as both a relative latecomer and an absolute outsider to the world of the novel as artifact. The before/after antithesis is doubled and displaced by the corresponding poles of inside and out. The "where" of prefacing joins the "when" as a major point of contention between
Préface and Préface de Julie. Insider or outsider—which has the more authentic claim to authentic prefatory status?

By definition, the question of timing could be posed only once. That of localization in space, on the other hand, was followed up in the subsequent history of publication, and remains unanswered to this day. However pragmatic, publisher Rey's decision to interject the Préface de Julie into the course of the novel itself yields an image of interiority more striking by far than the mere co-presence of Préface and Julie in a single volume. What does it matter that the original outsider should have been "taken in," and, what's more, taken further in even than the original insider? Or that, having rejected Rey's temporary solution, editors continue today to shuttle the Préface de Julie back and forth from one extreme of liminary space to the other?

Left as an unfinished legacy by Rousseau, the ongoing practical problem of finding a permanent home for this second preface, whether at the novel's head or in an appendix, serves as a constant reminder of our needing to know where, in the abstract, a proper preface stands with respect to the prefaced.

But what, precisely, is meant by the phrase "a proper preface?" Like the questions of time and space, this one too is implied by the conflicting testimony of Rousseau's two prefaces. How are we to choose, if not on a rhetorical basis, between a text called simply Préface and one which goes by the significantly more complex name of Préface de la Nouvelle Héloïse: ou entretien sur les romans? The pertinent distinction here is between literal and figurative uses of language. On the one hand, the Préface claims to be just that, nothing more, nothing
less, a preface through and through, a preface in the "true" sense of the word. There can be no conflict between identity and function for a text of this nature whose innermost being is, and always has been synonymous with its being a preface. On the other hand, the Préface de Julie answers both to a proper name and to an alias, Entretien sur les romans. It purports to be both a preface and something else besides. In fact, it is the alias, the "something else besides," which corresponds to the more basic source of identity. What the text is, first and foremost, is a dialogue about novels; that it should also happen to function as a preface to Julie is, relatively speaking, incidental. The Préface de Julie is a preface only to the extent that it acts like one; its being prefatory, in short, is a matter of figurative rather than literal being.

It will be recalled in this regard that if the Préface is a preface born and bred, the Préface de Julie does not become one until the final stages of its elaboration. Or so the internal fiction would have it. By suggesting that the preceding dialogue be substituted for a "proper" preface as yet unwritten, "N." confirms the metaphorical status assigned the Préface de Julie by its two-part title. His claim that "[1]es éclaircissements nécessaires y sont tous" (p. 30) makes resemblance, rather than identity, the key to the text's having acceded, as if despite itself, to the category of prefatoriness. And because the literal Préface which the dialogue would "replace" does not yet exist, either in the fictional world of interlocutors "R." and "N." or in the real world of scriptor Rousseau, the rhetorical question is tied up with that of temporality. Here as elsewhere in the master
text of Rousseauist linguistics, doubts are raised about the relation in time of literal to figurative language.\(^\text{10}\)

But we anticipate. With the recollection of what happens within the *Préface de Julie*, we have overstepped the limits imposed at the outset of this preliminary discussion. Rather than restrict ourselves to questions formulated at the level of making public, we have begun already to discover how these same questions are further elaborated at the level of making itself. There is in fact much more sense to be derived from the objective data of names, dates and places. As for the data themselves, they will have proven so important in orienting our return to close textual reading as to merit a brief recapitulation at this time.

It would seem, in retrospect, that we have a twice-told tale of publication to thank for making a public spectacle of prefacing's inner life. The two versions are interchangeable insofar as they both center on the mutual interaction between a prefacing and a prefaced text. They differ significantly, however, when it comes to the precise nature of that interaction. In one version, *La Nouvelle Héloïse* relates to the *Préface* as after to before, co-insider to co-insider, novel to literal preface. In the other, the same novel precedes and excludes that which by its own admission is only figuratively speaking the *Préface de Julie*. Two opposing series of potential prefatory attributes: before/inside/literal and after/outside/figurative are developed on the basis of localization in time, space and language.

That is not to preclude the possibility of interference between the two series at some other level than that of initial publication.
Far from it: having already witnessed the Préface de Julie's belated entrance into the world of the novel, we have yet to deal with such further complications as the post-novelistic preface's having actually preceded into being the Préface which precedes the novel into print. The outsider come in, the "after" as "before" to "before"--so many arguments against hard and fast association of the various attributes with one or the other empirical preface; so many indications that what these attributes designate ultimately are not so much answers as questions, not so much specific texts as specifications for an abstract in-between of all the so-called "prefaces" ever written.

When? Where? How? If the questions are deceptively straightforward, the answers will not come easily. Both the initial usefulness of the publication story and its eventual limitations derive from a common source, its capacity for simplifying the inherently complex. No one better than the "editor" who so readily assumes responsibility for publishing that which he dares not admit directly to having written would have appreciated the advantages to be gained and lost from our using figures of publication to represent certain truths of composition.

For the record, prefacer Rousseau calls himself only the publisher of Julie, but in a passage so essential as to have been transmitted virtually intact from Préface de Julie to Préface, he then proceeds to call himself to account as if he were the author:

Je me nomme donc à la tête de ce recueil, non pour me l'approprier, mais pour en répondre. S'il y a du mal, qu'on me l'impute; s'il y a du bien, je n'entends point m'en faire honneur. Si le livre est mauvais, j'en suis plus obligé de le reconnaître: je ne veux pas passer pour meilleur que je ne suis (p. 5).
For a mere publisher, such scruples as these cannot help but appear excessive, both in quantity and in quality, unless, of course—the invitation is there, unwritten, but understood—the publisher-published relation were to be read as a cover for relations of a much more complex and intimate nature. That Rousseau will have published _La Nouvelle Héloïse_ is a selective truth which begins, but only begins to retell the pre-publication story of the novel's formative stages. Prefacer Rousseau's strategy in framing the leading question: did I publish? is aimed at our having to conclude for ourselves that "there must have been more to it than that."

Can we not by the same token, and this time in the absence of direct pressure from the prefacer, conclude that there must have been more as well to Rousseau's having published two separate prefaces under different circumstances and different names? In this instance too, the simple facts of publication come into play as highly visible tips to an invisible iceberg. Having first arrested our attention, the _Préface/ Préface de Julie_ dyad of divergently published prefaces then leads us on with the promise of deeper revelations about the truth of prefacing per se.
The Rejected Alternative: A Fundamental Structure

"Cette alternative ne me paroist pas si nécessaire qu'à vous."

--Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Dialogues

How will our just completed foray into the domain of extra-text have prepared us for re-entry into the Préface de Julie? The immediate reward is a new sense of structure, and more specifically, a sense that common patterns of thought underlie both the extratextual and the intratextual versions of dialogue. Or rather, the same patterns which underlie the latter version are present (almost) at the surface of the former. The inherently superficial exchange between published artifacts becomes a privileged means of access to the deeper structure of linguistic exchange between "R." and "N." Rousseau's interlocutors are now revealed in retrospect to have operated, however subtly, in accordance with the very principles whose bold outlines are sketched by the Préface/Preface de Julie dyad.

In the most basic terms, what is accomplished by that dyad is the establishment of a patently illogical logic, a logic comprising two mutually contradictory propositions. On the one hand, convention demands that a clear-cut choice be made between alternatives; on the other, an equal and opposite force of more mysterious origin requires that such a choice not be made. At the heart of what might be called "the logic of the rejected alternative" are a simultaneous need and refusal to think in terms of either/or antitheses.
The more (conventionally) logical course of action, once the Préface had been elected to head La Nouvelle Héloïse, would have been to jettison the Préface de Julie once and for all. Barring that, the Préface itself could have been eliminated from later editions, and its place taken over by the Préface de Julie. By insisting instead that both prefatory texts accede to publication and at least tacitly condoning their eventual coexistence within the novel's covers, Rousseau signaled his own unwillingness to choose between them. Why, if from the first he felt the Préface to be the superior text, did he go ahead with plans to publish the Préface de Julie? Why did he pretend to play favorites when the actions which are credited with speaking louder than words implied a posture of the strictest neutrality? All the while he was encouraging his correspondents to take sides with the Préface against the Préface de Julie, that is, to choose between them on the basis of merit, the two-timing prefacer was denying them (and now us) the more fundamental choice of a one and only preface to La Nouvelle Héloïse. It is though the reader were enjoined in one breath and defied in the next to take his pick between the candidates to prefatory status.

What would appear to be a deep-seated ambivalence on the part of Rousseau himself is mirrored within the Préface de Julie by the contrasting behavior of "N." and "R." Little wonder that, from the first, we have felt the two to be on different wavelengths: responsibility for their constant disagreement turns out to lie not so much with the specific issues enumerated in our Chapter III as with a global incompatibility between their respective modes of addressing those
issues. If their reasons diverge, so too, and more essentially, do their reasoning processes. Each debater, in short, incarnates one half of the illogical logic extrapolated above from the Préface/Préface de Julie dyad. In their exemplary reenactment of the "rejected alternative," it is "N." who consistently portrays the impulse to choice, and "R." who, more often than not, would refrain from choosing.

How appropriate, in retrospect, that virtually the first words of note to be uttered by the man of letters should be a line of Latin poetry: "Vel duo, vel nemo" (p. 11), which combines brevity and the element of surprise to make so obvious a spectacle of either/or parallelism. How appropriate, too, that the formula should be repeated almost immediately when "N." gives voice to his own first and foremost question: "Cette correspondance est-elle réelle, ou si c'est une fiction?" (emphasis added, p. 11). For "N." in fact, the primary order of business throughout would appear to have been the formulation of categorical choices between a "this" on the one hand, and a "that" on the other. The pronouns' referents vary with the context, and the alternatives in question are not always so clearly articulated as in the initial instances of duo/nemo and correspondance réelle/fiction. But the underlying structure of discourse remains the same, whether the subject matter pits Julie's beliefs against her actions ("Une femme chrétienne, une dévote qui n'enseigne point le catéchisme à ses enfans," [P. 13]), the novel's beginnings against its end ("on dirait que ce sont deux livres différents que les mêmes personnes ne doivent pas lire," [P. 17]), or Rousseau's current practice against his previously enunciated principles ("comment passer au sévère censeur des
spectacles, les situations vives et les sentiments passionnés dont tout ce recueil est rempli?", [p. 25].

As inevitable consequences of his characteristic mental set, "N." must both find and find intolerable that seeming unity is everywhere divided in two against itself. The choices are there, and they have to be made. By his own admission, "N." is never so tourmenté (p. 29) as when an issue is left in doubt, or, to use the concept now under elaboration, an alternative is rejected. One in particular of his injunctions to "R." says it all: "Soyez conséquent, ou quittez vos principes" (p. 25). Not only does the formula itself typify the logic of alternatives, but by a kind of mise en abîme, it uses that logic to deplore the lack of consequence which, as embodied by "R.," typifies the rival (il)logic of alternatives rejected.

The "editor" does in fact prove to be almost defiant in his adherence to that illogic. Not that he fails to understand fully the kind of choices his adversary would have him make. On the contrary, "R."'s ability to mimic the other's preferred patterns of speech, as in the rejoinder: "Je vous suis. Si ces Lettres sont des Portraits, ils n'intéressent point: si ce sont des Tableaux, ils imitent mal. N'est-ce pas cela?" (p. 11), testifies to his appreciation of their underlying logic. But appreciation is one thing; compliance, quite another: at the moment of phrasing this particular alternative, "R." has already taken care to declare it invalid. Likewise, on each further occasion when "N." presents him with objections to Julie in the form of ready-made alternatives, "R." does his utmost to keep from having to sacrifice one or the other option. His first impulse when besieged
by the ubiquitous spirit of divisiveness is to reaffirm the integrity of the endangered whole, be it his heroine, his novel or his own overall career.

Though the basic strategy hardly wavers, the manner and success of its implementation are nevertheless subject to considerable variation. It is perhaps a measure of Rousseau's respect, however grudging, for the strength of "N.'s arguments—arguments which, after all, did not really originate with an empirical outsider, but rather within the scriptor himself—that "R." should respond more actively and more convincingly at some times than at others to the challenge of conventional either/or logic. "N." has only his own garulousness (as written, of course, by Rousseau) to blame for "R.'s escape from having to deal with the supposed inconsistency of Julie's devotion. Had the man of letters paused to listen, the editor would have been forced to engineer his own escape, as he does, for example, in rejecting and rejecting out of hand the primary alternative between correspondance réelle and fiction. "Au reste, comme je ne puis satisfaire à votre question, il faut vous en passer pour résoudre la mienne" (p. 11); the peremptory gesture about which much has been said already, and more will be said in our Chapter V, is of especial concern to us here because it plays so ambiguous a role in elaborating the illogic of rejected alternatives. Is "R.'s refusal to discuss Julie's origins nothing more than a classic case of avoidance behavior? does the editor simply not wish to address a potentially difficult, even dangerous issue? Or should he be taken at his word when he claims to find choosing between fact and fantasy impossible, rather than merely undesirable? Do we read this particular version of
the rejected alternative as a convenient fiction, or does it correspond instead to what Rousseau himself perceives to be an inescapable reality? Is there any truth, in sum, to the illogic of rejected alternatives?

Less ambiguous and less effective by far is the tactic which replaces out and out rejection when "N." places "R." in the position of having to choose "entre le commencement et la fin de l'ouvrage" (p. 17). Exchanging his habitual posture of confrontation for one of conciliation, "R." here makes concessions both to "N." personally and to the logic which "N." embodies. Not only is the man of letters favored with a rather long-winded reply, but the reply itself seeks to explain away apparent discrepancies, rather than merely to dismiss them on the implicit grounds that, like it or not, "la vie est comme cela." By weaving a tangled web of explanation ("Je pense au contraire, que la fin de ce recueil seroit superflue aux lecteurs rebutés du commencement...," and so forth), "R." proceeds for the moment as though he shared "N."'s intolerance for irreducible heterogeneity of any kind. While denying that inconsistency is a problem in Julie, he seems to be admitting that, had Julie been inconsistent, there would in fact have been a problem.

The weakness, however, is only temporary. How differently the same "editor" responds to charges of incompatibility between the phases of his own career. It is not enough that, given a choice between the moralizing Lettre à d'Alembert and the immoral Lettres de deux amans, "R." should disdain to choose. On the contrary, he goes further still towards active espousal of the rejected alternative, by taking it upon himself to aggravate the incompatibility in question. Whereas "N."
has opposed a "before" (the Lettre) to an "after" (the novel), "R." now proudly declares the two works to have originated simultaneously: "Souvenez-vous que je songeais à faire imprimer ces Lettres quand j'écrivois contre les Spectacles et que le soin d'excuser un de ces écrits ne m'a point fait altérer la vérité dans l'autre" (p. 27). In so doing, he effectively cuts himself off from recourse to extenuating circumstances: the intertextual difference which might otherwise have been understood, if not entirely justified, as a matter of temporal relativity is heretofore rendered absolute. Why's and wherefore's have become irrelevant to the fact of mutual incompatibility. Though previously he may have equivocated, "R." lends his unequivocal support at (or near) the last to the illogic of the rejected alternative.

To recapitulate, then, the Préface de Julie shapes up as a metalogical debate on the validity of that illogic, with "N." assigned to argue the negative, and "R.," to uphold the affirmative. That this seconde or préface dialogueée should also have been referred to by its author as a "préface raisonnée" makes much more sense now that the dialogue has been revealed to juxtapose "R."
's characteristic mode of reasoning with that of "N." There is, however, a point at which the interlocutors' respective roles in the debate would appear finally to have been reversed. Ironically enough, the issue in question at the time is precisely that of role reversal.

I refer, of course, to the suggestion made by "N.," and refused by "R.," in what has already been described as a kind of coda to the preface proper: "Seulement je vous conseille d'en transposer les rôles. Feignez que c'est moi qui vous presse de publier ce Recueil, et que vous
vous en défendez. Donnez-vous les objections et à moi les réponses" (p. 30). At stake in this proposal is a source of differentiation more basic even than the thought processes which underlie their specific misunderstandings. Even supposing that they had seen eye to eye on every issue, the two would, by order of the fiction, have remained two separate individuals, "R." and "N.," "R." and non-"R.". In the context of alternatives accepted and rejected, the initial of negation becomes an initial negation, a promise and a threat of irreconcilable difference, a guarantee that, come what may, "N." is not "R.," nor "R.," "N."

Whatever rapprochements do take place are confined to the dialogue's surface: one speaker can "perorate" for the other (p. 20), but he cannot be that other.

Or can he? The temptation devised by "N." is that of absolute indifferentiation. To this point, "R." has shown a marked inclination to disregard either/or distinctions. Why should he not now take the further step of acting symbolically as though such distinctions were in fact entirely meaningless? Why not, in short, change places with "N."? Instead, "R." draws the line: when being itself is at stake, he cannot afford not to choose. He who has fashioned a self out of the impulse to reject alternatives now makes a choice of that self against the other. The decision is final: in the transcription, as in the tête-à-tête, "R." will continue to be "himself."

With the addition of this final episode, the totality of Roussean's adventure in logic thus underscores the importance, and the difficulty of knowing when and when not to reject alternatives. In the ultimate either/or formula, one term corresponds to difference,
the other, to indifference. Either the "either/or" makes a difference, or it does not.

But what of the specific alternatives derived above from the Préface/Préface de Julie dyad of published prefaces? What of the partial differences between "before" and "after," "inside" and "outside," literal and figurative? Do they make a difference in terms of the Préface de Julie's ability to convey a notion of the specifically prefatory? This, the central notion of our present inquiry, has all but disappeared for the time needed to verify that, in the most general way, the dialogic preface does in fact reflect (upon) the logical possibilities set forth by the preface-to-preface dialogue. The moment has come now for reintegrating the modes of dialogue with its message, for putting the logic of the rejected alternative to a further test and asking to what extent and in what ways it coincides with the logic of prefacing per se. Before or after? inside or outside? literal or figurative? Does the Préface de Julie accept that its relation to the novel shall be defined by one, and only one party to a given antithesis? or does the truth of prefacing demand that the alternative be rejected, and the antithesis, maintained intact? The answer will depend on our reformulating the question in the terms particular to each pair of opposites. To that end, we shall proceed from the outset on the assumption that the same criteria—temporal, spatial and linguistic—which articulate the difference between prefaces have also left their mark within the Préface de Julie. Indeed, we shall quickly discover that what was perfectly clear at the level of publication (the Préface de Julie prefaced late, from outside, in
a figurative sense) becomes decidedly less so once the text itself is
called upon to "tell what it knows" about its own interaction with the
novel prefaced.

Before or After?

We have already touched, in other contexts, on some of the details
which, considered en masse, characterize the Préface de Julie as funda­
mentally preoccupied with questions of chronology. Can females profit
more from reading novels before or after the loss of virginity? Should
the matter of Julie's origins be addressed at the first or at the last?
Everything from the prefatory topoi themselves to the specifics of their
uniquely Rousseauist transformation goes to prove that timing, as they
say, is of the essence. When "N." mockingly demands to feel the pulse
of the interlocutor whom he suspects to be more than editorially in­
volved with the novel's heroine, "R." responds by waxing biblical:
"Non: voyez l'hiver sur ma tête. Il est un âge pour l'expérience; un
autre pour le souvenir" (p. 16). To everything there is a season: the
lesson applies as well to the experience of the novel as to that of its
"editor." It only remains to be seen where in the course of La Nou­
velle Héloïse the Préface de Julie would situate the season of its own
elaboration.

As it turns out, the seasonal metaphor is particularly apt, for
some at least of the relevant testimony suggests that preface and
novel are cyclically related one to the other. The temporal alterna­
tive will have been rejected if it can be shown that preface follows
novel follows preface follows novel, and so forth, ad infinitum. The roles of "before" and "after" would in that case be variously distributed according to the specific moment in time at which the cycle were interrupted. Point of view thus becomes the key to establishing a chronologic of preface and prefaced. But from where, precisely, does the Préface de Julie see itself to be running second to the Lettres, and from where (else) does it appear to have taken the lead?

On the one hand, there is much in the preface to recommend our taking the seeming accident of its belated publication as a concrete revelation of prefacing's deeper truth. Did Rousseau himself intend that, having followed the novel into print, the Préface de Julie should be greeted as a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy, as a warning to one and all that behind every so-called "preface" there lurks an actual postface?

Evidence that he acted deliberately or at least in full awareness of his action's implications is provided by the insistence of his fictional spokesmen on interpreting the role of "prefacer" as though it were entirely synonymous with that of "reader." In contrast to the more normal prefacers whose temporal relation to the prefaced text is rarely called into question, "N." and "R." take great pains at the outset to identify themselves as nothing more than readers, nothing more that witnesses to the fait accompli of an already completed novel. "Voilà votre Manuscrit. Je l'ai lu tout entier" (p. 11); "N."'s first words, and the preface's, make perfectly clear the chronological framework within which the man of letters will operate. The order of events is unmistakably consecutive: first the novel; "Voilà votre Manuscrit,"
then the reading of it: "Je l'ai lu tout entier." The second begins only when the first has been finished (in this case, rendered finite); nothing further can be said until the manuscript's status as autonomous object in the world has been explicitly confirmed. And nothing at all can be said, now or for the duration of dialogue, which would imply prior knowledge by "N." of Julie's origins and elaboration.

More surprising, however, than the imposition of such limits on "N." is their subsequent adoption by "R." himself. As avowed guardian, likely author, even possible protagonist of the Lettres de deux amans, "R." might easily have reverted to any or all of these roles; what more accessible means to mastery of dialogue than the exclusive capacity to draw on previous experience. Instead, the "editor" steadfastly refuses, even under duress, to credit himself with any but a reading knowledge of Julie. So clean, in fact, is his break with the past as before to reading, that he completely ignores (as does "N."#) the question of how the manuscript came into his possession. Prior associations between himself and the novel are possible (it is left to the empirical reader to determine just how possible), but in this context, irrelevant. "R." may well be a better reader than "N.;" the fact remains that he is, like "N.," nothing more than a reader.

Only when they have finished reading, are the two formally acknowledged to have acted all the while in a manner befitting apprentice-prefacers. The decision to publish their collaborative reading as a preface to Julie reinforces the chronologic already in place, and adds a final term to it. Situated from the first in the aftermath of novel-writing, reading now becomes the essential prelude to writing
prefaces. In order that a text be a preface, it must already have been written and, in addition, read. If there is a lesson to be learned from the Préface de Julie, it is this: the text to-be-prefaced looks forward in the present to a future past of reading and beyond to a future of prefacing. Lest we doubt the lesson's applicability to cases beyond Julie, we need only compare the joint statement made by "N." and "R." with what Jacques Derrida assumes to be a general law of prefacing per se: "Elle [la préface] énoncerait au future...le sens ou le contenu conceptuel...de ce qui aurait déjà été écrit. Donc assez lu pour pouvoir être rassemblé en sa teneur semantique et d'avance proposée." It is as though Derrida were extracting the moral from Rousseau's fable of the two readers and the new Héloïse.

Derrida's statement is important for the additional reason that it assigns philosophical underpinnings to the antithesis of before and after. Chronologically speaking, the very possibility of prefacing becomes symptomatic of what Derrida terms the "metaphysics of presence." In support of that metaphysics, the apparent preface as actual postface testifies to an already-there of meaning. It does not so much make sense as make manifest "le sens ou contenu conceptuel" present from the first (hence the fiction of the preface's anteriority) within the prefaced text. The preface, true "after" and pseudo-"before," confirms the prefaced in an original plentitude of significance. Rather than sow new seeds of meaning, the liminary text can only harvest what reading reveals to be the fruits or "teneur semantique" of the prefaced's own exhaustive past planting.
Translated into the terms of Rousseau's *Préface de Julie*, this essential incapacity of the preface to signify anew deprives the individual partners to dialogue of any but a functional existence. So exclusive, in fact, is the investment of their persons in the retrospection of reading that neither "N." nor "R." appears to be leading a life of his own. Theirs is not to originate meaning, but only to affix a seal of originality on the meaning of *Julie*. It is as though their conversation were unfolding in a vacuum. The preface leaves unanswered, even unasked, the vast majority of questions by which "R." and "N." might otherwise have acceded to autonomous being: where are they? what time is it? what do they look like? how do they occupy themselves when they are not engaged in interpreting novels, and so forth. These and other signs of life beyond the prefaced, signs which on so many previous occasions had been successfully woven into the fabric of dialogue, are conspicuous in the *Préface de Julie* by their almost total absence.

The paucity of biographical data is so marked that "R."'s claim to have visited Clarens "revenant d'ltalie" (p. 29) comes as a jolt to empirical readers accustomed by now to expect no such insights into the interlocutors' life before reading. At best, the reminders of that life are few and far between: "N." is a man of letters, "R.," the author of the *Devin du village*, *Préface de Narcisse* and *Lettre à d'Alembert*; some sort of prior link exists between the two such that "N." may be counted on to show greater indulgence than most for *La Nouvelle Héloïse* ("Votre jugement est sévere; celui du Public doit l'être encore plus," [p. 14]). They hardly add up to the kind of
full-length portraits which might have been elaborated had not the truth of prefacing dictated that any meaning be excluded from the preface which was not already contained within the prefaced.15

One brief allusion is made to a physical attribute of interlocutor "R.," who himself urges that note be taken of "l'hiver sur sa tête" (p. 16). But even here, the metaphorical formula creates a sense of unreality, and suggests that the detail has been included, not for its own sake, but rather to make a point about the chronologic of preface and prefaced. The message is precisely that, for "R.," the time of life lived (l'expérience) has given way once and for all to that of life remembered (le souvenir). To be snow-crowned is not really to be, only to look back from beyond the pale at an irrecoverable before of being. "R.," in short, has adopted a prefatory posture with respect not only to literature, but to empirical reality as well. The literary convention becomes a way of life, and the man, nothing more than a prefacer from the moment of his consigning the whole of his future to the remembrance of things past.

Thus, the Préface de Julie would seem at every turn to buttress Derrida's contention that "la postface est la vérité de la préface."16 And yet, this "truth" notwithstanding, the norms of prefacing have demanded from time immemorial that a "true" preface precede the text to be prefaced. By what logic can the terms of the essential relation have been transposed? Is the transposition only superficial, or does it reflect a deeper necessity? What might this necessity be? Its having taken exception to the prevailing etiquette of prefaces first by no means precludes the Préface de Julie from addressing these
questions on a textual level.

As a first step towards determining how the novel's future can have become its past, it is important to consider just how much time is supposed to have elapsed between the before of Julie and the after of prefacing. One way of measuring the interval is to note the interlocutors' sometimes surprising choice of verb tenses in their references to members of the Clarens community. What "R." says at one point of the heroine: "Julie s'Étoit fait une regle pour juger des livres" (p. 23) combines with "N."'s later questions about Julie and Claire: "Elles ne sont plus? Elles furent donc?" (p. 29) to suggest the need for significant revision in our hypothetical timetable of prefacing. Whether the tense employed is the past perfect (s'Étoit fait) or the simple past (furent), the point of view remains the same: the novel's characters are seen as belonging to a past so absolute as to be cut off entirely from the here and now of dialogue.

In terms of Rousseauist philosophy, the implication is clear: though the world in Julie may resemble the world into which it will be born, the two are by no means identical. By relegating the Clarens community to an utterly bygone era, the prefacers as much as proclaim its absolute otherness with respect to the life which they and we know. As discovered above, other metaphors can and do serve the same basic purpose: depending on the context, the elsewhere of Rousseau's Utopia may be variously situated in the past or in the future, in time or in space. Regardless of its specific spatio-temporal coordinates, however, this elsewhere must somehow be brought into relation with the temporal framework in which the novel will have been read. A third
term must be found to bridge the gap between past perfect and present, and to mediate the difference between reader Julie and the empirical reader.

An opening has been created, in short, for a bona fide pre-face to *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. The times (what Derrida calls "notre temps," as distinct from "le temps formel"17) are such that the novel can no longer expect (if ever it could) to be understood on its own terms. Rather, it must be explained in advance by a text like the one in progress. Paradoxically, the preface comes to precede the *lettres* because, not in spite, of their having preceded it by so wide a margin. Only the foreword remains as a viable route of return to Clarens. It is perhaps significant, in this regard, that of the two prefaces to *Julie*, it is the novel's actual forerunner which places the more explicit emphasis on the consequences of non-coincidence between formal and historical time. With its grandiose opening gesture ("Il faut des spectacles," and so forth), the Préface acknowledges a universal need for such mediation as prefaces provide between the truths to be told and the empirical conditions of their telling. Only by means of the preface as pre-face can the fallen gain access to truth incarnate.

What the Préface declares in so many words, the Préface de *Julie* makes apparent by the example of its own progressive unfolding. The gradual conversion of "N." to a greater appreciation of the novel is, after all, no accident, but rather a direct result of his having constantly to reconsider in the light of however much prefacing has already been done. The dialogue form permits the liminary text to be broken down into a series of partial prefaces, each of which initiates
a new and more accurate rereading of the main corpus. That, having lived and relived the before/after preface-to-prefaced relation, "N." should finally have acquired the ability to perorate for "R." is proof positive of benefits to be derived from prefacing as a preliminary gesture of mediation. Derrida says as much in a reading of the Vorrede to Hegel's *Phénoménologie de l'esprit* which, however inadvertently, places a stamp of universality on Rousseau's demonstration. To be sure, the Vorrede does not share the Préface de Julie's ambivalence with respect to the exact temporal location of the ideal state where truth could be immediate, and preliminary gestures, dispensed with altogether. Whereas Rousseau wavers between past and future, and leans towards the former, Hegel, as befits a nineteenth-century dialectician, opts in no uncertain terms for the future. This difference aside, the two logics are identical; what Derrida concludes on the basis of the Vorrede would apply with only minor revisions to the Préface de Julie. Once Hegel has begun: "comme ce n'est pas encore tout à fait le moment," and Rousseau, countered: "comme ce n'est plus tout à fait le moment," the two continue as if in tandem: "comme le moment du moins est inégal à lui-même, il faut encore le préparer et le faire se rejoindre lui-même par une didactique."18 That didactique, in short, is the preface itself, the preface which not only does but must precede, the preface which arrives in advance of the prefaced not merely by force of habit, but rather *par la force des choses*.

To recapitulate, then, the Préface de Julie reveals itself to be both by nature a postface and by necessity a preface. It originates in
the reading which it in turn originates. If not strictly rejected, the before/after alternative has been, at the very least, neutralized by the substitution of circularity for linearity as the distinguishing feature of prefatory time. With respect to the preaced text, the preface/postface can neither retreat into an absolute past nor progress into an absolute future; rather, it is caught up in "la circulation qui transforme en origine un après-coup du sens." There can be no hope of escape into autonomy for as long as the preface continues to revolve around the temporal axis of the so-called main corpus.

Inside or Out?

Such, then, is the logic by which the Préface de Julie disqualifies each member of our first binary opposition from providing the key to prefatory uniqueness. To the extent that it anticipates retrospectively, the preface can claim no moment as essentially its own. Only in its non-specificity can prefatory time be said to be specific. What matters finally is not the nature but the fact of temporal difference between the preface and the text (to be) prefaced. Preface and postface converge at the last in the knowledge of their common opposition to a present which would seem to exclude them both equally. Préface and Préface de Julie, before and after alike, attest to a radical non-coincidence of the novel as text with that "outside" of text which, according to Paul de Man, one critic has described as "the artist, his culture and the human community." Impossible to resolve on its own terms, the before/after antithesis does, however, point beyond, as signifier to signified, to the
divergence of two worlds, the one inside, the other, outside Julie. Thus, rather than collapse into nothingness, the question of timing is absorbed into what promises to be a more fundamental order of significance: the spatial.

It becomes important, henceforth, to establish the whereabouts of that (the preface) which itself uses time to articulate space. From where, if anywhere, is the prefatory gesture initiated whose enactment, whenever, signifies a margin of difference, "un certain espacement,"21 between the characters' world ("un petit monde différent du nôtre," [p. 17]) and the reader's? Can prefaces be traced to either of these worlds? do they partake exclusively of text, on the one hand, or extratext, on the other? Or are they somehow different from both, doubly marginal, and thus "outside" the sphere of relevance of the inside/outside metaphor insofar as it relates analogically to the prefaced/preface dyad? Can space, in short, accomplish what time could not by way of localizing the uniquely prefatory, or will final resolution of the alternative depend once again on a drastic displacement of the articulatory axis?

No idle questions, these; their occurrence is instead motivated by further testimony of a mutually corroboratory nature from both the publication triad and the "R."/"N." dialogue. Each in its own way inaugurates the new line of inquiry by endorsing the subordination of temporal to spatial criteria of difference. Distortion of the publication picture was inevitable for as long as Préface, Julie and Préface de Julie were merely lined up end-to-end as so many discrete items in the chronological series of past, present and future. For events as
they really happened to be more accurately rendered requires now that some account be taken of a marked interruption within the series: while two of the items were published together, the other first appeared under separate cover, or, as Rousseau himself had promised, à part. The inside/outside metaphor thus adds a substantial corrective footnote to the chronologic of before and after.

Greater complexity would seem to be in store when a single threesome is replaced by a two-tiered cluster of dyads, as depicted below:

\[
\text{Préface/Julie/Préface de Julie} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{Préface/Julie}
\]

\[
\text{Préface de Julie}
\]

In fact, the two tiers not only present an alternative but acknowledge the possibility of its eventual rejection. At the upper level, an invitation is extended to locate the prefatory text either inside or outside the main corpus: does the fact of appearing beyond the title page signify full membership in the text, or does it serve to dissimulate status which is really separate and (un)equal? A third possibility becomes explicit with the introduction of the Préface de Julie as other to the combined Préface and Julie. Given that the inside belongs by definition to the novel, and the outside, at least in theory, to the first preface, where does that leave the second, if not in some difficult to imagine beyond-of-space. Unlike the temporal version of the publication story, this, the spatial version already includes a provision for doubling, and thus doubting the alternative itself. It remains to be seen whether the provision will be carried out
intratextually by the *Préface de Julie*.

But first things first: in the matter of time versus space, the *Préface de Julie* signifies its own logical priorities obliquely. Whatever the subject, Rousseau's debaters tend to draw more often on space than on time for the elaboration of symbolic thinking. It frequently happens, moreover, that temporal metaphors fill in the details of thoughts whose broad outlines have been depicted spatially. "N.'s characteristic reliance on exclusionary rhetoric (*Julie*'s characters are outside nature; *Julie* itself, outside the novelistic, and so forth) is a prime example of recourse to the inside/out alternative. As for "R.," he constructs an entire sociology of readership on the foundation of an urban/rural antithesis. Age and sexual experience come into play as determining factors in the choice of individual readers only after entire segments of the population have been either accepted or rejected on the sole basis of geographic origin. Even when abstraction is made of empirical geography, the distinction between good and bad novels hinges on the degree of proximity to self brought about in the reader.

More directly pertinent to the present discussion is the manner in which "R." differentiates the fictional writers from the real-life readers of the *Lettres de deux amans*. Despite his affirming the youth of *Julie* and Saint-Preux to be an important source of linguistic aberration, his greater emphasis is on the characters' distance in space from the mainstream of French society. The letters' particularity begins ("Dans la retraite on a d'autres manières de voir et de sentir que dans le commerce du monde," [p. 14]) and ends ("Ils [the letter-writers] sont enfans, penseront-ils en hommes? Ils sont étrangers,
éciront-ils correctement? Ils sont solitaires, connaîtront-ils le monde et la société?" (p. 16) with the fundamental fact of shared solitude. Novel and reality thus relate as inside to outside in both the abstract and the concrete senses; the preface itself explains at length why it had to be written. Having disserted at length on the geographical non-coincidence of Julie’s world with his and our own, "R." formalizes the difference at the last. When, in his parting words on the novel, he reveals it to contain "des transpositions de lieux et des erreurs de Topographie" (p. 29), he is in effect using one kind of space to create another. Especially in the light of "M."'s imminent call for the dialogue itself to become a preface to Julie, the casual mention of deviations from standard geography comes to carry a deceptively heavy semantic load. They figure here as Rousseau’s chosen symbols for that espacement between text and extra-text which Derrida has identified as prefacing’s own metaphysical message. In themselves, the errors may have been avoidable or just plain willful ("soit que l'Auteur n'en sût pas davantage; soit qu'il voulût dépayser ses Lecteurs"); as symbols, however, they point to the inevitability of prefatory compensation for the mutual failure of novel and reality to be coterminous one with the other. As Voltaire might have put it, if such a failure did not really exist, the preface has by now made sure to invent it.

If the ends and means of invention are indisputably spatial, its point of origin remains unclear. Can we automatically assume the preface itself to be lodged between text and extra-text in the third world of its own creation? The preface inserts, but is it an insert? Or
does it emanate instead from either of the apparently preexisting worlds, from Julie, on the one hand, or "reality," on the other?

There is something to be said, in fact, for relegating the preface to a simple inside or outside of the prefaced text. Or rather there would have been, had not the Préface de Julie so thoroughly subverted the tacit rationale of eighteenth-century novel-prefacing. Parochial in its particulars, that rationale nevertheless describes the universally prefatory in its capacity for overlooking the potential illogic of the preface's being two places at once. Like its counterparts throughout the ages, the early novel preface upholds both sides of the in/out debate with equal conviction. Is it blindness to contradiction, or insight into a second dimension of specifically prefatory non-specificity which is to blame for the preface's sending out what must to us seem to be conflicting signals about its own exact location?

In any event, the case for exteriority becomes particularly strong when argued by the typical preface to a first-person fiction like Julie. The authorial figure here plays a pivotal role. From the moment of the "editor"'s explicitly writing himself out of the main corpus, text and extra-text are clearly differentiated as inside to out: the prefaced becomes a sort of inner sanctum which the "editor" declines to violate, having opted instead for self-imposed exile in a prefatory setting. Only in that setting, can the author/editor be (rather than copy, structure and revise) and be himself (rather than one or more fictional masks). In "R."
's case, for example, being fully himself means instilling his words with the authority of the "Citoyen de Genève," something which could not happen on the novel's title page, but can in the
context of prefatory discussions with "N." Exile in the preface thus results in symbolic repatriation of the author.

And yet, other as yet unmentioned aspects of "R."'s situation prove so unorthodox as to infringe upon the conventional boundary between novel as text and preface as extra-text. On the one hand, the very fact that he is called "R.," rather than Rousseau "en toutes lettres," undermines the identification of prefacing with plenitude of being. The initial is only part of the name; the designated party, only part of the expected authorial presence. Reduced in this way to a mere shadow of selfhood, Rousseau would appear to have vacated the preface no less than the prefaced. Conversely, the "editor" takes care never to extricate himself entirely from the world of the novel. He is forever dropping hints of greater than usual participation in the events recounted and in their recounting. If Rousseau is not entirely himself in the preface, he has also succeeded in overstepping the bounds of non-being in the prefaced. Neither here, nor there, the elusive authorial figure thus refuses on two counts to abide by the territorial provisions of an unwritten prefatory pact currently in force for the region of La Romancie. The threatened breakdown of analogical relations between preface and extra-text is realized at least in theory by the figure of the divided title page, whose epigraph may or may not have originated with the "editor."

If not outside, then inside? The same rationale which projected the preface into an outside of text also allowed for its eventual domestication. That the author will not have been present is after all an essential part of the novel's overall meaning. It is the
non-coincidence of the prefatory with the novelistic "I" which, more than any other single factor, explains the eighteenth century's peculiar brand of "realism," one which places consistently greater emphasis on the "how" than on the "what" of narration. Prefaces to first-person fiction had to be written in order that the then unacceptable posture of authorial omniscience could be formally rejected. Like the narrator(s), the prefacer can tell only as much as he knows from personal experience and observation; no single consciousness can oversee the entirety of life outside the self. Insofar as it informs a particular version of humanity's existential situation, the editor's exclusion is thus included within the novel's own field of signification.

Nothing better illustrates this view of the preface as participating semantically in the prefaced than the form taken by contemporary criticism of individual novels. D'Alembert's essay on La Nouvelle Héloïse is exemplary in this regard. To the extent that it can be outlined, the essay treats of the letters' components in the following order: characters, plot, preface and finally style. It would seem at first glance that the critic had committed an error in logical typing, and that the third item did not really belong to a series whose remaining elements permeate the novel in its entirety. The preface alone has a space of its own, or does it? That d'Alembert should have referred in one breath to the preface and in the next to the notes which (to his dismay) have infiltrated so many of the novel's own pages is a graphic reminder of the ubiquity accorded by Derrida to the archetypal preface: "Celle-ci occuperait donc en totalité le lieu et la durée du livre."
It is not our intention here to analyze the notes themselves; suffice it to say that there is enough duplication of content between them and the preface to warrant their being thought of as so many preliminary sketches. The final note, for one, anticipates "N."'s equation of universal goodness with tedium, and "R."'s anti-Richardsonian argument in favor of villain-less novels (p. 745). It is as though, by so far exceeding the average number of notes per novel, Rousseau had deliberately scattered the prefatory throughout the text to be prefaced. His reluctance to keep his preliminary remarks intact and in their appointed place cannot help but involve the preface in a crise de conscience. The same gesture by which the text embraces its outside marks the destruction of that outside as an island unto itself. "Prefatory space" becomes a fiction, and the preface, a kind of self-consuming artifact which survives only as a residue of meaning within the text.

In this sense, the preface is as much a part of the novel as are its characters, plot and style. And yet, what stands between Rousseau's second preface and total absorption into the letters themselves is precisely the fact that it too contains all the makings of a bona fide main corpus. Were a checklist to be abstracted from d'Alembert's decomposition of Julie, nothing essential to the novel's own brand of textuality could be found wanting in the Préface de Julie. It lacks neither for characters, nor for plot nor for distinctive ways of speaking; in the "Avertissement," moreover, it has a preface all to itself, one whose anonymous first person and detailed recital of pre-publication events much more nearly comply with the particulars of
prefatory etiquette than does the preface's own recourse to dialogue and to evasion. Designated by the "Avertissement" as a "Dialogue ou entretien suppose," the Preface de Julie becomes no less a narrative fiction than the novel itself. It only happens that the one treats of amour, and the other, of ecrits d'amour.

The implication of this embryonic mise en abîme is a further denial of prefatory specificity, but this time with the additional proviso that the same conclusion holds as well for texts of the supposedly non-prefatory variety. Just as any text, prefatory or other, may be prefaced, so too may any text be a preface. Extra-text and extra text, the hybrid Préface de Julie ou entretien sur les romans goes to show that just as a Préface de Julie may be prefaced, so too may an Entretien sur les romans be a preface. Or, as Derrida puts it in terms of the now defunct spatial metaphor: "Il n'y a que du texte, il n'y a que du hors texte, au total une préface incessante."24

Literal or Figurative?

All the text, in short, is a preface. With the identification of literature in its entirety as a préface incessante, comes the need for further reformulating the question of prefacing. Pending the emergence of as yet undiscovered categories of thought, it is in rhetorical terms finally that the question must be posed. Inscribed within the failure of either the temporal or the spatial metaphor to account for prefatory specificity is the suggestion that the problem lies not so much with the particular figure deployed as with the notion of figuration per se.
From metaphors of the preface, our attention is thus redirected towards the preface itself as (potentially universal) metaphor. Displacing the accent of interrogation from the "where" and "when" to the "how" of prefacing yields what may be considered, at least provisionally, to be the ultimate alternative: on the one hand, the literally prefatory, the prefatory, as "N." would say, "en toutes lettres;" on the other, that which, although implicated in Derrida's préface incessante, is prefatory only in the figurative sense. The preface by design takes on the preface by default in what may or may not turn out to be a valid confrontation.

Representing the two sides at the level of publication are the literal Préface and the figurative Préface de Julie. The one name is automatic; the other, by "R." and "N."'s account, an after-thought. The one is "proper," or was in the contextual grammar of the original Nouvelle Héloïse, where the substantive " Préface" was obviously intended to be read as though preceded by the definite, not the indefinite article. "(La) Préface" alone designated one and only one textual object: it was as unthinkable that the name should be shared with a second object as that the object itself should bear a second name. The reign of the literally prefatory proved, however, to be short-lived. The circulation of a putative Préface de Julie made inevitable the collapse of one-to-one correspondence between words and things. Not only were there suddenly two pretenders to the title of " Préface," but the second of these answered with equal, if not greater, promptness to the name of Entretien sur les romans. Here was a text whose prefatory status had been acquired late in life, not given at birth,
in much the same way that a Jean-Jacques Rousseau, for example, might, by his performance, acquire the alias "berger extravant," or "Julie" herself, come to be known as "the new Heloise." What or whoever the candidate for renaming, the process implied remains metaphorical: on the basis of an underlying sense of what exactly it would be like to be an extravagant shepherd, neo-Heloise or preface to Julie, resemblances are noted, and comparisons, drawn. As bestowed on the erstwhile Entretien, the name Préface becomes a mark of similarity, rather than difference. The transition from purely literal to systematic language raises, for the first time, the possibility of being like a preface.

What the publication story omits to recount (like all extended metaphors, this one too has its limits) is the tampering with chronology which has gone on in the interval between writing and printing. Contrary to present appearances, it was the figurative preface which actually antedated its literal counterpart. The comparison, in other words, anticipated its basis; resemblance to the prefatory took place in the absence of any literal antecedent (excepting, of course, the interpersonal prefatory master text, which is excluded from consideration here because it figures only by implication in the textual universe of La Nouvelle Heloise). It is nothing new to students of Rousseauist linguistics to see the figurative once again taking precedence over the literal. Indeed, the supposition that language per se emerged out of metaphor runs as a thread through the Discours, the Lettre à d'Alembert, the Essai sur l'origine des langues and on into the Confessions. And, as always in Rousseau, the "fact" of coming first carries with it the positive connotations of original innocence
and proximity to nature.

It is hardly surprising, then, that the *Préface de Julie* as text should join in the career-long celebration of metaphoricity. The principal celebrant, as might be expected, is "R;" his immediate cause for celebration, the rhetorical usage of lovers Julie and Saint-Preux. No longer themes in their own right, time and space reenter the picture here as privileged means to the orchestration of difference between literal and figurative language. The lovers' youth becomes, like that of mankind, a passport to metaphoricity. Likewise, their distance from civilization serves to measure the more fundamental écart by which their private language deviates from a hypothetical degré zéro of everyday speech. What "N." deplores as "nothing but rhetoric" in the pejorative sense ("Quel style épistolaire! Qu'il est guindé! Que d'exclamations! Que d'apprets! Quelle emphase pour ne dire que des choses communes!...," [p. 13]) "R." chooses to interpret as the only authentic avenue of expression open to the lovers. It is perfectly natural, in his eyes, that "l'enthousiasme de l'amour emprunts...le langage de la dévotion" (p. 16). Not to do so would be to betray that love in its essence: "N'élevera-t-il pas son style? Ne lui donnera-t-il pas de la noblesse, de la dignité" (p. 16). If to err is human, than to "err" linguistically with respect to the love object, is sublimely so: "[I]eurs erreurs [those of the lovers] valent mieux que le savoir des sages" (p. 16). So caught up is the prefacer in recreating the climate of metaphoricity that he cannot be satisfied until nothing less than the literality of the letter itself has been refuted: what the lovers have exchanged are no mere "Lettres;" far from it,
he concludes, "ce sont des Hymnes" (p. 16).

If letters can be (like) hymns, then why not assume that a novel (or, for that matter, any ostensibly non-prefatory text) can be (like) a preface? Given such encouragement as "R." provides, the temptation is great indeed to dismiss any and all literal designations as so many impediments to unfettered signification. What if, in the case of particular interest to us here, we were to treat Julie's not being (called) a preface as a matter of indifference? What if we were set out in search of signs by which the literal novel could be recognized as a figurative preface? From the instant of the metaphor's hypothetical enactment, all sorts of details spring to mind by which it might be extended. After all, in what do the Lettres de deux amans consist, if not in endlessly repeated before's and after's to the "main events" of a life which itself is, of necessity, absent? Or rather, that life is not so much absent as present only in the letters. Here again, there is no real point in attempting to distinguish between text and extratext. Then too, the letter, like the preface, must write its own raison d'être into being. Saint-Preux's separation from Julie plays the same role as Julie's from the "real world" in fabricating the necessity for a scriptural gesture already in progress. And what of the time and effort devoted by these particular letters not so much to narration as to close textual reading? Have not Julie and Wolmar earned the same right as "R." and "N." to call themselves prefacers after the fact?

Thus emboldened by the ease of confirming our hypothesis, we might even go so far as to speculate about Julie's being not simply a
preface but rather a preface to the *Préface de Julie*. By a curious turn of events, the nominal preface/novel dyad inverts what the metaphysics of prefacing assumes to be the normal relation in time of oral to written language. Instead of associating the main corpus with the plenitude of speech, and the preface, with the prescribed fall into formalism, Rousseau does just the opposite: it is the letters which are entirely written; the preface, which at least purports to be oral.

There is in fact a perspective from which the novel itself would come into focus as the secondary text, as the mere prophet whose mission it was to prepare in the margins for the long-awaited coming of orality to language. Critics have often interpreted the death of Julie as the negative but necessary means to the positive end of true fraternity among her male survivors. "Aussi tous les élus sont-ils célébataires," concludes one such critic, "et renoncent à se perpétuer. Au lieu d'une société réelle, la mort de Julie institue une sorte de communauté de frères dont elle représente le messie." In the interval between the novel's end and the preface's beginning, messiah Julie has become messiah Julie (the figurative death of commission to writing having doubled the literal event); the brothers have been perpetuated in the persons of "R." and "N." (the cast of Jacquin's *Entre­tiens* had numbered two men and a woman; the omission by Rousseau appears to have been deliberate); and what was really only a promise of community has been fully realized by the leap from correspondence into conversation. If it is truly a property of prefacing to be "l'avance d'une parole," then Julie as l'avance to the parole of the *Préface de Julie* would seem indeed to be (like a) true preface. Of course, in
order that the metaphor be maintained, we should have to overlook such obvious drawbacks to it as the vast disproportion in length and literary merit between the preface (the "real" one) and the novel.

It is time, then, that someone called a halt to what might pass for nonsense if it were not in actuality an overabundance of sense. Someone does, in fact: the same "R." who celebrates the positive aspects of metaphoricity also exposes the negative implications of its being allowed to pursue an independent course as though in utter disregard for the competing claims of literal meaning. Felicitous though they may be in terms of the power to express, the lovers' "erreurs" in denomination remain just that, errors. And if the novel's own events (seduction, separation, death itself) were not proof enough of the disasters which can ensue when such errors are committed in excess, and figures of speech are deployed "sans justesse et sans suite" (p. 15), "R."'s present analysis leaves no doubt as to the existence of a cause-effect relation. The connection is cemented by the notion of "folly," one which recurs with some frequency throughout the dialogue. In itself, the fact of "R."'s characterizing the lovers' "idées" as "folles" (p. 16) allows of a certain ambiguity: it is a literary commonplace, after all, to equate folly of this sort with superior wisdom. And yet, the identical epithet will be applied unambiguously in another context to those empirical readers who, supposing real life to resemble the life in novels, have abandoned home and hearth to seek existential confirmation of their readings. "Voulant être ce qu'on n'est pas, on parvient à se croire autre chose que ce qu'on est, et voilà comment on devient fou," concludes "R.," in obvious anticipation of the forthcoming
autobiographical accounts (p. 21). In this instance, as in the Confessions, there can be no mistaking the role of "folly" in mediating the relation between metaphoricity, on the one hand, and disaster, on the other. The self which reads (or writes) metaphorically is finally, as Paul de Man suggests, a victim of its own "illusory identification with the non-self." The harm done by the free play of signification is revealed only when life's unavowed fictions (self, man, society, and so forth) themselves come into play.

To persist in calling Julie a figurative preface would not entail any such danger. It would, however, constitute a kind of "intertextual folly" which, if carried to its logical extreme, would make renaming this or any text at will a matter of the utmost facility, and the utmost indifference. Indiscriminate insistence on resemblance breeds unreason; too many metaphors mean lack of meaning; supersaturation of sense verges on senselessness. That is not to say that "R." and "N." themselves refrain at all times from indulgence in intertextual folly. For example, their quoting from Persius as though his words were their own amounts to an implicit denial that "centuries" of difference separate the one text from the other. Once the door has been opened, auxiliary meanings crowd to get in; the scrupulous reader recalls in no special order that Persius' Satires comprise six "books" and a preface, that they castigate society for its corruption, that the author himself adopts the posture of misunderstood martyr, that "Perse" sounds a lot like "père," and Romain," like its (to Rousseau) antithesis, "Roman." Need we continue? The point has, I trust, been made that the line must be drawn somewhere between those metaphors which inform difference and those which merely
obscure it from view. To which category does the preface as metaphor belong? In the absence of objective criteria for validity, it is left to the individual reader to decide for him or herself.

The path to this final choice has in fact been strewn with unmade choices, those which, according to the logic of rejected alternative, are, by definition, to be seen, not made. As originally derived from a comparison between Julie's two prefaces, that logic has been successfully tested for applicability to the intertextual relations among prefaces and their prefaceds. It has in the long run withstood our every attempt to locate the preface in time, space and language. Admittedly, we are no closer now than at the outset to a one-sentence definition of the specifically prefatory. And yet, our appreciation of precisely why such a definition cannot now be written has increased with each reformulation of the rejected alternative. If we have not as yet discovered the quintessential preface, we have at least learned when, where and how (not) to look. Wisdom dictates that the search be abandoned, and that discussion of Rousseau's text be resumed in the beyond-of-prefacing held forth as a promise by the alternate title Entretien sur les romans. This essay's next and last chapter will in fact reinterpret the text as though its primary purpose were to be, not a preface (in dialogue form), but a dialogue pure and simple. Our return to reason thus guaranteed, who could resist a final bit of folly where the preface as "preface" is concerned? With all the evidence in, the Préface de Julie appears to be as much (like) a preface to prefacing per se as any text imaginable. Until further notice, the terms outlined by Rousseau's logic of the rejected alternative appear to be the only
ones in which a case could be made for according full-fledged generic status to prefaces in general, irrespective of specific differences in generic affiliations.
NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

1 "Hors livre," p. 21.

2 Derrida, "Hors livre," pp. 9 and 15.

3 "To Mme de Luxembourg," 16 Feb. 1761, Letter 1020, Correspondance générale, VI, 47.

4 Robitaille, "La Nouvelle Héloïse," p. 143.


6 Derrida, "Hors livre," p. 28.

7 This particular late addition is among those which will be shown to figure specifically in the previously announced "retreat from dialogue."

8 It should be acknowledged, nonetheless, that the oral/written antithesis is only apparently analogous to the difference between Préface de Julie and Préface, and, in fact, divides the former text against itself. That the axis of articulation can be so displaced is a further indication of that ambivalence with respect to writing (l'écriture, la trace, la différence) which Derrida situates at the heart of Rousseauist philosophy (See De la grammatologie, esp. pp. 379-445). Here as elsewhere, a desire that the trace should remain absolutely second, in both the chronological and the ethical senses, to being, coexists with an intuition that is precisely this trace which is everywhere and forever constitutive of being.


11 The Préface de Julie version differs only in that the donc is absent from the first sentence (a matter of context) and that the final
The sentence is divided into two and worded as follows: "Si l'on trouve le livre mauvais en lui-même, c'est une raison de plus pour y mettre mon nom. Je ne veux pas passer pour meilleur que je ne suis" (p. 27).


13 Despite the persuasiveness of recent efforts to demystify the conventional distinction between reading and writing (See especially Paul de Man's "Semiology and Rhetoric," Diacritics, 3, No. 3 [1973], 27-33), I maintain the distinction here in deference to the Préface de Julie as written (and read).


15 It is of the utmost importance, nonetheless, that some few details of the Préface de Julie refer not so much to the object of dialogue as to its subjects, "R." and "N." However slight, the text's biographical increment bears the ultimate responsibility for the kind of rereading which we shall undertake in our Chapter V, a rereading based on the assumption that the would-be preface is also an independent producer of meaning.

16 "Hors livre," p. 33.

17 "Hors livre," p. 18.

18 "Hors livre," p. 18.

19 "Hors livre," p. 27.


24 "Hors livre," p. 50.

25 The joke would appear finally to be on "N.": on the basis of the passage in progress, he is hardly in a position to criticize others for their overuse of exclamations (!


Chapter V. DEFERRED QUESTIONS: THE PREFACE DE JULIE IN THE CONTEXT OF ROUSSEAU'S OVERALL CAREER

Introduction

Already inscribed in our trajectory to this point is the need for further displacing "the question of Rousseau's Préface de Julie." However exhaustive it has shown the preface to be with respect to the abstract notion of "being prefatory," our most recent venture into interpretation serves ultimately to make room for yet another rereading from which that notion will be almost entirely absent, or present only metaphorically. What emerges in retrospect as the single most important difference between our first and second formulations of "the question" is the latter's admission that exception may be taken to something the former took for granted, namely that whatever sense the Préface de Julie makes must be assimilable at the last into the closed semantic field of Julie itself. Where once we alluded as a matter of course to Rousseau's "preface," the presuppositions on which we acted in doing so have long since become a matter for concern in their own right. That which appeared to look only to the novel has revealed itself to function as though in actuality its perspective were more nearly Janus-like. With the realization that any text may be a preface, and any preface, a text to be reckoned with regardless, comes now the possibility of rescuing the Préface de Julie from dependency on the sole Word of the
main corpus, and making it available for service as a full-fledged participant in the elaboration of other master texts.

In fact, this very possibility, along with the veiled threat which it poses to the most fundamental tenets of logocentrism, is acknowledged in passing by Jacques Derrida. For the critic, it would seem the Préface de Julie represents the prime example of the part-time preface, the preface which, by its involvement in extra-prefatory activities, cannot help but betray the cause of that "prefatoriness" to which it only pretends to lend its undivided support. A footnote to the "Hors livre" describes as follows the duplicitous gesture by which Rousseau's "preface" signifies its refusal to answer only to its designated preaced: "en affectant de regarder en arrière et de faire retour, on relance, on ajoute alors un texte, on complique la scène, on pratique dans le labyrinthe l'ouverture d'une digression supplémentaire." Left as a trace by this gesture, and others like it, is a "[r]estance textuelle...qui n'est ni étrangère ni réductible au corps dit principal d'un livre, au prétendu référent de la post-face, ni même à sa propre teneur sémantique."

Derrida does not, however, speculate on the nature or extent of the Préface de Julie's "digression supplémentaire." In what does this exemplary version of the more-than-prefatory consist, and where does it lead? The text itself furnishes the hypotheses whose elaboration and verification constitute the logical next steps of our inquiry. On the one hand, by his uncharacteristic reference to titles and topoi from Rousseau's prior non-novelistic production, prefacer "R." encourages enlargement of the Préface de Julie's sphere of influence to
include the entirety of that production. Indeed, such analyses of the preface as those done by Paul de Man and Juliet Flower MacCannell (in "The Purloined Letter" and "The Post-Fictional Self," respectively) would be unthinkable but for the suspicion, planted by the "editor" and shared by this study, that even had Julie itself never been published, the second preface thereto would have acted to alter the course of Rousseau's thought and literary technique.

Responsibility for broadening the "preface"'s intertextual horizons lies specifically with an alias no less important than it is long-winded, Entretien sur les romans entre l'éditeur et un homme de de lettres. Meanings have been accumulated, by our anatomy, around the title's first element, "Préface," and, by our logic of the rejected alternative, around its point of articulation, "ou." It only remains to develop the second element, "Entretien," into what the overall formula itself would have us take for the privileged other to the text as preface. In fact, from the standpoint of the Rousseauist master text in progress, the newest and, I would argue, most necessary aspect of the Préface de Julie is precisely its extended use of dialogue form (we part company in some measure here with the more exclusively thematic approaches of de Man and MacCannell). Far from incidental, the recourse to dialogue represents the inevitable response to certain problems of epistemology and expression whose repercussions would be felt, retroactively, in the preceding works and, by anticipation, in the works to come. The two faces of "R." and "N." thus epitomize one perspective of the préface-entretien which is itself two-faced because equally conversant both with Julie and with all that, in Rousseau, is not Julie.
Our text, then, has become a dialogue; our context, the author's complete works; our goal, to reexamine the first in the light of the second, and vice versa, to count the ways in which the Entretien as entretien makes a difference to the outcome of the oeuvre. For purposes of discussion, these ways will be numbered at three, although each is, in itself, complex, and all are derived at the last from a global preoccupation with the theory and practice of truth-telling.

Our initial concern will be for the disruptive influence of dialogue on the questions, framed in so many words by "R." and "N.," of what truth is, and how best it can be told. Not only does the Préface de Julie formalize a shift in emphasis from what had been impersonal to what would be interpersonal notions of truth, but, with respect to the latter, it proposes one model in particular of possible comportment, silence. The importance of this temporary solution cannot be exaggerated, given both its eventual inadequacy and its permanent attraction to so reluctant a violator of silence as the later Rousseau will claim to have been.

At the same time, however, that this theoretical discussion is taking place, a second model for truth-telling is being elaborated empirically on the level of praxis. Viewed in its entirety, the "R."/"N." dialogue itself becomes an oblique means to the end of self-revelation. It is charged specifically with recording certain interpersonal truths about the relations, lived and literary, between Rousseau himself and his erstwhile Aristarchus, Denis Diderot. And to the extent that it insists on distorting those relations almost beyond recognition, the literary dialogue constitutes a far-reaching critique of
mimetic theory as the underlying basis of truth through writing.

Out of this experiment in documentary dialogue, there arises, finally, a general appreciation of the contribution to be made by the form itself to the telling of truths about the self. A pattern is established, one which will be repeated, albeit with significant variations, in the Confessions-Diary sequence, for supplementing a paradoxically incomplete whole of narration, in this case Julie, with a footnote to it in dialogue form.

Temporally speaking, the Entretien sur les romans thus proves no less elusive than did its alter ego, the Préface de Julie. By whatever name, this too often neglected chapter in the Rousseauist master text belongs, at one and the same time, to the before, to the here and now, and to the aftermath of an imminent departure into the domain of avowed autobiography. Though certainly valid to a point, Robitaille's characterization of the text as a "prelude to autobiography" remains deceptively simplistic. From an exclusively historical perspective, of course, the two-part invention played here by "R." and "N." would appear to look in one direction only, ahead, to the larger, more important composition whose three major movements (Confessions, Dialogues, Rêveries) are understood by most references to Rousseau's "textes autobiographiques." What such a perspective fails to acknowledge, however, is that the pre-confessional act of anticipating an obsession with the truth of the self can and does coexist, in the Entretien sur les romans, with the confessional act of telling a part of that truth and the post-confessional act of doing so by means of dialogue. Verity, on the one hand, versatility, on the other; such will be the keys, thematic and
formal, to our discourse with the discourse between text and master text.

Honoring the Truth: Silence and the Avatars of Confession

Obliged as we are to confront the protean preface's various guises one by one, we might begin by asking how, in fact, it comes to function as a prelude to autobiography. How does it fulfill the requisite conditions of first displacing the \textit{lieu commun} of prefatory truth-telling, then addressing itself directly to the newly-displaced problem?

As we were on the verge of discovering, when the call of the eighteenth-century master Preface summoned our return to matters specifically and historically prefatory, one episode in particular assumes responsibility for giving the \textit{Entretien} an equal voice in the ever-expanding chorus of Rousseauist texts entrusted with the definition and declaration of general truth(s). No other episode so closely approximates what would, had the dialogue been dramatic, have constituted the moment of climax, than does the one which begins with "N."'s promise that, should "R." adopt the more prudent course of total anonymity, he, "N.," will reveal nothing of what he knows: "Quoi qu'il en soit, je vous garderai le secret" (p. 26). A rapid-fire exchange ensues, in which, to "N."'s initial astonishment ("Vous vous y nommerez? Vous?") and eventual satisfaction ("Cela du moins sera dans votre caractere"), it is established that "R." intends instead to have his entire name \textit{Jean-Jacques Rousseau en toutes lettres}," emblazoned across the novel's title page. He will, however, omit both his epithet, "Citoyen de Geneve," and his epigraph, \textit{vitam impendere vero}. Not that he feels the
latter omission to be absolutely necessary; on the contrary, he contends, what more graphic token of a life devoted to truth than the fact of his present indifference to personal prestige, as witnessed by his signing his name to a text, *Julie*, which is in such flagrant violation of the precepts set forth by the *Lettre à d'Alembert*. That being the case, the question occurs (naturally enough) to "N." of why "R." should have refrained to this point from making a clean breast about *Julie*'s origins. Under constant pressure from "N.," the "editor" settles finally on what must, for a variety of reasons, be considered the *Entretien*'s definitive (explicit) word on truth-telling: "C'est encore lui [à la vérité] rendre honneur que de déclarer qu'on la veut taire" (p. 28).

Before enumerating those reasons and submitting the formula itself to extensive explication, we should insist on a matter of more general relevance to the overall dialogue's eligibility for truth-telling, namely the above-mentioned discussion of Rousseau's epigraph. Does it belong, or not, on *Julie*'s title page? It is of far more than anecdotal importance that "R." should give voice here to what is in essence a faithful account of Rousseau's actual disagreement on the subject with publisher Rey (the latter persisted in his desire to print the epigraph and, in fact, did so, despite repeated directives to the contrary from the author). We are reminded in this way that, had Rousseau's own wish been granted, the honor, and the onus, of *vitam impendere vero* would have been specially reserved for the separately published *preface dialogué* (p. 1336). In the absence of further explanations from the author, we can only surmise, on the sole basis of the *Entretien* itself, what prompted his earmarking it, and not the so-called "main" corpus,
for inclusion in that portion of the _oeuvre_ which would bear the trace of a life devoted to truth.

With the pretensions of the whole to articulate the master text of truth-telling thus "authorized" (in the most literal sense of the word), it remains to be seen how one segment in particular of the dialogue preserves for posterity the temporary stance which was Rousseau's in 1761, and in what, precisely, that stance consists. As already suggested with regard to the rhetorical technique of _permutation_, significance of greater than usual proportions accrues automatically to the segment in question by virtue of its placement near the end of Rousseau's disorderly preface. The fact of postponing but never entirely pre-empting discussion of Julie's origins allows in itself for a gradual build up of tension, culminating, rather than commencing, in the claim that, where vérité is concerned, "[c']est encore lui rendre honneur que de déclarer qu'on la veut taire."

In this respect, the one-line formula stands out within its own immediate context in much the same way as does that context within the broader framework of the overall _Entretien_. Postulated as a general, even received truth, and paradoxical in its juxtaposition of _déclarer_ with _taire_, the formula is further earmarked for semantic prominence by its having been fabricated out of bits and pieces of just-completed dialogue. Clustered together in the formula are at least four notions: "truth," "honor," "naming" (as a positive speech act, interchangeable in this respect with "declaring") and "will," which, having traversed the context separately and in tandem, come together here in a kind of provisionally final resting place, to be joined at the last by a single
relative newcomer to the nomenclature, "silence." In musical terms, the passage whose boundaries we established above—less arbitrarily, it now turns out, than might originally have been suspected—could be described as introducing, experimenting with and insisting on certain motifs whose ultimate purpose it is to participate in the definitive statement of a principal theme.

Immediately prior to that statement (that is, within one page of it), the motif of "honor" (honneur, gloire, profaner) appears no fewer than six times, twice as an element in the metaphorical expression "faire honneur à quelqu'un de quelque chose" ("R." "...s'il y a du bien, je n'entends point m'en faire honneur;" "R." "Mon Libraire m'a déjà fait cette plaisanterie, et je l'ai trouvée si bonne, que j'ai promis de lui en faire honneur"). In addition to five solo appearances, the notion of "naming" (nommer, nom) is linked, once, with that of "truth" ("N." "Votre vrai nom? Jean-Jacques Rousseau, en toutes lettres?") and, twice, with that of "honor" ("R." "Je ne profane le nom de ma patrie;" "N." "Vous portez vous-même un nom qui n'est pas sans honneur"). "Truth" itself takes over near the last ("R." "...le soin d'excuser un de mes écrits ne m'a point fait altérer la vérité dans l'autre...Celui qui préfère la vérité à sa gloire peut espérer de la préférer à sa vie;" "N." "Mais vous refusez aussi de dire la vérité"), where it is explicitly named by "R." as the desired end of a supreme act of will on his part: "...être toujours vrai: voilà ce que je veux tâcher d'être."

Clearly, so high an incidence of these few motifs within a limited range of discourse comes as no accident. This is proven with particular conclusiveness in the case of honneur: literal and figurative uses
having little if anything in common from a semantic standpoint (miles of meaning separate "vous avez un nom qui n'est pas sans honneur" from "j'ai promis de lui en faire honneur") are nevertheless drawn, intentionally, into the greatest possible textual proximity. It would seem indeed that a kind of logic by association of ideas were being exploited here as a means of lending greater relief and multiple resonances to a message which can henceforth be understood only in relation to the gradual elaboration of its several elements. That the same word should have meant different things to the two speakers or, at different moments, to the same speaker endows the definitive formula with a pluridimensionality belying both its concision and the rapidity with which, having attained this momentary zenith, debate takes off once again on a more conventionally prefatory tangent. More than anything else, it is the duplicity and the density of dialogue which permits Rousseau's "R." to feel his way toward what promises to emerge as highly complex, even ambiguous posture for truth-telling.

The gradual elaboration of this posture, in opposition to the prescriptions of the prefatory code, is in fact initiated by an opening set of variations on the theme of honneur. The function of these variations is precisely to bridge, and at the same time to expose, the gap which separates the typical "editor"'s exclusive preoccupation with telling (falsely) his novel into truth from Rousseau's deeper concern for truthfulness as a constant of individual comportment, one which allows of no such exceptions as would seem to be authorized, even dictated, by the code. Can the lie be justified which "creates" additional truth by placing a seal of non-fictionality on that (the novel) which might
otherwise be taken perjoratively for a fictional document? Not according
to "R.," whose impatience with this limited and limiting interpretation
of what it means to "tell true" translates here into a continuing question
of what is meant by the term honneur. Symbolically speaking, it suffices
that "R." (with "N."
's more or less unwitting assistance) recognize and,
eventually, choose between rival meanings of honneur in order that a


corresponding choice be postulated, then made by the discourse itself
between conventional and confessional modes of truth-telling.

In strictly numerical terms, convention and confession are equally
represented in the four appearances of honneur which anticipate its in-
corporation into the final formula ("C'est encore lui rendre honneur...,"
and so forth). The first ("R.")'s claim that if, in Julie, "...il y a du
bien, [il] n'entend pas [s]'en faire honneur") and fourth (his report
of a promise made to "[s]on Libraire" with respect to the "plaisanterie"
of placing Rousseau's epigraph on the novel's title page: "j'ai promis
de lui en faire honneur") perpetuate the by now trivial topos of attribu-
tion according to which all histoires are by definition vraies whose
"editors" claim no honneur, or credit, for having spawned them. In the
interval, however ("R." "Je ne le [le nom de ma patrie] mets qu'aux
écris que je crois lui pouvoir faire honneur;" "N." "Vous portez vous-
même un nom qui n'est pas sans honneur"), honneur has been progressively
liberated from exclusive confinement to the formula "faire honneur à
quelqu'un de quelque chose," and the problem of truth-telling, promoted
accordingly from a simple matter of attribution (or "certitude" in the
Hegelian sense) to one of much more far-ranging implications.

The immediate effect of this second, more literal and, by
implication, more fundamental honneur would seem to have been a kind of reductio ad absurdum of the former, more figurative usage. Between the question of crediting "R." with authorship of Julie and that of crediting Rey with authorship of an unwitting plaisanterie, the distance is great indeed in terms of relative importance. What possible reason could be conceived for our having, or even caring, to know who (Rey? Rousseau? some undesignated third party?) first invented the suggestion which "R." here dismisses? It follows, moreover, from the very fact of "R."'s taking the suggestion for a "joke," that the gesture of bestowing credit has been transformed into an ironic parody of its former self: whereas it might be assumed that authorship of Julie would, at least to some extent, reflect favorably on Rousseau, it is clearly to Rey's dishonor (the word is, of course, and by design, excessive) to have been credited here with having authored so inappropriate, even outlandish, a remark.

And so, in the course of less than half a page of dialogue, the question of attribution has been actively and effectively reduced from be all and end all of prefatory truth-telling to, at most, a meaningless object of idle curiosity. Though "N." has yet to raise it again, the issue of authorship, as applied specifically to Julie, has, for all practical purposes, been removed from the agenda of Rousseau's anti-preface (even the "man of letters"' restatement: "Quand je vous demande si vous êtes l'auteur de ces Lettres, pourquoi donc éludiez-vous ma question?" can take place only in the context of a broader inquiry).

Meanwhile, what we shall develop presently into an alternative to the "truth" of attribution has been outlined in rejoinders one of whose purposes it is to link the notions of "honor" and "naming." To the names
of "Geneve" and "Jean-Jacques Rousseau," which the speakers themselves describe as connoting honneur, we might now, by extension, add that of "vérité." Though somewhat less than explicit on this point, Rousseau's Entretien supplies the lexical wherewithal and the philosophical basis for charging the prefatory master text with having sullied the good name of "truth" itself, by dragging it through page after page of purposeful, if blatant, deception.

Why else, indeed, would "R." come finally to choose rendre (to give back) over faire as the verb which will act directly on honneur and indirectly on vérité ("C'est encore lui rendre honneur que de déclarer qu'on la veut taire")? The fundamental commitment to confession is complicated in this way by secondary overtones of promised retribution to a woman wronged, "rendre l'honneur (à une femme)" meaning specifically to marry one's mistress. Prefacer "R.," it would appear, has taken it upon himself to "make an honest woman" of that (la vérité) which, through constant abuse at the hands of his fellows, had long since been stigmatized in prefatory circles as an "easy mark."

It is not surprising, in this regard, that one of "R."'s primary concerns will be precisely for reviving the association between "truth" and "difficulty"; implied here in the most general way is the assumption that, wherever vérité comes into play, an act of volonté will be required to achieve one's desired end, whether that end consist in living the truth ("...être toujours vrai: voilà ce que je veux tâcher d'être"), in telling it "(Je ne veux pas dire un mensonge"), or even, finally, in holding it back ("...déclarer qu'on la veut taire"). Specifically, the will to truth is established here in direct opposition to what "R." con-
ceives and condemns as equally willful prevarication on the part of the traditional prefacer. Though the latter's goal would appear to have been the more immediately attainable, it is also, in the long run, the more easily attacked. "Vous auriez meilleur marché," confides "R." to "N.," "d'un homme qui voudrait mentir." The prefatory lie comes cheap only insofar as its teller consents to pay the price (negligible, perhaps, in terms of the empirical public's own willingness to play along, but, where Rousseau is concerned, incalculable) of reduced personal integrity in the eyes of his reader. It is the genre, finally, and not the individual practitioner, which must somehow be made to conform: in the course of a life dedicated to truth, no time may be taken out for dalliance with travesties of truth. As a first expansion on the soon-to-be experienced desire that truth be silenced, we might thus propose the thought that the word itself (le nom) should be barred from those contexts, specifically those prefaces, which profit from its prestige, only to dishonor it in return.

How, then, the question becomes, to write (a preface) without taking the name of truth in vain? A first and, in fact, seemingly satisfactory solution emerges from the discourse in the form of a decided impulse to autobiography. Although the "editor"'s campaign to replace the novel's "truth" with the truth of the self gains momentum only in the aftermath of attribution (significantly, as though in pointed opposition to the abuses of past prefaces, the word vérité does not itself reappear until after the ironic reference to Rey's plaisanterie), that campaign has nevertheless already been launched as part of the above-related discreditation of giving and taking credit.
To this point in the Entretien, it should be recalled, "R."'s sole explicit link with the flesh-and-blood Rousseau was as putative author of what we readers know to have been the latter's pre-1761 oeuvre. Suddenly, as a direct result, it would seem, of his having authorized the equation "R."=Rousseau, the text begins, in most unprefatory fashion, to yield up bits and pieces of his biography. It comes out, in passing, that he enjoys a generally favorable reputation ("un nom qui n'est pas sans honneur") among the reading public, and that he has gone previously by the name of "Citoyen de Geneve." Appropriately enough, the concern for origination, here become geographic, remains constant, thereby shedding considerable light on Rousseau's displacement of that concern from novel to novelist.

Admittedly modest, this accumulation of data nevertheless deviates significantly from the "normal" prefatory course of suppressing actual biography entirely in favor of invented manuscript exchanges, imagined encounters with fictional protagonists, and the like. More important, however, than the data themselves are the "editor"'s attendant efforts, his first, at moral and moralizing self-portraiture. Enormous in its implications, "R"'s initial accession to the personhood of Rousseau is nevertheless managed with such extreme subtlety as to come down finally to a question of verb tenses. It is not merely in the particular case of Julie that the newly-identified "Jean-Jacques Rousseau en toutes lettres" will refrain from invoking his epigraph; on the contrary, he has done so before and will continue to do so whenever appropriate, because, by his own account, it is his essential nature to care everything for the prestige of his homeland and not a whit for whatever
prestige may accrue to him personally. That the "eternal" present should have been used, in lieu of the future, in the following declaration: "Je ne profane point le nom de ma patrie," makes a world of difference in terms of deflecting our attention away from Julie and onto Jean-Jacques. So too does the positive reinforcement which immediately greets this initial foray into autobiography: "Cela du moins sera dans votre caractère" (emphasis added), admits "N.," in belated reference to "R."'s earlier decision to forsake anonymity. Indeed, having "R." recall this exact formula in the overall Entretien's penultimate rejoinder ("Cela sera-t-il dans le caractère dont vous m'avez loué ci-devant?" [p. 30]) will be one way of recognizing its part in confirming the metamorphosis of prefacer into person, and preface into preliminary sketch for later full-length self-portraits.

Fittingly enough, this metamorphosis has been heralded as well by honneur's reacquisition of its original semantic force. No longer relegated to prefatory metaphors of attribution, honneur has become a bona-fide attribute of supra-prefatory individuals ("Jean-Jacques Rousseau en toutes lettres") and collectivities ("Geneve"). Language and praxis, the first mentions of personal honor and the first details of personal history thus combine to point the way towards an alternative, confessional form of truth-telling, one which will adopt the self ("R." become "Rousseau"), not the other (epitomized by Julie), as its primary focus of concern.

The corner to confession having thus been turned, "R."'s top priority becomes that of compensating adequately by personal revelation
for continued reticence on the score of Julie. What, then, are the specific truths of the self to be offered up in partial fulfillment of prefatory truth-telling's newly revised requirements? How indeed does he usher in that era of equivalence between honoring the truth and confessing it which will be officially proclaimed, in word, by the ambivalent formula "faire honneur à la vérité"? As though in anticipation of that very ambivalence, "R." chooses now to relate only that portion of his "truth" or "caractère profond" which directly informs his own past and present relation to the "truth" or "caractère des connaissances [whether of the self or of the non-self] qui sont conformes à la réalité." In accordance with the motto which he now so emphatically refuses to renounce ("Non, monsieur, je ne mettrai pas ma devise à ce livre, mais je ne la quitterai pas pour cela, et je m'effraye moins que jamais de l'avoir prise"), that relation here becomes one of undying devotion. The self-proclaimedly truthful self-portrait depicts its subject (and, to some extent, cannot help but do so, given the empirical identity of subject and portraitist) as one whose desire to honor la vérité has been and will continue to be his most fundamental impulse.

But much more than "R.'s basic commitment to forever honoring the truth is postulated by the final permutation of the passage's recurring leit-motivs. As regards the specific code of conduct to be predicated on such a commitment, at least two distinct possibilities for future interaction between truth and the truth-lover are spelled out here in so many words. The one is confession, as represented here by the verb déclarer. The other is silence; its paradigmatic instance,
the verb taire. In combination with continued semantic ambiguity, the syntactical complexity of the formula's unfolding makes it all but impossible to eliminate either of these two seemingly contradictory responses to what, for "R.," has long since become an existential, rather than a purely prefatory question.

Does he mean for the expression "rendre honneur" to be understood solely in the limited sense of "confesser" which usage conventionally accords it whenever it takes "la vérité" for its object? Is what matters finally that "déclarer qu'on la veut taire" be admitted as an act of confessional validity equal to that of any other declaration about the self?

Or is the reality of the situation, as we might suspect, more complicated? Can the substitution of rendre for the more usual faire be taken as an indication of reluctance to abandon other modes of "doing honor" besides the confessional? If so, can we number, among those modes, confession's apparent opposite, the will to silence, which despite (or, rather, because of) its relegation to a subordinate clause, emerges at the last as an impulse more fundamental than that of confession?

What makes choosing between these two extremes of interpretation that much more difficult is the fact that each resumes a portion of "R.'s" comportment in the dialogue to this point: steadfastly silent on the particular issue of Julie, he has nevertheless volunteered considerable general information about his identity and character. Which, if either, of these two postures has been the more "truthfully" adopted? It is by examining each in terms of its own particular
advantages and drawbacks that we shall attempt now to determine whether the two are in fact mutually exclusive, and, beyond that, how their co-presence, despite it all, in the Entretien's definitive word on truth-telling will have served, in the final analysis, to alter the course of the Rousseauist master text.

Silence or confession? Pragmatically speaking, the formula itself would seem to favor the second over the first as the more valid means to the end of honoring the truth. From the moment of "R."'s prefixing the infinitive taire with the auxiliary vouloir, doubts are raised about the feasibility of the truth lover's silencing the truth. In itself, silence would thus appear to be less a real option than an object of desire: it is the wishing, not the hushing, which, in the formula's subordinate clause, constitutes the subject's essential mode of being. But in what, precisely, does the attraction of quiescence consist? Why should Rousseau have been tempted at this particular stage in his career by what we might call the siren call of silence?

A likely basis for this attraction can be inferred from a text (not coincidentally, the most explicitly autobiographical in the published pre-Julie oeuvre) whose vital link to the Entretien is decreed but never explicitly defined by the dialogue itself. I refer, of course, to the Préface de Narcisse, as does "R.," somewhat unexpectedly, when charged by "N." with having lent his name to a novel in blatant contradiction with Rousseau's prior writings. By way of defense, the "editor" claims that, should his interlocutor reread that particular preface carefully, he would find there a more than sufficient "réponse à l'inconscience." As it turns out, the "man
of letters" is himself already conversant with certain details of the preface: "Je me rappelle deux passages." For whatever reason, then, the two together inscribe the present Entretien within a textual heritage which numbers the Préface de Narcisse among its already read (p. 25).

Of particular interest to us here, given the general inescapability of our viewing the one preface as a necessary precondition to the other, are the verbs used by the earlier prefacer to express what he felt at the time to have been the essence of lived relations between himself and truth or, more accurately, truths (in contrast to that truth of the self which would become, by definition, monolithic, that of the pre-autobiographical period tended toward multiplicity). On this score, the contrast with the Entretien is (deliberately?) marked: nowhere here is it a question of the verb taire or of the relative passivity which such a verb connotes. Instead, the "Rousseau" of the Préface de Narcisse portrays himself as having forever lent his active support to the truth or truths recorded in his oeuvre. How many times does he qualify the word vérité(s) with clauses like the following: "la vérité que j'ai soutenue," "des vérités que j'ai soutenues," "les vérités que j'ai proposées à la considération des sages," "les vérités que j'ai développées," and so forth. The line is fine, in fact, between giving credit to the truth and taking credit for it: Rousseau, whose anti-mimetic tendencies need hardly be recalled here, would seem at times to be claiming responsibility for inventing truths, rather than merely recording them.
And yet, whatever the precise nature of these truth-related activities, the very existence of the *Préface de Narcisse* attests (or so Rousseau would have us believe) to their failure, in the long run, to constitute the agent himself as a lover of truth. Inasmuch as the active practice of truth-telling, however inveterate, has heretofore left open the possibility of driving a wedge of hypocrisy between the truth and the teller, the latter must, "malgré [sa] repugnance," take up his pen to discount that possibility in so many words. As formulated at the outset ("il importe à la vérité que j'ai soutenue, que son défenseur ne soit point accusé injustement de ne lui avoir prêté son secours que par caprice ou par vanité, sans l'aimer et sans la connoître"), the problem to which the *Préface de Narcisse* responds is essentially that of the individual's alienation from the products of his own completed linguistic activity. To the extent, that in the eyes of the Other, the act of revelation does not automatically denote an attitude of respect ("Ils prétendent que je ne pense pas un mot des vérités que j'ai soutenues"), the would-be truth-lover can no longer afford simply to have revealed and, thereby, to have allowed the truth, his truth, to get out of his control. To persist now in merely emitting truths would be to run a permanent risk of cutting off, or allowing the Other to cut off, all existential contact with them.

It is in the context of previous failure thus acknowledged that we can perhaps best appreciate the temptation of silence as experienced by "R." in the *Entretien*. In contrast to the positive speech act, silence guarantees that relations will be maintained at all times between he who withholds, on the one hand, and, on the other, the truth withheld. For as long as the secret (in this case, that of
Julie's origins) remains unrevealed, he who is privy to it will enjoy a position of absolute mastery with respect to the unenlightened Other and, at the same time, coexist with the secret itself on terms of the greatest possible intimacy. Ethical consequences will derive, in other words, from the conventional synonymity between taire and garder pour soi. As set forth for our consideration by the Entretien sur les romans, keeping silent appears, in short, to represent the perfect solution to the ongoing problem of keeping company with the truth.

Or, rather, such would be the case were not the Entretien's own further unfolding instrumental in removing the vow of silence from the realm of practicality to that of unattainable ideals. We have already noted the role played by syntax ("...déclarer qu'on la veut taire") in refusing silence a position of semantic parity with confession. Far from arbitrary, this refusal is dictated, in formal terms, by the fact of dialogue and, more specifically, by the concrete presence, throughout "R."'s musings, of interlocutor "N." If silence was able to emerge from the debris of the Préface de Narcisse as a welcome and seemingly unproblematical corrective to the alienating experience of the written word, it is partially because no counterpart existed in that text, with its constant references to a generalized third-person plural, for the alter ego whose intervention serves here as a constant reminder of what it is precisely which will render the posture of silence untenable. It is from "N.," in fact, that we learn the lessons of silence's necessary specificity and its somewhat surprising vulnerability to interpretation.
Simply by being there and, in more spectacular fashion, by his persistence in cross-examination, "N." ensures that his interlocutor's silence will be somewhat less than absolute. It is the essential condition of dialogue and, by implication, of l'homme (de lettres) in society that both parties be heard, even if one or the other is heard only to express his will to silence. In order to avoid the subject of Julie's origins, "R." must either explicitly reiterate his distaste for it, equivocate, or redirect the dialogue along other lines. In any case, he is forced to speak, and his having spoken results in what "N." terms "petites subtilités...plus déterminantes qu'embarrassantes" (p. 29). However little he may have said of direct relevance to "N."'s questions, "R." is nevertheless reduced to a state of désarroi in the ears of the listening Other. Much like a Racinian or a Sartrean victim of the watchful Other, he has, despite himself, opened himself to interpretation. And this, not only by what he is compelled to say in the context of the current discussion, but by the fact of his having spoken previously (here again, it is "N." who makes the point, by introducing the issue of Rousseau's prior oeuvre). Silence, it would appear, is like Nature, a state of no return; once violated, it can no longer "be," but only function as a limit.

Even what we might call "relatively absolute silence," that is, silence which is not immediately and specifically supplemented by partial revelation or by revelation on topics other than that designated by the interlocutor, is transformed by the fact of dialogue into a speech act among others. What might otherwise have passed for non-speech must now be relegated to the status of anti-speech. As such, it is henceforth
subject, in itself, to (mis)interpretation. Once noted by speech as an alternative to speech, silence too becomes inherently noteworthy, as witnessed by disagreement between "R." ("je ne veux pas dire un mensonge") and "N." ("Mais vous refusez aussi de dire la vérité") as to how they should name the anti-speech act which the former has been performing throughout the dialogue. Reminiscent of the age-old debate over half-full and half-empty glasses, this paradigmatic clash between opposites of interpretation goes to show just how illusory are the advantages to be gained from remaining (or trying to remain) silent. As in speech, there can be no guarantee in non-speech against (willful) misunderstanding on the part of the Other.

Indeed, for proof positive of silence's vulnerability to interpretation, we need look no further than Book XI of the Confessions, where Rousseau himself will assume and develop the interpreter's role accorded here to "N." By confessing the part of his own coquetry in his fictional spokesman's reluctance to speak ("Ce qui me rendit les femmes si favorables fut la persuasion où elles furent que j'avois écrit ma propre histoire..."), Rousseau will not so much tell the true story of "R."'s silence (to pretend that he will would be to perpetuate the fallacy of the Confessions' superior veracity) as alert us to the more basic truth that this, and other, stories may be told just as easily about silence as about so-called "positive" acts of speech.

For this and those other reasons elaborated above, taire in the sense of silencing absolutely thus becomes, for the truth-lover, an impossible dream. No less real, psychologically speaking, for having been made over into an object of desire, the alternative of silence
(taire) is nevertheless supplanted at the level of concrete praxis by that of confession (déclarer). "C'est encore lui rendre honneur que de déclarer qu'on la veut taire;" it is clear, on the sole basis of word order in the truth lover's capsulized credo, that the path to which mutism can finally be affixed as an (ideal) end point must first have been traced by a gesture of self-revelation. The gesture is, in fact, two-part: immediately on the heels of an initial commitment, in theory, to confession ("C'est encore lui rendre honneur..."), there follows an exemplary instance of practical application ("...déclarer qu'on la veut taire"). Rather than be silent, "R." will not only speak, but speak about himself, and, moreover, speak in such a way as (to confess himself) to be precisely the kind of man who would refrain from speaking, if only he could.

Thus interpreted, the Entretien's provisional truth on truth-telling would seem to foretell and, in some measure, to foredoom the entire impetus of the prolonged autobiographical venture to come. It is not merely that fictional spokesmen "R." and "N." will have served to formalize the lived transition from the impersonal vérités of the Préface de Narcisse to such vérités (ideally, one indivisible vérité) of the self as will be revealed by the Lettres à Malesherbes, Confessions, Dialogues and Réveries, to name only the most explicitly autobiographical of the forthcoming œuvres. On the contrary, by establishing silence as the constant, if implicit, goal to which the sum total of all this verbiage must tend, the Entretien predicts the reluctance with which, having thought already to have expressed himself so totally and so unequivocally as to foreclose the possibility
of (mis)interpretation, Rousseau will nevertheless supplement the *Confessions by the Dialogues and the Dialogues, in turn, by the Réveries.*

Need we recall as well that, in addition to underlying the overall itinerary of the later career, the tension here recorded between confession and silence will permeate each of its individual way stations?

Nowhere, finally, is it made more clear, or more pathetic, than in the context of this seeming preamble to the autobiographical adventure that, as a *terminus ad quem* of confession, silence can be imposed arbitrarily, but never attained. That, however important, the Entretien's formula for truth-telling should be buried in the ensuing accumulation of more superficially prefatory *topoi* is but the most immediate indication of *taire*’s impracticability as a final resting place for the would-be truth-lover. Indeed, the formula itself says as much by placing *taire* at a double remove from *vérité* and by subordinating the act of silencing to that of wishing. Knowing as we do (ironically enough, on the basis of confessional texts as yet unwritten) that it is a constant of Rousseauist desire to find expression only when its object has been irretrievably lost, we cannot help but see the present declaration as expressing not only the desirability but the inaccessibility of a silence to which all possible routes of return have already been blocked. Speech, in short, is only an apparent means to the end of non-speech. Though it would seem at first glance to mediate between them ("R." confesses a desire; that desire is for silence), the institution of desire will have been responsible instead, semantically as well as syntactically, for imposing a permanent obstacle between the extremes of confession and silence.
Within the framework of this absolute incompatibility, there nevertheless exists a possibility of relative reconciliation between the two, a possibility predicated on our accepting the *Entretien's own* invitation that we read into the verb *taire* an alternate meaning less drastic by far than that of total abstention from linguistic activity. What if we were now to exempt from that abstention any such activity which does not directly involve the emission of audible sounds? What if the articulatory axis were to be displaced so as to fall, not between language on the one hand, and silence on the other, but between noisy (speech) and silent (writing) modes of language itself? Indeed, to this point in our development of the truth-telling formula, we have been remiss in neglecting to recall the broader context of supposed orality whose ubiquity fairly dictates that some consideration be given to writing as both an alternative to speech and a sub-category of silence. The omission has been all the more unwarranted insofar as the specific portion of oral-but-to-have-been-written dialogue which we have credited with giving rise to the truth-telling formula does not merely perpetuate, but also *ponders*, the illusion of audibility.

It is the *topos* of "naming" which, single-handedly, bears the burden of calling orality into question. Of capital importance in this regard is a distinction on which the text insists with what might seem at first glance to be less than good reason. In the rapid-fire exchange which injects the *topos* into discussion about editorship of *Julie*, extreme care is taken to distinguish between what "R." is doing in the here and now of speech, and what he will have done, in writing, on the novel's title page:
R. ...Je suis l'éditeur de ce livre, et je m'y nommerai comme éditeur.

N. Vous vous y nommerez? Vous?

R. Moi-même.

N. Quoi? Vous y mettrez votre nom?

R. Oui, monsieur.

N. Votre vrai nom? Jean-Jacques Rousseau, en toute lettres?

R. Jean-Jacques Rousseau en toutes lettres.

Only partially attributable to the complementary excesses of "N."'s incredulity and "R."'s "heroic" resolve, the pointed repetition of future verbs in company with the adverb "y" is perhaps better explained by a concern for designating the written (and not the spoken) word as the privileged or, rather, the only site of self-revelation. Strictly speaking, in point of fact, though he admits to editorship, "R." never actually names himself here. The task of doing so has been reserved instead for the scriptural moment of combining, not phonemes, but graphemes; "R." named will have become none other than Jean-Jacques Rousseau en toutes lettres (emphasis reversed).

Already, then, the incipient notion of confessionalism has allied itself with that of scripturalism. Even at the stage of its development which we might term "prenatal," autobiography has enlisted the services of writing and, in the process, emphatically rejected those of speech. Here again, it is the truth-telling formula which will derive a universal law from the specifics of the debate's past practice. Situated contextually such that "R." need not pronounce the actual word vérité, but can evoke it indirectly by a pair of object pronouns ("C'est encore lui rendre honneur que de déclarer qu'on la veut taire"), the formula is thus predicated in part on the (name of) truth's having been banned.
temporarily from the spoken language. Granted, it is possible to consider the oral/written antithesis as a matter of indifference here, and even to construe "R."'s gesture as protesting less against the audible abuse of truth than against such prefatory (i.e., written) abuse as might easily be seen by him to violate a long-since inoperative tabu which he would now restore to its original vigor. And yet, the fact of his having, moments earlier, used the word vérité to characterize the contents of the Lettre à d'Alembert lends support to the alternative interpretation whereby truth-telling would not, in itself, become impossible, but rather would become the special province of alphabets, epistles and literature, that is to say, of written letters.

This interpretation is consistent as well with various other chapters in the Rousseauist oeuvre which also reserve for writing what amounts to an exclusive license to truth. On the one hand, the Confessions will dwell on the role of timidity in precluding "Jean-Jacques" from being "himself" in conversational situations and in causing him to turn to written confession as a compensatory domain of self-approximation. On the other, the Essai sur l'origine des langues will insist on the paradoxical theory that, given the inevitability of language's fall away from being, the language (relatively) more capable of effectuating a return is not the less fallen, speech, but the more fallen, writing.⁸

It is not our purpose here to develop these perspectives, or to speculate on the causal relation, if any, between the narrative and normative bases of scriptural ascendancy. Rather, we would merely remark that, for whatever reason, such ascendancy is frequently granted
by the Rousseauist master text, not so much in contradiction as in
company with an equally pervasive nostalgia for orality. In the best
of all possible worlds, truthful speech could be, and even flourish. In
the post-paradisiacal world of the Entretien sur les romans, one where,
as "R." here reminds us, "il n'est plus possible à personne d'être bon,"
the only possible truthful speech is precisely that which recognizes
the relatively greater truth-telling capacities of writing. "Déclarer
qu'on la veut taire" becomes, in a final permutation of the truth-telling
formula, the quintessential speech act of one who would henceforth pay
homage to the truth (and the truth about truth) by committing them to
pen and paper.

In the final analysis, then, whether or not silencing the truth
constitutes a valid response to the existential situation of "R." become
"Jean-Jacques Rousseau en toutes lettres" depends on what, precisely, is
meant by the verb taire. Immediately impractical as a means to unambiv-
alent cohabitation with the truth, and potentially unattainable as a
long-range goal of confession, silence nevertheless comes into its own
(or, rather, that part of its own which is defined by opposition, not to
language per se, but to that which, in language, makes noise) at the
moment when, having already committed himself to confession, the truth-
lover must decide on the specific course of action best suited to honoring
that commitment. That "R." should, in Rousseau's stead, have settled
on writing in preference to speech is, naturally, of capital importance
to the future enactment of the autobiographical adventure.

Of no less importance, however, are the implications of this choice,
and that of confession, for the immediate context which brought them to
light and on which they will, in turn, shed a new light of interpretation. How short-sighted we should be to read as uniquely prospective a formula for truth-telling which, on closer inspection, reveals itself to be, at one and the same time, introspective. And this, in the sense that the forever already-written Entretien sur les romans has itself been charged with recording certain truths of the self, in excess (and to what extent!) of those to which our attention has been explicitly drawn. Just what those truths might be, and by what precise means they will have been confessed are the questions which will now guide our reimmersion into the text at large.

Writing a Loss: "N." ou le nouvel Aristarque

Where, then, is it written that the Entretien will already have fulfilled its own prophecy of future confession? Signs of self-revelation on the part of the absent author are, in fact, everywhere present, if only we would heed them. What might be called the "autobiographical sub-text" of the Entretien sur les romans becomes co-extensive with the dialogue at large from the moment of our realizing that the particular lived episode (re)called into being here is precisely that of dialogue between the self and another.

In retracing the stages of that realization so as, ultimately, to assess its significance for the overall oeuvre, we shall begin by further extending our comparison between this, the first written, and the second of Julie's prefaces. That their common scriptor would seem to have experienced dialogue, in the abstract, as an emotionally charged
issue and a source of not inconsiderable ambivalence points already to
the possibility of an empirical correlative to the "R."/"N." dyad.

Once raised, our suspicions gain in precision from what the
Entretien itself says and does not say about the identity of its parti-
cipants. By keeping "N."'s name so jealously guarded a secret (the
contrast with "R."'s owning up to the name of "Jean-Jacques Rousseau
en toutes lettres" is not only evident but emphasized), the text
practically demands that we treat him as though he were the protagonist
of a roman à clef, and, consequently, that we overlook no potential
cue in the attempt to discover "who he really is."

Thus sensitized to otherwise imperceptible nuances of situation
and behavior, and having mentally compiled a list of likely suspects
on the basis of extratextual evidence, we cannot help, finally, but
narrow the field to a single candidate, he being, as previously
suggested, Denis Diderot. So convincing, indeed, are the reasons, to
be accumulated below, for reading Diderot into Rousseau's fictional
"homme de lettres," that it is a wonder no one, to my knowledge, has thus
far thought to do so. Even were such a reading of none but anecdotal
interest, the Entretien would fill an important gap in the much-studied
dossier of Diderot-Rousseau dialogue, as carried out obliquely under
cover of literary texts addressed to the general public.

In actuality, however, what will prove on examination to be a
decidedly non-referential relation between "N." and Diderot does not
so much foreclose as focus discussion of both a topical and a formal
nature. On the one hand, the "N."/Diderot figure will be seen to epit-
omize a more general preoccupation, by no means unique to this chapter
of the Rousseauist master text, with that problematics of paternity which we have already derived from "R."'s somewhat surprising moral to Julie. On the other, the very fact (and the specific details) of non-referentiality set a significant precedent for untold moments of pseudo-nostalgia in Rousseau, moments when, by telling not so much what was as what might have been, if only..., the ongoing autobiography will have become more compensatory than strictly confessional. The literary Entretien not only fills the gap left by the cessation of lived relations, but improves upon the reality of relations remembered.

The general context within which memory works its compensatory magic here remains, nonetheless, that of an absent author's too insistent protestations of utter indifference when confronted by the prospect of a monologic future. Indifference is, in fact, too weak a word for the attitude towards dialogue reflected in the transition from Préface de Julie to Préface. The corresponding reduction of prefatory voices from two to one hardly ranks as "just another" technique of condensation. Rather, judging from traces left in the monologic preface itself, that reduction would better be described as a deliberate act of aggression. It is as though Rousseau were striking out in all directions against anything and everything remotely dialogic.

We have noted already that a perceptible chill comes over the discourse with the demise of debaters "R." and "N.," who, though in almost perpetual disagreement, never address each other in terms as disdainful as those flung at the empirical reader by the Préface's anonymous first person. Certain details unique to that text achieve the same end by lending affective overtones to the reaffirmation of prefatory solitude.
Nowhere in the dialogic preface had the "editor" suggested, for example, that he alone would have derived pleasure from reading his book. "A qui plaira-t-il donc?" he now asks. "Peut-être à moi seul..." (p. 6).

It is at the moment of concluding, however, that the unnamed "editor" makes most explicit and most adamant his refusal to engage in precisely the kind of head-to-head debate with a single critic which "R." had not only tolerated but solicited from "N." The same pains taken by the earlier "editor" to elicit a "jugement positif" (p. 11) are taken here to ensure that no real-life situation arises where such a judgment could in fact be rendered: "Que si, après l'avoir lu [le recueil] tout entier, quelqu'un m'osoit blamer de l'avoir publié; qu'il le dise, s'il veut, à toute la terre, mais qu'il ne vienne pas me le dire" (p. 6).

More strikingly still, this general rejection of critical dialogue culminates, as does the Préface itself, in what amounts to a scathing denunciation of former prefacer "N." With the words "je sens que je ne pourrais de ma vie estimer cet homme-là," the anonymous "editor" will have concentrated his condemnation of dialogue on his erstwhile partner therein, on that "homme (de lettres)" who had dared, even after reading the entire novel, to question the wisdom of its publication. The brunt of a nameless, apparently senseless rage is borne here by "N." himself no less than by the activity, dialogue, for which he stands.

So dramatic, indeed, is the retreat from dialogue into monologue, as depicted, intertextually, by the contrast between before and after, that the pre-publication story itself cannot help but acquire a new intensity. Such hesitancy as accompanied the Préface de Julie at every moment of its life before (and even after) printing (written,
rejected, resurrected, it was destined finally to be written off as esthetically inferior to the *Préface* would seem now to be grounded in a deep-seated ambivalence with respect to its dialogic form. That the *Imitation théâtrale* which was, at one point, slated to share a common volume with it would consist in (and declare itself to consist in) a monologic reworking of Platonic dialogues is but one indication among several of heightened sensitivity in Rousseau to the difference between the two modes of discourse, and of reluctance on his part to come out, once for all, in favor of either.

Indeed, the facts of the matter argue against our attempting in his stead to declare one or the other to have become the chosen mode of *Julie*'s liminary space. And yet, the balance of power would seem to have been more than restored by actual publication of the *Préface de Julie*, an event which not only put an end to the temporary loss of original dialogue, but inaugurated dialogue of a new and different sort at the level where text speaks to text and, in this particular instance, *preface* takes on *preface*. A model of compensatory displacement was thus established to which we shall have reason to refer later on: dialogue reasserted itself, after a period of enforced silence, as something other, something more than it had been initially. A not altogether dissimilar occurrence will, in fact, have been sighted in the interval of oblivion separating real and remembered dialogue between Rousseau and Diderot.

Before any such generalizations can be formulated concerning the mechanisms of textual distortion, it must, however, be established that the man distorted to yield the character of "N." was indeed Denis
Diderot. From whence, distortion to the contrary, comes the invitation to recognition? Just how striking are the underlying resemblances between the fictional and the real man of letters? Do these resemblances constitute the sufficient, even necessary basis for a positive identification?

These are questions which would never even have occurred, had not the text itself made a concerted effort to keep us guessing. Rather than rely on the fact of "N."'s anonymity to shroud his person in mystery, the Entretien chooses instead to make an issue of that fact, especially in the passage from which we earlier extracted the truth-telling formula. The strategy deployed there is relatively subtle: it never happens, in fact, that "N." is called upon to name himself "en toutes lettres." No matter; so insistently does he cross-examine "R." on this score that a boomerang effect would be inevitable even were it not for the "editor"'s own repeated, and relatively uncharacteristic references to his interlocutor as "Monsieur," throughout the naming sequence. With each exchange of a "Monsieur" for a "votre vrai nom?" or for a "Jean-Jacques Rousseau," the reader's need becomes greater to discover the fourth term of the implied homology: "R." : "N." : : Rousseau : ?.

It should be acknowledged at this time that one reader, at least, is already on record as having "solved" the enigma of "N."'s identity. As Rousseau's most steady and supportive correspondent throughout the whole of Julie's gestation, Duclos was led, quite naturally, to nominate himself as role model for the fictional homme de lettres. Interestingly enough, however, he was perplexed and no doubt a little disappointed to remark certain unmistakable differences between his own
comportment and that of his supposed "likeness." "J'ai été frappé d'une chose dans votre seconde préface," he wrote to Rousseau; "l'auteur fait plusieurs réponses que vous avez écrites, mais je ne vous avais certainement pas fait les mêmes objections." What Duclos seems to be admitting here, perhaps despite himself, is one or both of two things: his may not, in fact, be the (only) reality on which "N." is based; secondly, whatever the reality, the process of its transcription has been distinctly other than straightforwardly mimetic. Indeed, without an assumption of mimesis, the case for identifying "N." with Duclos becomes extremely tenuous, so exclusively does it depend on seeming imitation by the Entretien of the already existing Correspondance.

What if, on the other hand, the Entretien were to be charged with making up for an empirical absence of Julie-centered intercourse between Rousseau and Diderot? What if the relevant chapter of the Correspondance turned out to consist, not in the routine epistolary exchange with Duclos, but rather in the melodramatic record of "visites promises et différeés, rendez-vous offerts et acceptés avec ostentation, rencontres plus chargées d'amertume que l'absence," which had as their proposed agenda discussion of the manuscript Héloïse and as their actual end result the definitive break with Diderot? What if "N."'s somewhat too boastful claim to have read the manuscript in its entirety could be explained, depending on our perspective, as either incriminating or, alternately, idealizing the real-life reader who, "près de six mois" after receiving "les deux premières parties de la Julie...ne les avoit pas encore lues"? Common to all these queries is the two-stage hypothesis whose verification will preoccupy us
throughout the remainder of our discourse with the already autobiographical in the *Entretien sur les romans*: after taking stock of all that which, in the *Entretien* at large, recalls, albeit inaccurately, the reality of Rousseau-Diderot relations, we shall examine the role of faulty recollection itself in defining a particularly Rousseauist practice of confession.

Implicated in our search for refracted realities is the entire course of the Diderot-Rousseau saga, as recounted after the fact and with varying degrees of objectivity by the participants themselves (in the *Tablettes* and *Confessions*, respectively), by such firsthand observers as pseudo-memorialist Mme d'Epinay (in her *Histoire de Mme de Montbrillant*), and by such recent exegetes as Jean Fabre (in his "Deux frères ennemis: Diderot et Jean-Jacques"). Our more immediate concern will be, however, for the pivotal chapter of that saga from which the *Entretien sur les romans* will have emerged and to which it in turn will have spoken. Like the whole from which we would now excerpt it, the episode in question, that of the supposed idyll's progressive but by no means linear deterioration into a nightmare of accusations and counter-accusations, has been, from the first, doubly constituted. As declared and demonstrated by Fabre, the particular fascination of Diderot-Rousseau relations lies in their having begun almost at the outset and continued to the last (that is, far beyond the point of empirical dissolution) to unfold simultaneously in each of two sometimes contradictory but mutually supplementary registers: extra-text, on the one hand, and text, on the other. From the moment of collaboration on the First *Discours*, the liaison knows of no interlude
which is absolutely pre-scriptural. The "real-life" story of these two "frères ennemis" is forever that of life lived literarily as well as literally.

Account must therefore be taken of "le rôle primordial tenu par la littérature dans une querelle où l'on a eu trop souvent tendance à la négliger." Though in fact buttressed for the most part by those later works of Diderot, particularly the Réponse à Helvétius and the Supplément au voyage de Bougainville, which may, by their philosophical orientation, be discovered to honor what was by then the memory of Rousseau, Fabre's argument of mutual interference between life and literature also applies, in theory, to the entirety of both Œuvres. Indeed, it is within the general framework of this argument that Guy Turbet-Delof, for one, has seen the novelistic conclusion of Rousseau's treatise on education as harkening back in anger to a note from the Deuxième entretien sur le fils naturel, and that, we, in turn, will read the Entretien sur les romans into a hybrid context of a querelle which will have engaged not only the persons of its participants but also and especially their prose. In short, the confrontation to be initiated by "R." and "N." is at one and the same time man-to-man (Rousseau vs. Diderot), text-to-text (Entretien vs. Entretiens) and text to man (Entretien vs. Diderot).

The specific multi-dimensional crisis to which the present Entretien responds is literally that of extra-literary dialogue's failure to materialize between Diderot and Rousseau on the subject of the latter's Nouvelle Héloïse. Not that any effort had been spared in the attempt to arrange such an encounter. On the contrary, though some of
the relevant missives have been lost, the extant Correspondance testifies in no uncertain terms to the protagonists' assiduity and that of their mutual confidants in making, and breaking, appointments for Julie-centered discussion. What would appear in retrospect to have been an unmitigated exercise in futility began promisingly enough with Diderot's reception, in January, 1757, of a manuscript containing the novel's first two books. In the normal course of events, submission of such a manuscript for approval by the master would have been followed in short order by a critical tête-à-tête with the longtime protégé. Only, this time there ensued nothing but a series of epistolary feints and parries whose immediate result was to delay the expected tutorial indefinitely.

Characteristic of the exchange at large is a letter from early March where Diderot uses the conditional to elaborate "future" projects, as though in anticipation of the fact that no such projects would ever be realized:

J'irois samedi vous chercher à St. Denis où nous dînerions, et delà nous nous rendrions à Paris dans le fiacre qui m'aurait amené. Et ces deux jours, savez-vous à quoi nous les employerions? A nous voir; ensuite à nous entretenir de votre Ouvrage [Julie]; nous discuterions les endroits où j'ai fait des marques auxquelles vous n'entendrez rien si nous ne sommes pas l'un vis à vis de l'autre.15

Whether in reference to the preceding invitation or to another like it, Rousseau countered, on March 16, with a general condemnation of Diderot's habitual failure to honor his engagements: "Il est vrai que quand vous avez promis de venir, je murmure de vous attendre toujours vainement; et quand vous me donnez des rendez-vous, de vous voir manquer à tous sans exception." By the same letter's end, however, for reasons which we
shall discuss presently, it is Rousseau who not only is refusing to discuss *Julie*: ("Il n'est pas question de mon ouvrage, et je ne suis plus en état d'en parler, ni d'y penser"), but is exhorting Diderot not to seek any further interviews whatsoever ("Si vous avez quelque respect pour une ancienne amitié, ne venez pas l'exposer à une rupture infaillible et sans retour"). So serious, in fact, is the rift that Rousseau directs the following day's two letters, not to Diderot himself, but to third party Mme d'Epinay, who is charged, in the earlier missive with stopping the philosopher at any cost: "Surtout que Diderot ne vienne pas," and later treated to the most dire of predictions about the meeting's outcome were it to be held:

Il [Diderot] s'excedera pour venir à pied me répéter les injures qu'il me dit dans ses lettres. Je ne les endurerais rien moins que patiemment; il s'en retournera être malade à Paris, et moi, je paroîtra un homme fort odieux.

It is small wonder, given this representative sampling of the dialogue's debacle that, within a week of the last-cited letter, Diderot had sent, not carried, the *Héloïse* manuscript back to Rousseau. Instead of commenting on the text, his cover letter merely explained his alleged reason for not doing so in person: "Je vous renvoie votre Manuscrit, parce qu'on m'a fait assez entendre qu'en vous le reportant, je vous exposerois à maltraiter votre ami," and reiterated once again the proposal which must by now have lost any semblance of credibility:

Si je ne vous éloigne point par ma visite, écrivez-le-moi, et j'irai vous voir, vous embrasser et conférer avec vous sur votre ouvrage. Il n'est pas possible que je vous en écrive. Cela serait trop long. Vous savez que je n'ai
que les mercredis et les samedis, et que les autres jours sont à la Chymie. Faites-moi signe quand vous voudrez et j'accourrai: mais j'attendrai que vous me fassiez signe.\textsuperscript{18}

Suffice it to say that, to our present knowledge, the sign in question was never tendered. Julie as original pretext to discussion long since doomed does not even figure in the response of March 26, where Rousseau writes as though to close the book once and for all on a former friendship: "quoi que vous puissiez faire, ce sera toujours un lien sacré pour mon cœur que celui de notre ancienne amitié," while, at the same time, like Diderot, placing the onus of closure on the other: "dussiez-vous m'insulter encore, je vous verrai toujours avec plaisir, quand la colère ne m'aveuglera pas."\textsuperscript{19}

It was not our purpose in reproducing this exchange to bemoan the depths of pettiness to which, in actuality, the "lien sacré" had sunk, or to portion out blame for its having done so. Much more important to our own discussion is the fact, little emphasized in prior accounts, that the crucial misunderstanding from which the empirical friendship would never fully recover manifested itself not merely in rendez-vous manqués but in rendez-vous manqués having as their explicit agenda a manuscript version of \textit{La Nouvelle Héloïse}. As the meeting itself receded further and further into the realm of impossibility, even the participants tended to lose sight of the novel whose function it should have been to serve as a theoretical meeting ground. And yet, the breakdown of dialogue was historically based throughout on life's repeated failure to provide the existential model for a specific \textit{entretien}. That the literary version of this \textit{entretien}, as conducted by "R."
"N.," should insist at the outset on its own fictionality is a pointed reminder that, though the text to come can, in fact, claim no objective correlative, such need not have been the case, if only....

If only Diderot had consented to play his accustomed role, Julie would have passed directly from his hands into Rousseau's with the words now pronounced by "N.": "Voilà votre Manuscrit" (p. 11). In the ensuing discussion, Diderot would have distinguished himself from the rest of the philosophical establishment by tempering his criticism with an indulgence born of affection and esteem, such that Rousseau, like "R.," would have been forced to concede: "Votre jugement est sévère; celui du Public doit l'être encore plus" (p. 14).

Regressive to the extent that it imagines Julie-centered discussion to have antedated that falling away from friendship which, in actuality, coincided with the absence of such discussion, the Entretien sur les romans furnishes an antithetical pendant to the prospective imaginings of the March 17 letter to Mme d'Epinay. Like the disaster foreseen, the idyll "recollected" compensates at the level of écriture for the nullity of dialogue as event. No more or less real, in fact, than the diabolical "Diderot" who, in the Correspondance version, would have seized the opportunity of the proposed entretien to fall ill and to blame his illness on Rousseau is the relatively benevolent "man of letters" who, in his dealings with "R.," resurrects, but only symbolically, the attitudes and comportment of an earlier "Diderot," now dead to dialogue.

Indeed, the initial "N." suggests, as does the character's response ("Vél duo, vel nemo") to the question of who will follow his lead in
finishing *Julie*, that the model to be imitated would himself be better characterized as a non-entity than as an Everyman of letters. Does the gesture of negation as inflicted on the person of "N." amount to a simple statement of fact, to an expression of regret for what might have been, or to a retaliatory measure against the guilty party? Is scriptor Rousseau acknowledging the reality of life without Diderot? is he writing Diderot back into his life or, alternately, writing him out once and for all? In support of the last possibility, we might, with Jean Fabre, recall Rousseau's seemingly pathological inability to refrain, when speaking of Diderot's characters, from distorting their names. Just as "Dorval" had become "Clairval," so too, by a transfer of aggression onto the author's own person, "Diderot" would now be condensed, displaced and, by implication at least, reduced to non-being. Within the context of this global repudiation, a less drastic reproach to the real-life Diderot is hinted at by "N.'s claim that he can and should be trusted with the secret of *Julie*'s parentage. That "R." should nonetheless have chosen to remain silent, a decision to which we have already attached various practical and philosophical motives, may also be imputed in part to the memory of past treachery by Diderot. It was he, after all, who, for divulging Rousseau's amorous feelings towards Sophie d'Houdetot, would later be indicted as "celui qui a révélé le secret."22

And yet, all the while that it is striking out against the absent interlocutor whose name is stricken from the record, the Entretien is also giving vent to the expression of a profound nostalgia. Most consistently figured by "R."'s indefatigable efforts at converting "N." to
his point of view, the need for approval by Diderot or, at least, for a chance to earn that approval would seem to coexist in an uneasy equilibrium with the equal and opposite need to dismiss the other's opinion and, with it, the other, as no longer deserving the least consideration.

Though we have in nowise exhausted the ambiguity of emotions clustered around the person of "N.," one thing should by now be abundantly clear: in the light of mutually corroboratory testimony from the Correspondance and from the Entretien sur les romans, it is more difficult than ever to take seriously Duclos' self-appointed role as artist's model for the fictional "man of letters." Can there be any doubt as to the greater validity of the "N."/Diderot identity? Should further proof be needed, it will be forthcoming from our imminent investigation into the Entretien's literary heritage.

So tangled, in fact, is the web woven by private and public writings in elaborating a context for Rousseau's dialogue that, in order to separate the two, we have had, thus far, to ignore large portions of the epistolary brouhaha over the ill-fated séance de lecture. Obscured by our selective quotation from the Correspondance, have been the origins of a quarrel which though literally centered on the Héloïse manuscript as potential intermediary and actual obstacle to discussion, derived its greater impetus from insults exchanged, not in person or even (at least initially) in letters, but rather between the covers of books.

Linking the intertextual to the interpersonal basis of misunderstanding is what would, in terms of both, turn out to have been a cataclysmic event, that of Rousseau's self-imposed exile at l'Hermitage. On the one hand, distance itself, especially when aggravated by the
extenuating circumstances of bad weather, ill health and unreliable transportation which both parties were so (suspiciously) quick to invoke, provided a permanent reason, or excuse, for non-frequentation and emotional estrangement. On the other, Rousseau's insistence on guarding that distance gave rise to the celebrated mot of *Le Fils naturel* in which the so-called "hermit," apparently with good reason, saw himself to be personally implicated: "Il n'y a que le méchant qui soit seul." If, in the letter of March 16 already quoted above, Julie's author professed himself no longer able to go through with the *entretien* as planned ("Il n'est pas question de mon ouvrage," and so forth), it was precisely because the *Correspondance* had, in the interval of deferment, become a kind of exegetical battleground where debate raged with increasing intensity as to what exactly Diderot had meant by the mot in question. Not content, however, to keep private what Diderot had made public, Rousseau tendered his definitive response in the equally celebrated note to his *Lettre à d'Alembert*: "J'avais un Aristarque sévère et judicieux. Je ne l'ai plus. Je n'en veux plus." Were the note itself not already sufficiently ambiguous in its very adamancy, it must surely have become so with the publication of the *Entretien sur les romans*. Who is "N.," in fact, if not a verbal reincarnation of the very Mentor whose services the Rousseau of the *Lettre à d'Alembert* would repudiate or, more likely—we have no evidence as to the *Entretien* 's precise date of composition—had already repudiated. Should we read into "'N.' ou le nouvel Aristarque" a gesture of regret? of reconciliation? of renewed reproach? In any case, Diderot could not fail, nor can we, to perceive the *Entretien* 's part in perpetuating a
texte-à-texte which, now as always, would find a way to transcend the barrier of apparent closure.

Lest he or we forget the sources from which it has sprung, the "R."/"N." dialogue alludes directly to the Lettre à d'Alembert and indirectly to Le Fils naturel. Taking decided exception to the practice of previous prefacers, "R," by now become "Rousseau en toutes lettres," goes out of his way to draw his non-novelistic and even anti-novelistic Lettre into the field of discussion. Does he intend, by proclaiming that text to be a repository of vérités, to include among them the farewell note to Diderot? If left unanswered, the question is certainly raised. So too is the question of whether Julie's Entretien should not be taken for a response in kind to the dialogic preface to Le Fils naturel. Whether his aim was to emulate or, conversely, to surpass his own past master and the universally acknowledged past master of dialogue, Rousseau would seem to have chosen his form with Diderot in mind. What might at first glance pass for a coincidence becomes less of one from the moment of our remarking that, as always careless with the details of the Diderot dossier, Rousseau will have remembered the inflammatory mot as having figured, not in the main corpus of Le Fils naturel, but rather in what was, like his own, a belatedly prefatory Entretien.25

Meanwhile, when referring to the novel's collected characters, "R." misses no opportunity of dubbing them "les Solitaires." (That the epithet will serve as well for that novelistic sequel to Emile which Turbet-Delof has linked with other passages from the Entretien sur le fils naturel indicates Rousseau's inability or unwillingness to forgive and forget the association of solitude with méchanceté.) Though Julie's
own greater or at least equal emphasis had been on the notion of internal solidarity, it is the relation of exteriority with respect to society at large which, in the Diderot-directed preface, becomes the essential key to understanding or, alternately, misunderstanding the Clarens community. Everything from Julie's fall to her exemplary conversion to her idiosyncratic language is attributable, at the last, to Rousseau's having beneficently removed her even farther from Paris than he had himself.

As with Julie, so with the novel's virtual readers: they have, like the heroine, been blessed with utter isolation from the Parisian philosophical establishment. Thus guaranteed against the siren song of those conventional novels whose essential crime, it will be recalled, is twice depicted by the Entretien as that of luring countryfolk to the capital city, Julie's ideal public serves in part to legitimize the empirical exile at l'Hermitage. The very disasters which the Entretien imagines to have befallen countless unsuspecting consumers of alienating fiction would, by implication at least, have been reserved for Rousseau himself, had he not put up so "heroic" a resistance to the repeated entreaties of such as Deleyre, self-styled peacemaker between Rousseau and Diderot. In the light of Deleyre's albeit playful threats to kidnap the hermit for purposes of transporting him bodily back to Paris and ideologically back to the philosophical circle (e.g., "M. Diderot et moi nous allons vous assiéger en forme au premier jour, et comme nous avons grande envie de vous amener captif à Paris, croyons que nous n'épargnerons rien pour vous forcer")26, it is small wonder that, as we noted above, the Entretien's geographical metaphors so clearly take the lead in figuring
the difference between nature and society. To the extent that it mirrors the author's existential situation, the rhetorical preeminence of space over time constitutes yet another of the veiled messages which the Entretien would seem to have directed to one in particular of its potential readers.

In fact, it is all but impossible, once the Entretien has been replaced in the combined context of letters both privately and publicly personal, to share Jean Fabre's view that, while Diderot's oeuvre would continue to the last to bear the imprint of former friendship with Rousseau, "Denis Diderot avait cessé d'exister pour Jean-Jacques, du jour où il en avait enseveli le souvenir sous quelques versets de l'Ecriture," that is to say, in the pseudo-farewell of the Lettre à d'Alembert. Unless Fabre is referring exclusively to concrete existence (and, even on this score, it should be pointed out that the estranged amis would in fact have occasion to meet again), his formula makes all too categorical what our investigation has shown to be, at the least, a matter of considerable ambiguity.

Collecting evidence of a "Diderot"-"N." connection has proved relatively unproblematical. More difficult by far is the task which awaits us now, that of assigning to the connection a specific meaning and a specific autobiographical function. Each new piece of evidence has presented us with virtually the same problem of interpretation: should a gesture be read as primarily elegiac which, at the same time, includes an unmistakable element of aggression? can the same "faulty" recollection" work at once to the credit and to the discredit of the being recollected? Apparently so. It is not so much to simplify as
to name the complexity of the *Entretien*’s confessional increment that we will act now on a further suggestion made by the initial "N." itself. As signified to *nemo*’s signifier, the initial permits of two slightly different readings: it might constitute the bearer as "no man," in which case one could suppose Rousseau to be repeating the ritual "burial" described by Fabre, but it might also designate, "no man in particular." In the latter instance, the personage of Diderot would itself point, as signifier, to a further link in the chain of being initiated by the fictional "man of letters." "N." would not so much refer to Diderot as refer through him to meaning of a higher or at least different order.

That the meaning in question should center on the transpersonal notion of paternity is, in a way, only logical, given those fundamental preoccupations of the prefatory corpus which we discussed in our Chapter III. With its insistence on establishing or, alternately, obscuring the identity of he who had originally fathered the prefaced novel, with its depiction of the "editorial" figure as a kind of foster father to otherwise homeless orphans, the master Preface had created a topical framework within which exploration could but rarely did take place into paternity’s less specific connotations.

In the case of Rousseau’s *Préface de Julie*, however, indications exist even at the level of particularly prefatory figuration that good use will have been made of access routes as yet little traveled. Rather than state the facts of the novel’s parentage, "editor" "R." seeks to elaborate the prefacer’s parental function. Whether it is as the "natural" or as the "adoptive" father of *Julie* that he speaks matters less than his assuming full responsibility, but not credit, for
the novel's imminent being in the world. In marked contrast to this idealized incarnation of fatherhood, there stands, also at the level of manifest content, a scathing indictment of parental tyranny. As we saw when compiling our catalogue of "morality," it is at their fathers' expense that Julie's sisters are finally exculpated by prefacer "R.": "c'est de l'inique despotisme des peres que viennent les vices et les malheurs des enfans" (p. 24). Though explicitly leveled at fathers from the world outside Julie, this indictment does not fail to implicate the novel's own baron d'Etange. At odds with prior portrayals of the baron both from the preface itself and from the correspondence proper, "R.‖'s anti-paternalistic moral combines with his own present aspirations to exemplary paternity to write a general question of fatherhood into the Préface de Julie's already extensive field of inquiry. Around the two-faced father figure—alternately biological and metaphorical in nature, malevolent and benign in function—there arise both a high degree of affectivity and an essential ambiguity.

In the economy of the Entretien, the task of elaborating the paradigm of paternity falls to that allegory of readership which, without saying so, we have already discovered to be para-confessional. On this score, as on that of Julie's prehistory, the allegory supplements a pointed refusal of explicitly autobiographical narration by somehow projecting onto hypothetical third parties (what would later be confessed as) relations lived by Rousseau himself. If the creation process will have been identical which gives life, here, to a community of readers and, in the Confessions, to the Clarens community itself, so too will the Entretien have prefigured confessional treatment of
Rousseau's own biological father. More specifically, by what it does and does not say, the allegory alludes already to that inaugural scene of the *Confessions* which, in their preoccupation with the absent mother, so many critics have failed to recognize as "un discours qui porte essentiellement sur le père."  

Corrected by Nicole Kress-Rosen in her "Réalité du souvenir et vérité du discours," this collective misreading derives no doubt from the absence of counterparts "on the paternal side" to that seemingly endless chain of women which the forthcoming *Confessions* will explicitly designate as mother surrogates. The obsessive quest to come for a signifier adequate to the task of undoing the maternal signified's original non-being makes it seem indeed that, in the words of Philippe Lejeune, "ce n'est pas tant la figure de la mère qui est absente dans la vie de Jean-Jacques (au contraire on la lit partout), que celle du père." And yet, if the *Entretien sur les romans* is any indication, "celle du père" is perhaps not so much really "absente" as absent in name only. The insistent anonymity of "N." may be symptomatic of a condition reserved congenitally for all avatars of Issac inscribed within the Rousseauist master text.

But we anticipate. With respect to the father figure, the allegory begins on a decidedly positive note. Unlike young "Jean-Jacques," the ideal reader experiences no need to flee from the father or from the (literal and figurative) fatherland. On the contrary, "[c]ombien d'honnêtes gens passent leur vie dans des campagnes éloignées à cultiver le patrimoine de leurs pères" (p. 22). What follows looks very much, however, like an attempt on the part of Rousseau to write himself
out of that primal scene of father-son novel-reading whose responsibility for irreversible folie is described elsewhere in the Entretien.

(Of course, as befits a text where confession, though abundant, is never direct, "R." identifies, not himself, but others as the past and potential victims of alienating fiction.) The novel-reading scene presented here corresponds, detail for detail, with the one which would occupy the Confessions' opening pages. In both instances, the couple is isolated ("dépourvus de sociétés"); the setting, nocturnal ("Durant les longues nuits d'hiver..."); the reading itself, an avowed substitute for love-making ("la nuit de lecture à la place de la nuit d'amour" is the way Lejeune puts it with reference to the Confessions text). So perfect indeed is their parallelism that the two would be identical but for a single difference which makes all the difference. Replacing the remembered father-son pairing with a couple comprised of "deux époux" serves, on the one hand, to negate the guilt-ridden act of assuming a role which should naturally have fallen to the mother. But beyond that, the substitution restores generational parity between the parties to dialogue and deprives the remaining male of his paternal function.

Why, indeed, should Rousseau have evoked his own past experience, if not to relive its happier side, while at the same time rewriting its unresolved ugliness into oblivion. Having not as yet taken the vow of literal confession which would be formalized in the Entretien's penultimate moments, Rousseau remains free here to avenge himself not only of the biological father but also and especially of what that father would have come to mean. Aggressively as well as actually
paternal, the "auteur de [ses] jours" would, in the Confessions scene, have originated a model of authoritarian behavior defined in its essence by absolute mastery over the realm of language. "Parlons de ta mère;" the brevity of what Kress-Rosen has shown to be the quintessentially paternal speech act belies its importance as a résumé of all that which, in the father-son relation, Rousseau will find unbearable.31 Helpless to disobey the command to linguistic performance, the son is further placed in the position of speaking about something of which he has no firsthand knowledge, and so, must pass off the other's words as his own. Additional pressure is exerted on the protégé, meanwhile, by the exacting mentor's all too obvious emotional investment in the success of performance. Viewed from this perspective, the call to novel-reading becomes an exemplary extension of the father's linguistic dominance: as experienced by the son at the father's behest, l'Astrée and La Calprenède only aggravate what is already an irreversible alienation in language.

But if "Issac" incarnates the primal instance of this alienation, his literal demise by no means restores "Jean-Jacques" to prelinguistic purity. On the contrary, the biological father's reign of benevolent despotism is consolidated and carried forward under a whole series of metaphorical patriarchs among whom Diderot stands out as at once the most loved and the most feared. It is Diderot, after all, who will be charged with inaugurating the further fall away from being which occurs with the transfer of linguistic activity from speech to writing. Completing the exhortation to speech about the mother is that, more terrible still in its long-range implications, ("dès cet
instant je fus perdu") to write about the moral repercussions of arts and sciences, to "donner l'essor à mes idées and to "concourir au prix." In the dungeon of Vincennes, "Jean-Jacques" reverts to the posture of filial docility for which the Geneva nights had so well prepared him. Though its site and specifications have changed, the ancestral stronghold remains intact: henceforth, "Diderot" will supervise the production of texts, just as "Issac" had supervised, on the one hand, the consumption of actual romans and, on the other, the jongolesque perpetuation of oral traditions regarding the mother. Inordinate hopes once invested in the favored younger son will be reinvested in the genial apprentice on whom "Diderot" and, with him, the entire philosophical community will count to spread a word which is basically not his but theirs.

Such, in short, was the price to be paid for the right of return to dialogue with the father. Such, the only conditions under which the quasi-erotic intimacy of tête-à-têtes with "Issac" could be recreated in the "entretiens de ce vertueux Philosophe [Diderot]" whose friendship Rousseau remembers, before the split, as constituting "la gloire et le bonheur de ma vie." That this friendship, like the familial relation on which it is modeled, should be recollected as a series of dialogic moments, rather than as an unbroken continuum, that the meeting of minds should be most adequately figured by the evocation of actual meetings is of capital importance to our current discussion. This propensity toward "scenic" portrayal (the entire unfolding of the Confessions will, of course, be structured by the alternation between two distinct narrative modes, with scenes predominating at
the outset and all but suppressed at the last) places a final stamp of
verisimilitude on our reading of the Entretien as an elegiac text of
the first magnitude. Itself the fictional "report" of a single iso-
lated encounter, the Entretien participates after the fact of bona fide
confession, in the power of other such emblematic encounters to con-
dense the whole of an obsessive lived relation. Highly affective in
its own right, the "memory" of Julie-centered discourse with surrogate
father Diderot comes into even greater focus and force through its
obvious structural affinity with the as yet unwritten "original" memory
of discourse with the biological father about the mother's novels and
the mother as novel.

Is it any wonder, this being the case, that the entire course of
the present Entretien can be charted in terms of what the Confessions
will have designated as the most primitive of all generational con-
flicts, namely the struggle for mastery over the discourse? From the
moment of "R."'s enjoining "N." to linguistic performance with the
peremptory "je veux un jugement positif" (p. 11), the mechanism is set
in motion which will wreak the son's revenge on the composite father
who had initiated ("Parlons de ta mère") and then compounded ("Il
[Diderot] m'exhorte de donner l'essor à mes idées et de concourir au
prix") the irrevocable fall into language. With the profoundly dire
prediction: "Ainsi, j'arracheraï toutes vos réponses avant que vous
m'ayez repondu" (p. 11), Rousseau's fictional spokesman turns the
tables on the flesh-and-blood arracheurs de paroles held accountable
for reducing his alter ego to the ignominious status of beau parleur.
In the ensuing rejoinders, everything from the anonymity which
precludes "N." from speaking "in his own name" to the obstinate mutism which greets his every inquiry into Julie's origins, contributes to the same righting of past wrongs through an ongoing enactment of poetic justice.

It is, however, in that Dostoievskian climax to dialogue where, the pretext of Julie dropped, "seules comptent les relations entre les deux hommes,"^34 that the struggle for dominance of the discourse attains its maximum of immediacy, intensity and, finally, ambiguity. On the one hand, "R." would seem, by his ready compliance with "N."'s suggestion that the dialogue be transcribed for use as a preface, to be relinquishing his newfound mastery and reverting to that role of submissive son which would, despite it all, have maintained its original fascination. On the other, the fact that he alone will have done the transcribing restores "R."/Rousseau to a position of relative mastery which in reality he could never enjoy so long as "N."/Diderot insisted on testifying firsthand to the "true" nature of relations between the two. There can be no transcending this refusal at the last to relinquish either the possibility of nostalgia or that, its polar opposite, of revenge. Rather, in a final recourse to the by now well-established practice of rejecting alternatives, the self-declared "entretien suppose" permits its author to (re)write himself into a paradoxical state of grace. Where else but in a compensatory fiction could Rousseau remain faithful to fathers "Issac" and "Diderot," while at the same time denying them, and assuming for himself, their essentially paternal function?

Much more could be said about the configuration of paternity
elaborated with implicit reference to Rousseau's lived experience by Julie's preface in conjunction with Julie itself. For example, generally viewed as an exact philosophical counterpart to literal flight from Diderot's sphere of influence, La Nouvelle Héloïse would then have been doubled by a post-scriptum which, by its own double nature, both furthers that flight and, as a fiction of return, negates or at least regrets it. And what of the novel's own obsession with that fatherhood which is, on the one hand, denied perpetual adolescent and metaphorical Abélard, Saint-Preux, and, on the other, transferred intact from biological father M. d'Etange to father surrogate Wolmar, who, having literally saved the baron's life, is rewarded both with the power to propagate and with apparent linguistic mastery over the Clarens community? Indeed, establishing Wolmar as a further link in the open-ended representational chain stretching from "N." to "Issac" by way of "Diderot" would go a long way towards explaining why, Rousseau's own emphatic protestations to the contrary, reader reaction to the character should be, if not universally negative, at least ambivalent. The revenge motif would account, meanwhile, for the fact that father Wolmar's control over discourse, as carried to new extremes of refinement by his script-writing for therapeutic encounters between the child(hood) lovers, should finally be exposed as having been, all the while, illusory.

And so forth. Our purpose here was not to exhaust the topos, but merely to identify it as a determining factor in the intertextual universe of La Nouvelle Héloïse and, more specifically, in what we have come to know as the Entretien sur les romans' autobiographical
sub-text. After all, the abiding interest of the "N."/Diderot paral-
elism established at the outset of this most recent rereading has
little to do with the methodical enumeration of one-to-one correspon-
dences. The rereading began to make real sense only when it ceased
to be allegorical and became metaphorical, that is to say, when the
"N."/Diderot dyad was absorbed into the broader context of fatherhood
rewritten. It was only then that a name could be bestowed on the
problematical ambiguity surrounding the figure of "'N.' ou le nouvel
Aristarque," only then that we could appreciate, in all its complexity,
the role played by compensatory distortion in a confessional master
text already in progress at the moment of its formulation as project.
What more paradigmatic illustration of memory's many modes and the
memorialist's many moods than the Entretien sur les romans' polyva-
lent reenactment of dialogue with at least two fathers. Regret, re-
venge, regression, resignation, rehabilitation—all play a part in
elaborating the nominal "fiction" which, more poignantly by far than
the Confessions' own straightforwardly narrative accounts, mourns the
unspoken absence of neo-paternal figure Diderot and of his entretiens.
Inscribed in the invisible interspace between dialogic and monologic
prefaces, resumed in the initial of negation, alluded to indirectly
in individual rejoinders seeming to signify elsewhere and in an over-
all struggle for mastery of the discourse, that absence is no less
really felt for having, itself, been relegated to silence. On the
contrary, nothing better conveys a sense of loss than does the ubi-
quitous process of (dis)figuration responsible for rendering literary
those relations which we first read in the Correspondance's explicitly
referential version. And nothing better forewarns us against the further influence of disfiguration on the avowed autobiography than does that *Entretien* whose admitted fictionality constitutes a license to do extremely what the *Confessions* will perforce do more discreetly.

Finding a Form: The Preface Rewritten in *Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques*

It is not merely by its manipulation of content, however, that the *Entretien sur les romans* proves, in retrospect, to have acted compensatorily. On the contrary, we need only look beyond the *Confessions* to the subsequent *Dialogues* to appreciate that the act of writing a loss coincides, in the *Entretien*, with that of finding a form. The very gestures by which Rousseau conceals, in order better to reveal, the death of dialogue as an existential reality also record his discovery of dialogue as a literary convention relatively, if not absolutely, adequate to the further elaboration of truths about the self. Awaiting the newfound form is a responsibility tremendous by any standards, but especially by Rousseau's: implicated only indirectly in the present *entretien suppose*, the author's own person will be explicitly entrusted to dialogue when the focal point of discourse shifts from his dear Julie to the even more near and dear "Jean-Jacques."

So marked, in fact, is the formal parallelism between the earlier and later dialogues that it is difficult to imagine why this, like the parallelism between "N." and Diderot, has gone more or less unacknowledged by previous readers. Michèle Ansart-Dourlen comes close to
making the connection when she affirms that "... dans les Dialogues sont repris les mêmes thèmes essentiels que dans la Nouvelle Héloïse." The affinities are, to be sure, unmistakable between the intra-novelistic community, and the monde idéal evoked at intervals throughout Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques and progressively identified as the spiritual domain in which "Jean-Jacques" himself must be understood to have taken refuge. But to concentrate exclusively on these affinities would be to ignore that Julie's own preface already linked the belles âmes of Clarens with a company of kindred souls, in the persons of the ideal readers who, for reasons to be elaborated below, speak more pertinently even than do the novel's originals to the Dialogues' so-called "êtres surlunaires." Why not, given this sharing of "thèmes essentiels" between novel and preface, admit the latter to be the better qualified for dialogue with the Dialogues? All things being more or less equal at the level of manifest content, why not seize the opportunity of formal coincidence to evaluate the role of structure in the making of sense and, more specifically, in the determination of Rousseauist singularity? It is time, in short, that, with regard to the intermittent dialogism of Rousseau's master text for truth-telling, we correct the critical error of omission described in general terms by Philippe Lejeune:

[l']expérience montre que l'expression de la singularité est envisagée comme un problème de contenu ... ou comme un problème de style ... mais très rarement comme un problème de structure du texte.37

Dialogue--so what? The question would beg inclusion in the exegetical
repertoire even had Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques had nothing more in common with the Entretien sur les romans than a basic means of expression rendered "typical" by its deployment on two separate occasions. In reality, however, the overall division of discourse between two speakers is but the most telling indicator of such partial and portentous correspondences as will be yielded by an initial superimposition of the one dialogue on the other.

By no means confined to internal structure or even to structure per se, the parallelism will be further extended to encompass not only the immediate contextual situation of each dialogue, but also the preoccupation of both with the theory and practice of hermeneutics. It is at this point in our reading that resemblance now reinforced will become a source of mutually illuminating difference. However much they would seem to be patterned on the earlier spectacle of interpretation, the Dialogues nevertheless diverge therefrom in ways involving the spectacle's every aspect: interpreter(s), interpreted and, as Charles Sanders Peirce would say, "interpretant." From the sum of these divergencies, there will thus emerge some important footnotes to the intratextual model predicated in our Chapter II on the sole basis of the Entretien sur les romans. Though expanded and emphatically confirmed at the level of essences, that model will perforce, when tested for existential validity, receive only qualified support from Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques.

Laying the groundwork for our eventual perception of difference are a pair of three-term relationships so analogous as to constitute,
between them, what might be labeled the degré zéro local of dialogue in Rousseau. Debate takes place, on the one hand, between "R." and "N." with respect to Julie, and, on the other, between "Rousseau" and "LeFrançois" with respect to "Jean-Jacques." In both instances, moreover, a horizon of interpretation is actively invoked which mediates the encounter of the interpreting couple with the object to be interpreted: Julie will be read against a backdrop of earlier fictions responsible for falsifying the records of humanity in general; "Jean-Jacques," against a backdrop of "lies" told in speech and in print about one man in particular. The novelistic corpus conspires no less than does the hypothetical web of deceit known simply as le complot to make immediate apprehension of understanding's respective objects a practical impossibility.

Where these objects themselves are concerned, it is impossible, even at the moment of rapprochement, to overlook an obvious and potentially revealing discrepancy in nature: with the substitution of "Jean-Jacques" for Julie, a living being comes into that vertex of the archetypal triangle formerly occupied by a written artifact. And yet, in order that difference be staved off temporarily, we need only recall that "Jean-Jacques" himself had acceded to textuality with the writing of Les Confessions. Like the Préface de Julie, the Dialogues have as their pretext a bona fide pre-text. Highly suggestive in its own right, the "Pléiade" editors' decision to make the Dialogues a direct sequel to the autobiography proper is justified and even demanded by the facts of the case. Numerous explicit references to the Confessions qualify Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques for service
as a kind of préface annexe. Among those references, one in particular underscores the identity of situation between Julie, on the one hand, and the Confessions, on the other: the necessity of exposing "des mensonges qui en donnent l'air à ses Confessions" (p. 903) corresponds here to that of giving the lie to "N."'s literally constituted criteria for reading Julie.

Dialogue, then, is twice summoned to redress the wrongs of misinterpretation committed (or alleged to have been committed) against a narrative text already in existence. Or, as Benveniste might have put it, discours (à deux) comes to the aid of histoire. (In neither case, of course, are the two categories mutually exclusive: the Confessions contain a goodly dosage of discours; Julie is, in fact, "narrative" only to the extent that an unbroken story line may be extrapolated from the epistolary discourse of its various characters.) To be sure, the temporal ambiguity is lacking in the Confessions-Dialogues sequence which derived from the Préface de Julie's having actually been written prior to publication of the novel; where "R." only anticipated the worst, for "Rousseau," the doomsday of universal misprision will already have come and gone. Though contributory to the later dialogues' greater sense of pessimism, the discrepancy is, nonetheless, more apparent than real.

On the one hand, the call will already have gone out from within the Confessions, if not for the Dialogues themselves, at least for something resembling them. Specifically responsible, in this instance, for the creation of "prefatory" space is the autobiography's pre-recorded failure to speak unequivocally in its own name to that
intratextual audience which, in the Confessions' final paragraph, greets protagonist "Rousseau"'s experimental "lecture de [sa] déclaration" with the "silence" of utter incomprehension. The prescription has, from the first, been written for such mediation as the Dialogues will eventually provide. Lest we forget it, the primal scene of misinterpretation which is the basis for their being is recalled in the Dialogues' own allusions to the Confessions as "cette œuvre unique dont il [Jean-Jacques] a profané la lecture en la prodiguant aux oreilles les moins faites pour l'entendre" (p. 859). By the same token, the implication is there in the final decision to follow through with deferred publication of the Préface de Julie that, in Julie's case as well, a genuine need had been created for dialogue's special brand of revisionary reading.

Nor should we be detained at this point by the knowledge that, of the two discours, the first was appended to a fiction, the second, to what purports to be a true account of life actually lived. Given the Préface de Julie's strategies for defictionalizing Julie or, at the very least, clouding the issue, to say nothing of the Confessions' own departures, avowed and unavowed, from fact, it is clearly discours, and not fiction, which here constitutes the more operative alternative to histoire. Rousseau himself says as much when, in both instances, he designates for the prefatory discourse a public different from the one which had read and enjoyed the prefaced narrative. To the shift in literary registers from narrative to discursive, there corresponds, within each sequence, an increase in instruction at the expense of amusement, and hence, a smaller, more selective virtual readership.
With respect to plans for distributing the Préface de Julie, Rousseau writes as follows to Coindet: "Je n'en donne point à M. du Bettier, ni à ces dames, parce que cette brochure est pour les gens de lettres, ce n'est plus un roman." (Obviously, "roman" cannot be taken here as synonymous with "fiction," since the "entretien" itself is declared from the outset to be only "supposé.") Likewise, a warning is extended by the preambulatory "Du sujet et de la forme de cet écrit" to all who, having read the Confessions, would mistake the imminent Dialogues for a mere continuation in the same (narrative) vein:

Quant à ceux qui ne veulent qu'une lecture agréable et rapide, ceux qui n'ont cherché, qui n'ont trouvé que cela dans mes Confessions, ceux qui ne peuvent souffrir un peu de fatigue ni soutenir une attention suivie pour l'intérêt de la justice et de la vérité, ils feront bien de s'épargner l'ennui de cette lecture (p. 666).

That the Préface de Julie's audience ("les gens de lettres") should have been preselected on a strictly professional basis, and that of the Dialogues ("ceux qui peuvent souffrir un peu de fatigue...pour l'intérêt de la justice et de la vérité") on the basis of unusual moral aptitude certainly denotes a difference in the degree of misanthropy to which the two prefacers are willing to admit, but does not negate their shared insistence on the fundamental discontinuity between narrative and dialogue, histoire and discours.

Also shared by the two, or so they would have us believe, is a reluctance to commit the discursive text to print. We have already had occasion to recall those of Rousseau's on-again-off-again plans for publishing the Préface de Julie which are detailed in the
Correspondance and resumed in the eventual "Avertissement." Not to be outdone, his counterpart in "Du sujet et de la forme de cet écrit" will claim as well to have been tempted by the (im)possibility of total suppression: "Un silence fier et dédaigneux est en pareil cas plus à sa place, et eût été bien plus de mon goût; mais il n'aurait pas rempli mon objet,..." (p. 665). As to the reasons for dialogist Rousseau's making this pose "characteristic," we can only surmise. Granted, that generalized desire to abstain from any and all écriture which was formulated by "R." ("C'est encore lui [à la vérité] rendre honneur que de déclarer qu'on la veut taire") is emphatically reiterated by the Dialogues' many expressions of disdain, even horror, for the corrupt and corrupting "métier d'Auteur" (p. 673). But where the two préfaces-annexes themselves are specifically concerned, publication would seem also to have been conceived as tantamount to an explicit admission of prior inadequacy: had Julie and "Jean-Jacques" been absolutely accessible on their own terms, no opening would have been created for their respective exegetical appendices. Nor would the need have arisen for actively diverting the entire onus of misinterpretation from the prefaced text onto its readership, yet another area where "Rousseau" carries the practice of "R." to its logical extreme. Passages like the one which begins as follows exculpate the Confessions at their readers' expense, but remain powerless to undo the actual fact of mutual misunderstanding: "Ils [vos Messieurs] ont travesti ses défauts [ceux de Jean-Jacques] en vices, ses fautes en crimes, les foiblesses de sa jeunesse en noirceurs de son age mûr" (p. 903).
In fact, a second source of reluctance to publish has less to do with failure recorded than with failure foreseen. Both the post-novelistic and the post-confessional dialogues are, in short, doomed, the Précis de Julie, like Julie, by implication, the Dialogues, like the Confessions, in so many words. As a solution, dialogue is only temporary; though it can and does recur, the dialogistic moment is, in itself, fleeting. Why else, indeed, should Rousseau have continued to disparage the préface dialoguée even after its publication unless he himself no longer believed in its potential efficaciousness?

According his greater favor to the dialogue's monologic reworking was one way of suggesting that, in what the autobiographical sequence would prove to be the "normal" course of events, discours à deux supplants histoire, only to be supplanted in its turn by discours pure and simple.

The time has come, in other words, for amplifying our basic analogy by the addition of a third item to each of the sequences already in place. On the one hand, the "first" Précis, on the other, the Rêveries du promeneur solitaire expand the narrative/dialogue dyad into a narrative/dialogue/monologue triad of texts. For whatever reason (I hesitate to join with Christie McDonald in assigning precise descriptive titles to each of the architext's three moments), dialogue thus comes to occupy a mediate position between a story already told and a soliloquy already foretold. Indeed, if what might be called the "Rhétorique du préfacier (aggressively) solitaire" lies in wait within that Précis de Julie which it contents itself with condensing and displacing, so, more tellingly still, the Dialogues'
"Jean-Jacques" is reported by alter ego "Rousseau" to have long since become "[a]ccoutumé à ses douces rêveries" (p. 859). A scission within the authorial persona, about which much more will be said later on, permits two moments of the sequence to be presented simultaneously. "Jean-Jacques" having already acceded to monologism, "Rousseau" lags behind to dissert, dialogistically, on the other's nascent "passion pour la promenade" (p. 845). Is it any wonder, in view of the Dialogues' extended analyses of rêverie as "currently" practiced by "Jean-Jacques," that the rêveries proper should begin with a sentence: "Me voici donc seul sur la terre...," whose logical articulation, "donc," supposes a textual antecedent?  \[42\]

Though its tenure is short and its word, far from final, dialogue does, however, take advantage of its two major appearances to contribute a chapter "all its own" to the Rousseauist master text. As we might have suspected from our initial reading of the Préface de Julie (see Chapter II), that chapter has to do, in large measure, with the theory and practice of interpretation. (From this perspective, the narrative and monologic moments may be thought of, in relative terms, as pre- and post-interpretational, respectively.) Were there any doubt at this point as to the existence of semantic correlates for the structural parallelism between Préface de Julie and Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques, that doubt would be dramatically dispelled by the first (of several) passages charged with elaborating reader "Rousseau"'s own personal code of conduct. "[C]onsultez la disposition de coeur où ces lectures vous mettent," he urges "Le François;" "c'est cette disposition qui vous éclairera sur leur véritable sens" (p. 695).
Where have we heard those words, or some very like them, before? Who else will already have gone on record as having no other "maniere de juger de ses Lectures que de sonder les dispositions où elles laissent son ame"? But of course, "Rousseau"'s is none other than the law of reading laid down by Julie herself and adopted for his own use and (perhaps) "N.'s by prefacer "R.". Now bearing the further authorization of a latter-day "Rousseau en toutes lettres," the formula thus forges an identity of purpose, and philosophy, between Préface de Julie and Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques. Not only will the two have shared a common preoccupation with understanding, but for the moment at least, understanding will have been understood by both in precisely the same terms.

Among the many ramifications of resemblance thus written out in so many words, the most interesting are those which either grow out of or give birth to mutually illuminating difference. By the mere fact of their greater length and explicitness, for example, the Dialogues promote to inevitability a reading, our first, of the Entretien, which owing to that text's somewhat impressionistic rendering and (illusory) confinement to the master Preface, might otherwise have remained optional, even excessive. To the extent that its embryonic philosophy of interpretation will later have been not only endorsed but more fully elaborated, the Préface de Julie cannot help but be credited, in hindsight, with outlining an authentic hermeneutical adventure. Conversely, whatever exception might previously have been taken to our emphasis on that seeming detail among others which was Julie's (now "Rousseau"'s) law is discredited in turn by the Dialogues' own insistent invocation.
Indeed, so unrelenting, and persuasive, are "Rousseau"'s pleas for universal passage, that the law is finally endorsed, in letter and in spirit, by the Dialogues' initially hostile "François." "Rousseau"'s interlocutor comes out officially, where "R."'s never did, in favor of that ideally engaged critical stance which, since Julie, had consisted in judging books in accordance with the "dispositions" where they left the reader's "âme." Says the latest convert to his spiritual director:

...j'examinois comme vous l'avez désiré dans quelles dispositions d'amé elles [les lectures des livres de "Jean-Jacques"] me mettoient et me laissoient, jugeant comme vous que c'étoit le meilleur moyen de pénétrer celle où étoit l'Auteur en les écrivant et l'effet qu'il s'étoit proposé de produire (p. 930).

That a perfect accord has been reached on this score by the two parties to discussion is made manifest by the almost identical wording of "Rousseau"'s original recommendation:

...lisez vous-même les livres dont il s'agit et sur les dispositions où vous laissera leur lecture jugez de celle où étoit l'Auteur en les écrivant et de l'effet qu'ils doivent produire quand rien n'agira pour le détourner (p. 697).

Meanwhile, however, a major change in focus has been injected into the law as drafted by Julie and supported by "R." The moment of explicit and emphatic authorization coincides, in the Dialogues, with that of amendatory displacement having as its precise goal direct involvement of the author in the interpretative experience. Left hors du jeu by reader Julie's avowed end, "juger de [ses] Lectures" in and of themselves (p. 261), the author's own dispositions
have here become the privileged signifieds for those of the reader. The actual text has, in other words, become a pretext, a means to the end of reading the writer; interpretation has set as its new goal that of judging, not the inscription, but the scriptor. That the specific scriptor in question throughout the Dialogues has been none other than "Jean-Jacques" validates Starobinski's claim that Rousseau "ne nous demande pas seulement de lire et aimer ce qu'il écrit mais de l'aimer dans ce qu'il écrit." The autobiographical adventure originates with the Confessions-Dialogues-Réveries sequence only to the extent that passages like the present addenda to Julie's law displace the ends of interpretation, and so, act (prefatorily) to qualify the entire œuvre for service in safeguarding the signs of self.

Far from arbitrary, the Dialogues' recasting of Julie's law is, in fact, dictated by the context of interpretation in action. To the original version, there corresponded a sphere of immediate application, the Préface de Julie, in which a book, Julie, constituted the only textually designated object to be interpreted. Perfectly adequate to the needs of "R." and "N.," that version could not, however, survive intact so radical a transformation in the nature of the triangle's third term as that instituted by the replacement of Julie by "Jean-Jacques." At once a text and a creator of texts, the doubly constituted object of discussion between "Rousseau" and "Le François" demands to be judged by new and different criteria, criteria capable finally of restoring him, not it, to unity.

But we anticipate. Before entering further into the specifics of text-to-text disagreement, we should pause to consider the general
implications to be derived from the tailoring of Julie's law to Julie, and "Rousseau"'s to "Jean-Jacques." Indeed, that the ends of reading should have diverged, however slightly, as a function of divergences in the reading matter at hand is but the most obvious clue to articulating the difference which, despite their pronounced formal parallelism, separates Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques from the Entretien sur les romans. A direct relation would seem already to have been established between what each text says, and what it does about interpretation. So far, so good. Only the "what" of saying and that of doing happen far to exceed the respective one-sentence laws, on the one hand, and the Julie/"Jean-Jacques" dyad, on the other. Confirming the relation between theory and practice will thus require that we examine for possible discrepancies each of the couples which, in addition to Julie/"Jean-Jacques," figure in the twice-told tale of dialogistic reading. What distinguishes "Le François" from "N.?" "Rousseau" from "R.?" "Jean-Jacques" from Julie? the apochryphal "roman de Jean-Jacques" from the corpus of conventional romans? Those questions answered, it will remain to ask what kind of trace, if any, such distinctions will have left in the considerable portion of the Dialogues which addresses itself directly to the problem of interpretation. Why is it, precisely, that Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques conveys an impression of greater pessimism than does the Préface de Julie? How does it happen that the same text which, of the two, proves the more eager to invoke Julie's (revised) law, also acts, if not exactly to revoke it, at least to raise serious doubts about its fitness to serve as the sole theoretical basis for the
present and future practice of reading?

Less drastic perhaps than the metamorphosis of Julie into "Jean-Jacques," changes at the interpretative triangle's "M."/"Le Frangois" vertex nevertheless provide an important initial measure of the distance traversed between Entretien and Dialogues. In terms, first, of the interpersonal drama played out in our preceding section, the interval between "R.'s interlocutor and "Rousseau"'s is marked by a vast reduction in tension-producing affect. If the Entretien took place in the irremediable aftermath of heterosexual love (long since dead to dialogue, Julie figures there only as a kind of desexualized legislator, one whose law is itself committed to indirect discourse), the Dialogues will in turn have been temporally located, at a double remove from love, in the irremediable aftermath of friendship.

Significantly enough, the relationship with "Le Frangois" persists over a period of time comprising three separate encounters, and even the first of these does not, as did the Entretien, constitute an ex nihilo beginning. Rather, from the moment of "Le Frangois"'s own allusion to "les entretiens que nous venons d'avoir" (p. 668), the so-called "Premier Dialogue" becomes a mere continuation of discussions already in progress. With the increase in duration comes a proportionate decrease in emotional intensity; extended beyond the moment, dialogue becomes, figuratively speaking, less momentous. In the modal economy of Rousseauist autobiography, the man-to-man talk has been demoted from ritual status to an in-between of ritual and routine. And rightly so. It is no longer a question here of using the interlocutor to work out ambivalent
feelings towards his real-life counterparts. Those feelings have by now passed from the arena of pre-conscious drama to that of self-conscious discourse. It is in so many words that friendship will here be alternately rejected ("Revenu de cette douce chimère de l'amitié dont la vaine recherche a fait tous les malheurs de ma vie,...je me suis retiré au dedans de moi," [p. 727]), and regretted ("...d'anciens amis qu'il [Jean-Jacques] regrette et dans lesquels il semble encor chercher les consolations qui lui manquent," [p. 725]). Whatever nostalgia remains for dialogue with the literal or figurative father is but a pale reflection of that to which the Entretien gave vent. The door closed once and for all on the possibility of affective ties to the literal Other, the locus of friendship will, in fact, have been transferred from the interpreter/interpreter ("R."/"N.") duet to that which is established, within the Dialogues, between interpreter and interpreted ("Rousseau"/"Jean-Jacques"). Thanks to the rhetorical bifurcation whose multiple resonances will concern us later on, "Rousseau" is now in a position to satisfy his affective needs with none other than alter ego "Jean-Jacques." "Je me livrois à l'espoir de retrouver en lui tout ce que j'avais perdu" (p. 729) is the way the authorial persona recounts his desire, all else having failed, to make friends, strange though it may seem, with himself!

All this to say that, unlike "N.," "Le François" falls outside the Rousseauist subtext of friendship lost. Or rather, his identity informs that subtext only to the extent that it is predicated on the loss already recorded in the Entretien sur les romans. And yet, the worst is still to come. With the casting change which substitutes
"Le François" for "N."/"Nemo," the tragedy of No Man opens onto the grimly realistic drama of confrontation with Everyman. Accordingly, the Dialogues' greater emphasis is not so much on mourning the passing of a single benevolent reader as on making present, in his stead, a readership of universal and active malice. The adversary relationship between interlocutors has been aggravated and acknowledged to the point where "Le François" can claim in tones of righteous indignation never to have read "une seule ligne" of works bearing "cet odieux nom" of "Jean-Jacques" (p. 679). This telling difference in detail (it will be recalled that "N." claimed, on the contrary, to have read "R."'s manuscript "tout entier") bodes ill for the virtual readership which "Rousseau," following in "R."'s footsteps, will designate for the texts of "Jean-Jacques" and for "Jean-Jacques" as text.

In this regard, it is the generic name, "Le François," which, from the outset, renders the Entretien's geographical antithesis inoperative. Whether the reader is of the city or of the country no longer makes a difference in the nature of his reading; distance from the capital no longer functions as a guarantee of greater receptivity. "Le François"'s hostility to "Jean-Jacques" is that of an entire nation, "sans distinction de rang, d'âge, de sexe, de caractère, et sans exception aucune" (p. 704). It is for naught that "R." has compiled a detailed demographic profile of the potentially friendly reader. Such an animal, it turns out, does not really exist; or if it did for Julie, it no longer does for "Jean-Jacques." Where "N.," in the guise of philosophe, stood only for that portion of a divided public in supposed conflict with the remaining trois quarts, "Le
François" presides over the uniformity of public disfavor into which "Jean-Jacques" will have fallen.

So markedly, in fact, has the readership situation deteriorated, that the axis of articulation between good and bad readers must now be removed to a position between this world and the next. Only the inhabitants of "un monde idéal semblable au nôtre, et néanmoins tout différent" (p. 668) are—or, more accurately, would be—equal to the task of interpreting "Jean-Jacques." Ethically speaking, these imagined readers are not entirely without resemblance to those whom the Entretien expected to profit by intercourse with Julie; on the contrary, it is the good fortune and the cardinal virtue of both communities that their internal evolution should have been arrested before amour-propre could take over from amour de soi (p. 669). In this regard, the Dialogues render direct and universal a relation, left oblique and specific by the Entretien, between the fall into amour-propre, and the advent of misinterpretation. "On veut deviner," generalizes "Rousseau," "on veut être pénétrant; c'est le jeu naturel de l'amour-propre: on voit ce qu'on croit et non pas ce qu'on voit" (p. 742).

Ultimately, however, ethical resemblance serves only to accentuate ontological difference. In itself, the accession of amour-propre to "naturalness" undermines the Entretien's attempts at placing concrete territorial restrictions on its field of play. Regardless of whether he actually believed Julie's chosen readership to exist in France's outlying regions, Rousseau had permitted "R." to wish it did, and to wish with such fervor as could create a powerful illusion of objectivity.
No such luxury of faith is permitted the Dialogues' "Rousseau." Never anything but lucid before the imagined spectacle of ideal readers, he attests most succinctly to their fundamental otherworldliness when he refers in passing to "[1]a figure de [ses] êtres surlunaires" (p. 686). The spatial metaphor only translates what is revealed here to be an essential metaphoricity. To the Dialogues' more extensive and emphatic evocation of readers as they might have been, there corresponds, by a necessarily inverse proportionality, a more emphatic exclusion of such readers from literal being. The felicitous fiction of immediate understanding takes root here in the unhappy fact of "Le François"'s empirical ubiquity, or, to be entirely accurate, his near ubiquity.

There may, indeed, in the person of "Rousseau," exist a single flesh-and-blood exception to the rule of a fallen readership. It is only a matter of time before the two interlocutors' axiomatic alterity ("Rousseau"≠"Le François") spawns the corollary of consubstantiality between "Rousseau" and the supposed figments of his imagination. Important in its own right, the pertinent exchange is, in addition emblematic of strategies which, having been tested on a limited basis in the Entretien, await full-scale deployment in the Dialogues. One cannot help thinking of "N."'s reaction ("Citoyen, voyons votre pouls?") to "R."'s impassioned linguistics of love, when, at the conclusion of "Rousseau"'s equally impassioned presentation of beings from beyond, "Le François" is heard to exclaim: "Mon cher Monsieur Rousseau, vous m'avez bien l'air d'être un des habitants de ce monde-là!", and his interlocutor, to retort: "J'en reconnais un du moins sans le moindre doute dans l'Auteur d'Emile et d'Héloïse" (p. 673).
Just as the "man of letters" had suspected the self-styled "editor" of personal involvement in the Clarens community, so now the Frenchman credits his terrestrial interlocutor with firsthand knowledge of "Êtres surlunaires."

In both instances, an identical rhetorical principle is at work: the postulation (or at least the supposition) of difference ("R." ≠ "amoureux," "Rousseau" ≠ "surlunaire") by no means precludes and, in fact, invites the perception of resemblance. The rules of non-identity are, in short, made expressly to be broken. The prideful reader who, in "Rousseau"'s own terms, would be penetrating, comes to congratulate himself on "discovering for himself" exactly what the author intended all along that he should discover, namely that within the putative "fiction," whether of "Saint-Preux" or of "les habitants du monde idéal," there lurks a thinly veiled allegory of autobiography. In what amounts to a choice for figurative over literal interpretation, "Le François" thus joins with "N." to dispute their respective interlocutors' use of third person pronouns when the "truth of the matter" so clearly calls for the first person singular. Rather than lay claims of his own to the status of super(human) reader, "Rousseau" arranges for his name to be placed in nomination by the most unexpected (and unsuspecting) of allies.

More or less contained in the Préface de Julie, the message of metaphoricity spreads, as if by contagion, throughout the later Dialogues. No sooner has "Le François" established a first relation of resemblance ("Rousseau" ≠ "un Âtre surlunaire"), than "Rousseau" himself follows suit with the further stipulation that such an "Être" must
(also) be read into that "Auteur d'Émile et d'Héloïse" who will later be identified, again metaphorically, as none other than "Jean-Jacques."

(Significantly enough, the Dialogues bypass entirely the problem of literal authorship which had so preoccupied the Entretien's man of letters; with considerations of verisimilitude having all but supplanted those of veracity, the pertinent question becomes not so much who did write, as who could have written the by now avowedly fictional Héloïse).

Inscribed within these two rejoinders is the text's entire course, past and future: they have, in no time flat, assembled a chain of being whose various links, though said to be discrete, will have been shown to collapse, as if by magic, into a single all-embracing whole. On the one hand, care has been taken to erect initially insuperable barriers of difference: "Rousseau"≠"un être surnaturel"≠"Jean-Jacques"≠"l'Auteur d'Émile et d'Héloïse." On the other, by the Dialogues' end, not one of these barriers will have been left standing; each in turn will have been broken down by the seemingly inexhaustible restorative powers of resemblance.

More numerous and more pronounced than those of the Entretien, the Dialogues' repertoire of differences will also have undergone a more radical extermination. None of the ambiguity persists which resulted from the earlier text's unwillingness either to rule out, on the literal plane, or to render metaphorically incontrovertible that the novel's "Saint-Preux" had been more or less made over into the preface's "R." On the contrary, the original alienation is absolute which, in the sequel to autobiography, divides the pre-autobiographical "Jean-Jacques Rousseau en toutes lettres" against himself to yield
the interpreting/interpreted couple of "Rousseau," on the one hand, and "Jean-Jacques," on the other. According to the formal readership contract whose terms are set forth by the title "Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques" and honored, in letter, if not in spirit, throughout the text's subsequent elaboration, the first-mentioned individual is empowered only to read, the second, only to be read, and never the twain shall meet. Or rather, such face-to-face confrontations as do take place in the interval between First and Second "Dialogues" are possible only insofar as the given name and the family name have come to designate two entirely separate existential entities.

That much said, the "Dialogues' preliminary work of absolute differentiation has only just begun. As recorded on the title page, the alienation of "Jean-Jacques" from "Rousseau" is but a preview of articulatory operations to be performed within the text on the subtext of "Jean-Jacques" himself. How suggestive that divisiveness should have left its mark within the hyphenated given name. Translated into the terms of discussion between "Rousseau" and "Le François," the hyphen serves, artificially, to bridge what is postulated at the outset as an unbridgeable gap between "Jean-Jacques" the man and "Jean-Jacques" the writer. His own distance from the composite "Jean-Jacques" already long since prescribed, "Rousseau" now bears the initial responsibility for furthering the cause of internal dissension. "[V]ous unissez deux choses que je sépare," he explains to "Le François." "L'Auteur des Livres et celui des crimes vous paroit la même personne; je me crois fondé à en faire deux" (p. 674). Thus formalized, the premise of discontinuity between "Jean" and
"Jacques" will be reinforced at intervals by the circumstances of changing relations between the interpreted man-text and his two interpreters. If, at the outset, "Rousseau" knows "Jean-Jacques" only as an author, and "Le François" knows him not at all, each will have made good use of the intermission between the Dialogues' first and second installments, "Le François" to read, "Rousseau" to see for himself. The parallel questions with which they greet each other's return to dialogue:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Le François} & \quad \text{Hebien, Monsieur, vous l'avez vu?} \\
\text{Rousseau} & \quad \text{Hebien, Monsieur, vous l'avez lu? (p. 673)}
\end{align*}
\]

reaffirm the belief, now shared by both, that the object of their joint investigation is inherently dual, and the path to knowing him, comprised of two discrete tracks or, diachronically speaking, stages. For experimental purposes, the living being must be isolated from his literary counterpart.

But even now, bifurcation has not run its course through the text of Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques. To each of "Jean-Jacques"'s component parts, now detached one from the other, there correspond two absolutely contradictory versions, the one already written as a collaborative effort by the enemies of "Jean-Jacques," the other currently under elaboration by his solitary champion, "Rousseau." As always, the pertinent difference is spelled out in so many words, this time by "Le François:" "je conviens franchement que votre J.-J. et celui de nos Messieurs ne sauroient être le même homme" (p. 375). Works which the aforesaid "Messieurs" have judged to be pompueuses (p. 667), and, worse
still, devoid of truth (e.g., "ses mémoires qu'il appelle ses confessions et que nous ["Le François' and company] appelons ses mensonges" [p. 717]) have nothing whatsoever in common with those in which "Rousseau" claims to have recognized "l'homme que je retrouvois en moi" (p. 728). As with the author, so, to an even greater extent, with the man: the "Jean-Jacques" whom "Rousseau" eventually encounters shares nothing but a name with the subject of "nos Messieurs"' best-selling biography.

A brief digression is called for at this point which would take another sounding of the distance between Entretien and Dialogues. Like "Jean-Jacques," Julie too had been threatened with the prospect of ambivalence: the novel meant one thing to "N.," and quite another to "R." And yet, nothing in the man of letters' scattered jabs even approximates the complexity and (apparent) coherence of the "anti-Jean-Jacques" which the Dialogues posit in direct opposition to the authorized version. In the matter of providing the interpreted object with a disruptive, even diabolical double, the Entretien's preliminary sketches have become the Dialogues' full-length portrait. In fact, unlike "N.," whose Julie, though presumed to be identical with that of other Establishment readers, remained essentially his own, "Le François" has been removed from the moment of producing, to that of consuming the Dialogues' "anti-Jean-Jacques." That "Rousseau"'s interlocutor should have only to recite secondhand propaganda prefabricated by others ("des hommes de la plus sublime vertu et de grands philosophes qui ne se trompent jamais," [pp. 696-97]) for his use and that of the nation attests to a much greater need than existed in the Précâ€šc de Julie for deconstructing the double. Consequently,
"Rousseau"'s encounter with the authentic "Jean-Jacques" can take place only after one hundred pages have been devoted to exposing the impostor. Even then, what passes for firsthand experience is mediated at every turn by the knowledge of prior misinterpretation. Reading "Jean-Jacques" consists to a much greater degree than did reading Julie in the constant reassessment of secondary sources. It is from a double negative, in other words, that "Jean-Jacques"'s positive image first emerges: before telling us straightforwardly who he really is, the Dialogues make sure to emphasize that who he really is not is some unreal figment of the collective imagination.

As we rejoin the mainstream of our discussion, we should, however, acknowledge that, though their substantive difference may be absolute, "Rousseau"'s "Jean-Jacques" (the man) does have one structural trait in common with the "Jean-Jacques" received as truth by "Le François." Neither, in short, is immune from that epidemic of differentiation whose further effects should hardly surprise us at this point. On the one hand, it is the single most outstanding feature of the unauthorized version that its proponents should have depicted their subject both as a "scélérat" and as a "fripon" (p. 901). In portraiture both verbal and plastic, they could not seem to decide whether petty or heinous crimes were the more damning, and so elected to charge "Jean-Jacques" with both. With a few strokes of pen or brush, "l'homme terrible qu'on avait peint d'abord" could be transformed at will into "un petit menteur, un petit escroc, un coureur de tavernes et de mauvais lieux" (p. 782).

Scoundrel or scamp? Appropriately enough, the two extremes of this most recent polar antithesis will have rewritten into negativity
the poles which "Rousseau" himself, in agreement with the Confessions, sees as orienting the entire existence of the real-life "Jean-Jacques." In the only passage of any length to be excerpted, albeit with variations, from the autobiographical narrative, the Dialogues retell the obsessional story of childhood reading, and its role in the formation of a nature both Romain and romanesque (p. 819). Thanks to the indelible "impressions" left upon it successively by Plutarch and by Cassandre, that nature cannot help but be forever torn between the contradictory impulses to greatness, on the one hand, and sensuousness, on the other. The hero doubles the lover, just as, in "Le François"'s account, the corrupted hero, or villain, will have doubled the corrupted lover, or debauchee. Global difference will have descended finally to the level of detail.

The moment has come, in fact, for graphic recapitulation. Just how far we have come along the path of articulatory difference will become evident from the following schematic itinerary, which begins, where the Entretien left off, with the unified whole of "Jean-Jacques Rousseau en toutes lettres" (subscripts 1 and 2 are used to distinguish "Le François"'s "Jean-Jacques" from "Rousseau"'s).
There would seem to have issued from the original choice of dialogue a formal invitation to exclusively and exhaustively binocular vision. Like the Entretien, only more systematically and with an even greater seriousness of purpose, the Dialogues as such usher in an era of universal dualism. History would seem to be repeating itself but for a few all-important changes in the principle of dialogue, and in its principals. We need not linger over the displacement of emphasis which results at dialogue's most literal level from the metamorphosis of "N." into "Le François." Ominous though the latter may be, he is scarcely interesting. Suffice it to say—the respective titles Entretien ... entre l'éditeur et un homme de lettres and Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques speak eloquently to this point—that, where the enigmatic "N." demanded to be dealt with in his own right, the caricatural Frenchman has become little more than a structural support to discourse which, almost to his exclusion, privileges the interplay between fellow- interpreter "Rousseau" and interpreted "Jean-Jacques."

But where, and why, does this interplay itself diverge from the version premiered by "R.," Julie and company? The question becomes all the more pertinent when we realize just how similar have been the sacrifices made to rhetoric by each of Rousseau's successive personae. More astounding even than "R.'s self-imposed reduction to reader of Julie is the fact that "Rousseau" should have followed his lead in the case of "Jean-Jacques." Of course, the specific contractual agreement has been altered in accordance with the parties to it: whereas face-to-face encounters with Julie would have been inadmissible as evidence, such encounters are reported to have taken place with "Jean-Jacques,"
since the man himself, as well as his books, figures on the Dialogues' expanded version of the authorized reading list. Another way of putting the same difference would be to remark that the Dialogues combine the readership activities of the Préface de Julie with those of the novel itself: where Wolmar read Julie, and "R.," Julie, "Rousseau" now undertakes, with "Le François" always one step behind, to know "Jean-Jacques" in person and in print.

The problem of interpretation is thus compounded in more ways than one. Replacing a liber simplex like Julie with the liber duplex of text and man-as-text ("Jean-Jacques") requires, first and foremost, that the rhetorical function of dialogue's structural derivatives be radically rethought. That which dualism left as a trace throughout the Entretien is best summed up by the term "ambiguity." Boundaries blurred at the outset—between fiction and history, characters and editor, novel and preface—remained blurred up to and beyond the adjournment of dialogue proper. Its coat of arms, the divided(?) title page, its motto, as pronounced by "N.," "Je ne conclus pas; je doute," the entire Entretien occupied a kind of middleground between the certainty of absolute difference and that of unmistakable identity. And rightly so, given such barriers against the two extremes as were written into the fundamental formula of interpretation. On the one hand, "R." could not extricate himself entirely from a text which, at the very least, he acknowledged to have edited; nor, whatever else he had done besides editing, could he ever coincide entirely with Julie, for the obvious reason that it was a book, and he, a man. The two were somehow related; it only remained to discover, or better yet, to dissemble the
precise extent of their mutual involvement. As the author himself confirmed in the confessional account cited above (see p. 239), there was nothing to lose and everything to gain by keeping that involvement open to speculation.

The same could not be said, however, for the interpreting/interpreted couple formed by "Rousseau" and "Jean-Jacques." On the contrary, ambiguity of any kind is anathema to the mission with which the Dialogues are implicitly entrusted by the preliminary "Du sujet et de la forme de cet écrit." Were its tone less combative, the following passage might have passed for a simple dramatis personae:

\[
\text{J'ai pris la liberté de reprendre dans ces entretiens mon nom de famille que le public a jugé à propos de m'ôter, et je me suis désigné en tiers à son exemple par celui de baptême auquel il lui a plu de me réduire (p. 663).}
\]

As it is, a barely hidden agenda calls for that annexation of "nom de famille" to "nom de baptême" which would make restitution to "Jean-Jacques" for his stolen selfhood. The two must, by some feat of language, be made one; the Dialogues must finally invalidate their own title, by overcoming the obstacle of otherness, juge, which stands at the outset between Rousseau and Jean-Jacques. A specific course of action has been plotted for the forthcoming Dialogues which would take the "Rousseau"/"Jean-Jacques" couple all the way from estrangement to definitive reconciliation, with few, if any, side trips into what used to be the locus amoenus of ambiguity.

In short, the conditions of dualism have changed since the days of "R." and Julie: if the present difference, as originally stated ("Rousseau"≠"Jean-Jacques") is absolute, so too is the potential for
erasure; there is no logical reason why "Rousseau" cannot become "Jean-
Jacques." Paradoxically enough, dialogue, here pressed into the service
of reunification, will have become its own harshest critic. What was
only hinted at by the Entretien's insistent fictionality and, to some
degree, obscured by its pronounced elegiac strain is here brought to
light for all to see: to the dialogic moment, in Rousseau, there
-corresponds an essential negativity. Though it may allow the truth to
be told, dialogue itself can never be anything but a blatant lie.
Indeed, from the post-dialogic vantage point of Préface or Rêveries,
it is as though the preceding discours à deux, existentially nul from
the outset, had not even happened as text. Gone from the militantly
monologic in Rousseau are all traces of that rhetorical scaffolding
which remained in place only long enough for the edifice of unity to
be restored.

In fact, even within Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques, the dis-
mantling of dualism will have become virtually coextensive with its
deployment. The tracks of articulatory difference whose general con-
figuration we recorded above are still fresh, when the return trip is
undertaken which has as its ultimate destination the convergence of
"Rousseau" and "Jean-Jacques" in a single point. That is not to deny
that, literally speaking, the interpreter/interpreted dyad remains
intact up to the final moment of "Rousseau"'s wishing that "Jean-
Jacques"'s eyes might be closed in "sa dernière heure," by "des mains
amies" (p. 976).

But the difference would seem to persist in name only, so seriously
has it been undermined by the empirical reader's understanding of its
inherent artificiality. Bringing us to that understanding has been the long and arduous task of metaphor. Seeds of resemblance have been planted throughout the Dialogues in the hopes that they would so take hold of the reader's imagination as to yield, in their final harvesting, the overriding realization that "Rousseau" and "Jean-Jacques" are more alike than any two discrete individuals could possibly be. If the most basic "facts of the matter" have, for all intents and purposes, been rendered contrary to fact, it is thanks to the text's manipulation of metaphor to ensure the ultimate triumph of figurative over literal reading.

It is not our intention here to chart every last bump and curve of the long and, by Rousseau's own admission, often circuitous road back to resemblance (p. 665). Each lap of the journey will instead be resumed by a representative instance or two of metaphor's struggle to the death with difference. (Indeed, with the fate of no mere text but a man-text in the balance, reading correctly has become no less crucial than it was for the poet-critics of Clarens; witness the claim made in all seriousness by "Rousseau" with respect to his reading of "Jean-Jacques": "il y alloit du destin de ma vie à ne pas me tromper dans ma conclusion," [p. 797]).

If the process of alienation detailed above is to be reversed, "Jean-Jacques" cannot be reunited with "Rousseau" until he has once again become one with his more limited self. That means, first and foremost, invalidating one of the two versions of his vita currently in circulation. Given the choice between "Rousseau"'s reading of the Confessions and "everyone else"'s, it is with good reason,
according to their own internal logic, that the Dialogues should give the nod to "Rousseau" and the lie to "Le Françoise. Even if entirely unfounded, such dualism as metaphor is empowered to deconstruct must first be recognized for what (in people's minds) it is. As exposed by "Rousseau," the inexcusable error committed by "Jean-Jacques"'s detractors consists in non-recognition of difference, in blindness to the contradiction which works from within to discredit their story. They are too short-sighted to see that scélérats and fripons don't mix, too blinded by greed to realize that, in trying to hang their enemy and mock him too, they risk aiding and abetting his escape to innocence, or at least to the freely admitted and thus potentially comprehensible contradiction of dual citizenship in Rome and in La Romancie. In terms (not surprisingly) like those which "N." (mis)-used against Julie, "Rousseau" here declares the collective "roman de Jean-Jacques" to be, now and forever, lacking in coherence and thus, incompetent to serve as a metaphor for life really lived:

Vous m'avez fabriqué tout à votre aise un être tel qu'il n'en exista jamais, un monstre hors de la nature, hors de la vraisemblance, hors de la possibilité, et formé de parties inaliéables, incompatibles qui s'excluent mutuellement (p. 755).

Unmixing the defamatory metaphors (dupe rather than duper, "Le François" offers no resistance against "Rousseau"'s demonstration) releases the "true" "Jean-Jacques" from the further necessity of otherness to the oeuvre. Significantly enough, it is "Le François" himself who, at the second major stopping point along the road back to unity, pronounces the text's official decree of reconciliation
between the man and the writings. His published conclusions are said to be the result of an experiment, lasting "quelques mois," in which he subjected the hypothesis of resemblance to an entire battery of texts for validity:

Je crus qu'en méditant très attentivement ses ouvrages et en comparant soigneusement l'Auteur avec l'homme que vous m'aviez peint, je parviendrois à éclairer les objets l'un par l'autre et à m'assurer si tout était d'accord et appartenait incontestablement au même individu (p. 932).

Not only was the hypothesis itself verified with respect to those books which "Jean-Jacques" actually wrote, but "Le Français"'s findings have the further practical application of allowing him to detect those books which, though written by others, seek to discredit "Jean-Jacques" by claiming him as their author. The increasingly sympathetic Frenchman has set himself up, in all modesty ("non que je me croye un juge infaillible en matière de style," [p. 933]), as a veritable Minos of metaphor. By his ability to discriminate among valid and invalid vehicles for the being of "Jean-Jacques," he exposes a second blindness to difference on the part of those collaborators whose viewpoint he no longer shares. This time, it is their failure to distinguish between superficial and profound resemblance ("Il est bien aisé de contrefaire le tour de ses phrases, ce qui est difficile à tout autre est de saisir ses idées et d'exprimer ses sentiments," [p. 934]), which jeopardizes the entirety of their argument in the eyes of the right-thinking reader.
To recapitulate, the man has been made as whole as possible, given the irreparable scission effected in his soul by childhood reading. And the author has been semantically reunited with that portion of the ostensible oeuvre in which he really figures. It only remains now for "Jean-Jacques" to accede metaphorically to the authority of the patronym. Never explicitly realized within the text, the final act of reparation is left up to a virtual reader by now well versed in the healing powers of metaphor. In this regard, no matter how few Frenchmen they actually persuaded, the Dialogues are pedagogically sound in that they gradually wean the empirical exegete from obvious dependence on the dicta of "Rousseau." Techniques of readership handed over to his interlocutor are ultimately destined, at least in theory, for use by real-life judges in the matter of "Rousseau" versus "Jean-Jacques."

Not that any pains have been spared to provide us with more than enough material evidence to convict the Dialogues of duplicity. On the contrary, what follows here represents only a sampling of conveniently placed clues as to "Jean-Jacques"'s true identity. The details first: forgetting "himself" momentarily, "Rousseau" refers to himself in that third person which by rights is the special province of "Jean-Jacques" (p. 909); presented with the opportunity of lauding "Jean-Jacques," "Rousseau" falls victim suddenly to "inexplicable" reticence (p. 797); "Jean-Jacques," on the other hand, is reported to have written "en forme de Dialogue une espèce de jugement d'eux [ses persécuteurs] et de lui assez semblable à celui qui pourra résulter de nos entretiens" (p. 836). And the general trends: "Rousseau" is given to ambiguous statements like the following which, though possibly attributable to a
mere observer, are more probably based on "inside" information: "J'ai dans le coeur des [témoignages] plus forts que toutes vos preuves que l'homme que vous m'avez peint n'existe point" (p. 768). He is given as well to acting out the very traits of "Jean-Jacques" which are currently under discussion. Should the question of moral indignation arise, then "Rousseau" himself becomes, perforce, morally indignant, to the point where "Le François" must calm him down: "Ne vous échauffez pas" (p. 802). Other such instances abound. What could, in the Entretien, have passed for mere sympathy, however profound, here evolves, through the sheer weight of accumulated evidence, into sustained synonymity.

Qualitatively speaking, however, it is the pivotal exchange long since cited which best anticipates the ends and the means of coincidence become unconditional. It will be recalled that, when "Le François" exclaimed: "Mon cher Monsieur Rousseau, vous m'avez bien l'air d'être un des habitans de ce monde-là!", "Rousseau" himself countered with the following concession: "J'en reconnois un du moins sans le moindre doute dans l'Auteur d'Émile et d'Héloïse" (p. 675). Metaphor's essential mechanism is here revealed in all its pristine purity. The rapprochement of "Monsieur Rousseau" and "l'Auteur d'Émile et d'Héloïse," that is (or will be), "Jean-Jacques," is effected through the intercession of a third term ("surlunarity") which is a shared seme or unit of meaning. As "Rousseau" himself reminds us by his reference to "la figure de mes êtres surlunaires," it is a figure of speech which, in disregard of literal difference, will finally have brought together two beings separated, in apparent deference to public opinion, by means both linguistic (e.g., the expropriation of the proper name) and
logical (e.g., the confinement to mutually exclusive levels of discourse).

But the instruments of this exemplary intercession have a second role to play in the overall economy of Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques. Like the earlier Entretien, the Dialogues seek not only to interpret a specific object (Julie or "Jean-Jacques") but to formulate a universally applicable theory of interpretation. In this business of furnishing underpinnings to understanding, the "êtres surlunaires" show the way: presented within a page of the Dialogues' beginning, the guiding principles of these enlightened exegetes are later adopted without attribution by "Rousseau" himself, and passed along with his highest personal recommendation to "LeFrançois" and all for whom he stands. Is it any wonder, given the Rousseauist dialogue's past record of practicing what it preaches and vice versa, that the lesson to be learned from the êtres surlunaires is essentially one of metaphorical reading? The passive agents of metaphoricity have, by their own actions, as mediated by "Rousseau," become its staunchest advocates.

More than anything else, it is their capacity for transmitting and receiving what "Rousseau" calls "un signe caractéristique" (p. 672) which sets them apart from their mortal counterparts. "Caractéristique" because immediately legible for all "habitans du monde enchanté" and only for them, but also and perhaps more fundamentally, because of its metaphorical relation to character. Reading at the level of un signe caractéristique means seeing beyond the letter of the text (in fact, the "surlunaires" tend to dispense with the concrete acts of reading and writing whenever possible) to the human reality responsible for its elaboration. In the best of all
(im)possible worlds, the entire lexicon of life and literature would be reducible to a single sign, that being the "=" which, by the magic of metaphor, transforms the other into another self. Every authentic text would convey the same fundamental message: I am (like) you, and no text would pass the test of authenticity which merely copied the characters without incarnating the character.

Too good to be true? "Rousseau" agrees, and yet he attempts to salvage as much as he can of the (super)natural model. The first commandment still holds. Those who would now aspire not to "disfigure" "Jean-Jacques" are discouraged from taking the literal approach: "En prenant toujours tout à la lettre on trouveroit peut-être en effet moins à reprendre dans les livres les plus dangereux que dans ceux dont nous parlons ici" (p. 695). They should seek instead to emulate the surlunaires' receptivity to signs of self, though, despite repeated affirmations of the goal, exactly how this is to be accomplished is never made clear: "lisez tous ces passages dans le sens qu'ils présentent naturellement à l'esprit et qu'ils avoient dans celui de l'auteur en les écrivant." And if all signs are no longer one in a world where aggressively egotistical self-love (amour-propre, as opposed to amour de soi) has blinded men to their common humanity, the individual at least must still be reckoned for a single sign. The text of his life must be considered to unfold paradigmatically, not syntagmatically. No fair isolating as "lambeaux" the various episodes which deserve to be considered "à leur place avec ce qui précède et ce qui suit."

All well and good. The question still nags: does "Rousseau," or even more to the point, Rousseau, really believe this course of
instruction sufficient to convert the more stubbornly "sinistres" among "Jean-Jacques"'s "interprétateurs" (p. 695)? Even supposing men to be of good faith and to have acquired what the Dialogues themselves define as good reading habits, would the texts of this world be guaranteed against misinterpretation? Could "Jean-Jacques"'s Alcestian pseudo-suicide have been prevented? Or would he still have, as his only truly understanding readers, a fiction ("Rousseau") and the fiction's Frankenstein ("LeFrançois")? Why is it that, as "Rousseau" himself warns, the truth will not always out: "Ne disons donc pas que le temps fait toujours triompher la vérité" (p. 957)? Answering these questions in the Dialogues' own terms will carry us to the last outposts of interpretation, and beyond. What better vantage point for looking back on an almost completed hermeneutical adventure; how humbling is the sense of perspective conveyed by Rousseau's two-hundred-year-old insights into problems of textual analysis very like those which current critical discourse is only beginning to formulate anew.
NOTES TO CHAPTER V

1 "Hors livre," pp. 33-34.

2 "La Nouvelle Héloïse," p. 111.

3 "To Rey," 24 Apr. 1760, Letter 769, Correspondance générale, V, 75-76; "To Rey," 6 Jul. 1760, Letter 812, Correspondance générale, V, 136. It is in the former missive that Rousseau first characterizes Rey's suggestion as a "plaisanterie," and promises to "[lui] en faire honneur dans le public en temps et en lieu." That promise (or threat) would, of course, be carried out in the passage currently under examination, where, in response to "N."'s "Mais à propos, mettez-vous aussi votre devise à ce livre?", "R." is made to say: "Mon Libraire m'a déjà fait cette plaisanterie, et je l'ai trouvée si bonne, que j'ai promis de lui en faire honneur" (p. 27).

4 Préface de Narcisse, in La Nouvelle Héloïse, théâtre, poésies, essais littéraires, pp. 959, 961, 968, 970.

5 Préface de Narcisse, p. 959.

6 Préface de Narcisse, p. 961 (emphasis added).

7 Les Confessions, pp. 547-48.

8 For discussion of these and other texts with respect to the primacy of written language, see the final chapter of Derrida's De la grammatologie, "Du supplément à la source: la théorie de l'écriture," pp. 379-445.


11 Rousseau, Les Confessions, p. 460.

12 First published in 1795 in Grimm's Correspondance littéraire, Diderot's Tabletes are reproduced in the appendix (III, 585-93) to George Roth's three-volume edition of the Histoire de Mme de Montbrillant (Paris: Gallimard, 1951). Meanwhile, formally introduced in Book VII (p. 282), the name of Diderot intervenes with increasing frequency in the remaining Confessions.


20 Though by no means conclusive in terms of establishing a positive identification between "N." and Diderot (Rousseau was all too apt to depict his struggle with the philosophes as that of the "one" against the "many"), much of the Entretien goes towards situating the "man of letters" at the forefront of the philosophical movement. Is it any wonder, then, that "R.'s" cry of despair at having to deal with such an adversary: "O Philosophie! combien tu prends de peine à retrécir les coeurs, à rendre les hommes petits!" (p. 13) should echo the exclamations of Rousseau in his above cited letter to Diderot of March 16: "Philosophes! philosophes!"

21 "Deux frères ennemis," p. 45.


25 Les Confessions, p. 455. The pertinent passage reads as follows: "En lisant l'espèce de Poétique en dialogue qu'il y a jointe, je fus surpris et même un peu contristé d'y trouver parmi plusieurs choses désobligeantes mais tolérables contre les solitaires cette âpre et dure sentence sans aucun adoucissement. Il n'y a que le méchant qui soit seul.

27 "Deux frères ennemis," p. 46.


30 Le Pacte autobiographique, p. 100.


32 Rousseau, Les Confessions, p. 351.

33 Rousseau, "Fragment autobiographique," in Les Confessions, autres textes autobiographiques, p. 1115.

34 Bakhtine, La Poétique de Dostoievski, p. 342.

35 Denaturation et violence, p. 207.

36 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques: Dialogues, in Les Confessions, autres textes autobiographiques, p. 686. Further quotations from this text of the Dialogues will be designated as such, and page numbers, given within the body of my essay.

37 Le Pacte autobiographique, p. 195.

38 Paul de Man, "Semiology and Rhetoric," p. 29. De Man follows Peirce's lead in acknowledging the "necessity of a third element called an interpretant within any relationship that a sign entertains with its object." As we shall see, both the Entretien and the Dialogues shape up as confrontations between rival claimants to the role of interpretant, with both Julie and "Jean-Jacques" alienated as signs from their respective objects by the misreadings of the Other, and (supposedly) reunited with their objects by the authorized readings of "R."/"Rousseau."

39 Les Confessions, p. 656.


41 In "Rousseau's Autobiographical Venture" (Genre, 6, No. 1 [1973], 108), McDonald proposes that the three stages of that venture be labeled Nature, Self-Consciousness and Imagination or, alternately, Eden, Fall and Redemption. While helpful from a heuristic standpoint, the categories are perhaps too confining and certainly too mutually exclusive.

42 Les Réveries du promeneur solitaire, p. 995.
This shift in focus from questions of identity to those of resemblance leaves its mark at every stage and on every level of *Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques*. To cite but one further example at this time, it will be recalled that, in the *Entretien*, "R." had professed *Julie* to contain certain unmistakable clues as to its author's precise identity; "les gens de goût se trompent-ils sur la plume des Auteurs?" (p. 28) is the provocative question which he had put, accordingly, to "N." Its pertinence redefined by "Rousseau," the same sort of textual evidence comes, in the *Dialogues*, to play a major role in determining, not who, but how authors really are. Their names matter less than do their characters; what they are called, less than what they are like, to the "Rousseau" who sets forth the following claim: "Qu'on me montre une lettre d'amour d'une main inconnue, je suis assuré de connoitre à sa lecture si celui qui l'écrit a des moeurs" (p. 688).
If the Dialogues' celebration of metaphorical reading takes shape as a kind of parable, that of the êtres surlunaires, so too does the critique which doubles and doubts that celebration. Appearing within the text as a counterweight to sublime signification is a passage which, for want of a more inspired title, might simply be called "the misunderstanding of the Kehl gravure" (pp. 816-17). Taken from the life of "Jean-Jacques" as told in the gospel according to "Rousseau," the anecdote in question presents all the earmarks of exemplarity, at least to readers already firm in the conviction that the Dialogues (and Rousseauist dialogue in general) speak at every moment and on every level to the problem of "what understanding and interpretation as such, are."\(^1\) Even had it not happened to occupy a central position in the text's overall geography (just how seriously should Rousseau be taken when he deplores the Dialogues' disorder?) or to open, in what is one of the text's longest rejoinders, onto the indisputably seminal scene of childhood reading, the parable of misprision would stand on its own content as a distillation and a deconstruction of the hermeneutical enterprise in process.

The text's entire roster of interpreting/interpreted couples is, in this single paragraph, present, accounted for and lined up for inspection according to official rank. The specific situation recalled by "Rousseau" is one where he found himself in a position to read the enemies of "Jean-Jacques," as they, in turn, read "Jean-Jacques," whom
they themselves had apprehended (or thought to apprehend) in the act of reading. "Je le vis un jour," begins "Rousseau," referring to "Jean-Jacques,"

assez longtemps arrêté devant une gravure. De jeunes gens inquiets de savoir ce qui l'occupoit si fort, mais assez polis pour ne pas s'aller interposer entre l'objet et lui, attendoient avec une risible impatience. Sitôt qu'il partit, ils coururent à la gravure et trouvèrent que c'étoit le plan des attaques du fort de Kehl. Je les vis ensuite longtemps et vivement occupés d'un entretien fort animé, dans lequel je compris qu'ils fatigoient leur Minerve à chercher quel crime on pouvoit méditer en regardant le plan des attaques du fort de Kehl (p. 817).

Such irony as is directed against the villains of the piece, the excessively cerebral "jeunes gens," by no means exempts "Rousseau" from sharing, for reasons of his own, in their inquiétude. For according to legislation which he himself has drafted, the "jeunes gens" would seemingly have every right to their (mis)reading. What, if anything, precludes their taking "Jean-Jacques''s every action, even one so apparently inconsequential as browsing, for a sign (of a sign) of character? Why not assume that "Jean-Jacques" will have interacted with the gravure at something other than a literal level? After all, in his shoes, alter ego "Rousseau" would have sought to know firsthand the "dispositions d'âme" which were the artist's at the moment of creation. The solution is only rhetorical, in short, which reductio ad absurdum brings to the very real problem of setting and sensing limits to the free play of metaphor. Even knowing the "jeunes gens" to be in error, we are powerless to say why, precisely, or to prevent the proliferation of other such incidents.
Identical in nature, if less extreme in degree, is the problem confronting all those (authors and readers alike) who enter, at their own risk, into the arena of interpretation. The poet's task consists to a large degree, as does the critic's, in censoring certain readings of a given text and in validating others. How can we prevent ourselves and others from reading something more into the text than is really there? How, in "Rousseau"'s terms, can innocent browsing be distinguished from nefarious plotting? How, in the terms of Michael Riffaterre, can those textual elements which are "marques" be distinguished from those which are not? Riffaterre responds, not altogether convincingly, by stipulating the theoretical existence of a so-called "architecteur," endowed by definition with the infallible power to detect that which, in the text, "makes sense." In the passage currently under consideration, the theoretical construct comes to life in the person of "Rousseau," to whom the author has granted apparently absolute control over the decoding process. And yet, the promotion of the individual to super-readership is no less arbitrary than the concept itself is ambiguous. Clearly beyond the grasp of any single empirical reader, the status of architecteur would seem, for that very reason to defy assimilation into the concrete practice of literary criticism.

In the absence of any universally acknowledged arbiter of meaning, the question remains: does interpretation as such allow for the possibility of non-sense or for sense which is, always and forever, only literal?

If "Rousseau" had his way, it would. That much is evident from the general observations about "Jean-Jacques" which preface the incident of the Kehl gravure. If "Rousseau" here plays the "architecteur,"
it is in diametrical opposition to "Jean-Jacques"'s "non-lecteur." Unifying the details of the man-text's habitual activities is a consistent refusal to read or be read, and a contrasting desire that life could simply be, without meaning. It is an "oeil stupide" which, in his happiest moments, the unsupervised dreamer (significantly enough, this is one of several passages in the Dialogues which explicitly anticipate the Réveries) turns on that spectacle of the world whose elements are merely enumerated, without comment, here: "une parade de foire, une revue, un exercice, une procession...la grue, le cabestan, le mouton," and so forth (pp. 816-17). Where books themselves are concerned, specifically those in the riverside stalls, "il ne lit que les titres" (p. 817). The dimension of depth has been rejected at every turn; existence has become syntagmatic, superficial, and so, sense-less. All that remains is to taste the pleasures of the moment "avec une sensualité d'enfant" (p. 815). Just how profoundly nostalgic is this view of life before the fall into interpretation becomes strikingly clear two pages hence, when, in reopening the Confessions, "Rousseau" reminds us that, for "Jean-Jacques" himself, there was in fact no childhood, if by childhood is meant a state of being without reading, an unconditional selfhood in which metaphor plays no part.

And so "Rousseau"'s immediate response to the dilemma of interpretation, as depicted scenically in the Dialogues, is regressive. In the chronological aftermath of metaphorical reading, he adopts a posture which is, by nature, pre-interpretational. Still, the same doubts and discouragement which, in his particular case, prompted the reversion to revery, have returned to haunt the imagination of those
who, with Jonathan Culler, would lay the groundwork for critical life "beyond interpretation." Indeed, nothing better than the twice-repeated dialogic moment of the Rousseauist master text illustrates Culler's self-consciously "tendentious position" that, "while the experience of literature may be an experience of interpreting works, in fact the interpretation of individual works is only tangentially related to the understanding of literature." It was in pursuit of just such an "understanding" that first the Entretien, then the Dialogues transformed what might easily have been interpretational œuvres de circonstance into events of major hermeneutical importance. Though twice abandoned, "Rousseau"'s foray into the philosophy of reading left behind a residue of unanswered questions, many of which figure as well on Culler's agenda for the future: "What is the status and what is the role of fictions...? What are the ways of moving between life and art? What operations or figures articulate this movement?", and so forth.

Also left behind were ample warnings against undue self-congratulation for the work of interpretation which, despite it all, we continue to do in conjunction with the further development of our collective reading skills. Were not the cas Wolmar sufficient dissuasion from indulgence in critical hubris, the Dialogues point the moral which strikes uncomfortably close to home: "On veut deviner, on veut être pénétrant; c'est le jeu naturel de l'amour-propre: on voit ce qu'on croit et non pas ce qu'on voit" (p. 742). (How uncharacteristic is the alliance here of "naturel" and "amour-propre," and how pessimistic the prognosis for recovery from what would thus appear to be the critic's universal condition.) It is, then, in full awareness of
prejudice as a contributory force, and in at least partial ignorance as to its precise contribution, that I would now read back the minutes of our three major encounters with Rousseau's *Préface de Julie ou entretien sur les romans*.

Like "Jean-Jacques" of the bookstalls, we have really done no more than read the title, segment by segment, from left to right. But where the letters were, for him, opaque, for us, they have opened vertically as metaphors onto three discrete regions of the ever-evolving intertextual universe. The words *Préface de Julie* summoned forth an entire corpus of early novel prefaces. As a relatively late addendum to that corpus, the *Préface de Julie* catalogued its by then conventional topoi, while at the same time tampering with nearly all of them. A second-degree rhetoric at work throughout the text deconstructed the archetypal configuration of truth, morality and interest, but salvaged that which, in the configuration, could serve in the construction of new and often highly personal meaning.

The coordinating conjunction *ou* then transported us to the land of dyads located between the novel's own covers. A preliminary stopover in the interspace between *Préface* and *Préface de Julie* became the occasion for formulating a logic of the rejected alternative. Its sphere of relevance extended to the *Préface de Julie/Julie* dyad, that same logic went a long way towards elucidating the relations which prefaces as such bear to prefaced texts, in time, space and language.

And finally, the second of the title's own alternatives, *entretien sur les romans*, freed us to look into all those nooks and crannies of the Rousseauist text in progress which deal neither with *Julie* nor with
prefacing per se. What we found within the _Entretien_ were three
distinct but complementary perspectives on the career-long preoccupation
with truth-telling. One portion in particular of the text, pre-confessional in nature, anticipates, at the level of manifest content, the
promotion of self to favored status in the pursuit of truth through
language. However, it also introduces the impossible but recurring
dream that such a pursuit could be carried out in silence. Meanwhile,
a sub-text, confessional throughout but only latently so, looks back
in anger and in nostalgia to dialogic relations with surrogate father
Diderot and beyond, to dialogue with the biological father. The
empirical loss translates, thirdly, into a literary gain, with the dis-
covery of a format, the _entretien_, which will be resurrected and, to
a significant extent, revamped in the post-confessional moment of
_Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques._

In short, given the breadth and depth of its concerns, this _pré-
facer_ merits the epithet _grande_ on more counts than its length rela-
tive to the first or _petite préface_. As threatened in the Introduc-
tion, we have been unable to settle on a single all-embracing
"question of Rousseau's _Préface de Julie_." Nor would we want to at
the sacrifice of such complexity as is promised by the title and de-
livered by the text itself. And so, a minor modification is necessary
in the quotation from R. G. Collingwood which will stand here as the
epigraph to the just completed adventure. Where he referred to "the
question," we shall substitute the plural "questions." In all other
respects, Collingwood's advice to readers speaks to the essence of
what we have attempted to do at every stage of our own prefatory
dialogue with Rousseau: "In order to understand his meaning, you must also know what the question was (a question in his own mind, and presumed by him to be in yours) to which the thing he has said or written was meant as an answer." No one, more enthusiastically than Rousseau himself, would have applauded our successive attempts at "reading his mind." Who knows? He might even have condoned our portraying that mind less as a repository for clearcut ideas, intentions and character traits than as an ever-expanding repertoire of queries put to him by literature, on the one hand, and life, on the other. It is, after all, from the "emptiness" of a mind traversed by question marks that a text like the *Préface de Julie* can finally issue forth in all its plenitude of sense.
NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

1 Palmer, Hermeneutics, p. 8.


3 Riffaterre, p. 48.


5 "Beyond Interpretation," p. 297.

6 An Autobiography, p. 31.
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