

Recovering *Fraternité* in the Works of Rousseau: Jean-Jacques' Lost Brother

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Time may lift many veils; and if my memory descends to posterity perhaps one day it will learn what there was in me to say. Then it will be understood why I am silent.

Rousseau's *Confessions*, closing words of Book 6

For Rousseau, the family is the original model for society: "The oldest of all societies and the only natural one is that of the family . . . the family, therefore, is, if you will, the first model for political societies." ¹ More than once, Rousseau observes: "the state remains, and the family dies out." ² For Rousseau, this was an autobiographical experience as well as a political assertion, for his mother died giving birth to him, his only brother ran away, and his father went into exile, leaving Rousseau completely severed from his family of origin by the time he was ten years old. ³ In his political writings, Rousseau is not surprisingly concerned with the "inalienable," "indivisible," fusing general will, with contract defending against alienation, and society replacing the family ("Social Contract," 99). This contractual fusion of will is associated with origins and beginnings. In his autobiography, Rousseau begins with the only period in his life when his family was intact: "It is as if, feeling my life escaping from me, I were trying to recapture it at its beginnings" (*Confessions*, 31). Similarly, the imagined origins of humanity are essential to his political writings as he declares his purpose of "discovering and following the lost and forgotten paths that must have led man from the natural to the civil state" in the "Discourse on Inequality." ⁴ **[End Page 191]**

Many readers of Rousseau have equated his political and autobiographical writings with his own family of origin. Rousseau has been seen as the perennially Oedipal son projecting his desire for the mother onto nature and his evasion of the father onto society: "O nature! O my mother! I am here under your sole protection. Here there is no cunning and rascally man to thrust himself between us" (*Confessions*, 594). The gendering of nature and society creates confusion for political man. According to Rousseau, masculine society casts man in a feminine role, making him "weak, timid and servile; his safe and effeminate manner of living completely exhausts both his strength and his courage." By contrast, natural man, measured against feminine nature, is robust, masculine, strong, and courageous ("Discourse on Inequality," 56). Attempting to resolve these contradictory gender roles in the "Discourse on Political Economy," Rousseau seeks to integrate feminine nature with masculine society in "La Patrie," the homeland, creating a feminized fatherland, which devoted sons and daughters must love as a union of mother and father, of nature and nation ("Political Economy," 58-83).

Not surprisingly, Rousseau's work has become a proof text for many psychoanalytic and Lacanian critics. ⁵ Yet the triangular model that so often proof-texts Lacanian lack is itself lacking: a fourth corner remains largely unrecognized in the text: Rousseau's lost elder brother. Rousseau's family of origin was not a triad. He was born into an already existing triad of his mother,

Susanne, his father, Isaac, and an unnamed rebellious and dissolute brother, who was seven years old: "I hardly ever saw him. Indeed, I can hardly say that I ever knew him, but I did not cease to love him dearly, and he loved me as well as a scoundrel can love" (*Confessions*, 21). Psychoanalytic theory tends to ignore the impact of siblings on erotic and psychological development. Theodore Lidz, in his *The Relevance of the Family to Psychoanalytic Theory*, writes: "Although sibling relationships have received some consideration in the psychoanalytic literature, their importance has remained rather peripheral to the theory." He promises to address the importance of siblings as rivals and as role models in his next chapter, yet in that chapter, he confesses, "I have not managed to find a suitable place to discuss the matter adequately." Nevertheless, he gives the gist of what he had hoped to demonstrate, asserting that sibling "rivalries for parental affection and attention . . . can sometimes be as significant as rivalry with a parent." He goes on to say, "Despite childhood jealousies, brothers and sisters often become important love objects and sources of protection and comfort. . . . For some, a sibling may be as important, or a more important, an [*sic*] object for identification as a parent." ⁶

Just as siblings have not received the attention they warrant in psychoanalytic theory, so too literary critics have ignored the role of Rousseau's brother in Rousseau's autobiography and his significance for Rousseau's political theories. This essay will attempt to show that Rousseau's lost brother is not only an integral source of political and erotic inspiration in Rousseau's writings, but also that he is symbolically central to *The Confessions* in his representation of both the lost child and the bad child that *The Confessions* sets out to retrieve and to redeem. Restoring Rousseau's brother to a reading of Rousseau's family of origin sheds new light on the much-discussed childhood beatings and the three major confessions of the first three books of Rousseau's autobiography, and by extension, on the political and even the **[End Page 192]** fictional writings. In the final analysis, while the violent eroticism of paternal beating and authority feeds into narratives of paranoia, the love of brothers proves an inspirational and productive force in Rousseau's life work.

Rousseau's brother is neither a minor nor gratuitous addition to readings of Rousseau's political theory. The French revolutionary movement that adopted many of Rousseau's ideals and much of his rhetoric astutely added the word, "fraternité," to his own key terms, "liberté" and "égalité," suggesting the necessity of this third word to represent his ideals in sloganesque concision. ⁷ Jean-Claude Bonnet describes the French Revolution as a quest for a new family romance founded on fraternity, ⁸ and Felicity Baker stresses the importance of the erotic component of fraternity to give energy and impulse to the 1789 revolution. ⁹ Just as there is an erotic impulse in the Freudian family romance, so too, there are sexual elements in fraternal relations. J. M. Coetzee has posited a connection of fraternity and sexuality in South Africa to raise the enticing but largely undeveloped possibility of fraternal sexual love in politics. ¹⁰ Yet the focus on fraternal relations does not obliterate the connection to parents or patriarchy. While Baker defines the revolutionary fraternity of 1789 as a shift from Enlightenment political theories based on the nonegalitarian, vertical model of parent and child to the egalitarian, horizontal model of fraternal relations, she

qualifies this shift: "Fraternity does not abolish relationship to parents; obviously, it is forever inscribed within that relationship." ¹¹ Rousseau saw parental, hierarchical relations as temporary expedients until children could survive independently; then they were to be peers with their fathers: "the father is master of the child only as long as the child needs his help . . . beyond that they become equals" ("Discourse on Inequality," 48).

Although Rousseau's political writings devote more space to political fathers, political brothers are nevertheless central to the formation of his ideal societies and to the establishment of political solidarity against the tyrannical fathers who govern corrupt societies. In this ideology, fraternity becomes the only enduring model for social and political relationships. Rousseau's domestic utopia is clearest in his comments on education in the "Discourse on Political Economy":

If *children* are brought up in common in the bosom of equality, if they are steeped in the laws of the state and the precepts of the general will, if they are taught to respect them above all things, if they are surrounded by examples and objects which constantly remind them of the tender *mother* who nourishes them, of the love she bears for them, of the inestimable benefits they receive from her, and of what they owe her in return, let us not doubt that they will thus learn to love each other as *brothers*, never wishing anything but what society [endowed with the authority of the political *fathers* on the previous page] wills. ("Political Economy," 73-74, emphases added)

Here, the ideal society is not only one in which citizens relate appropriately to mother and father, but one in which they "love each other as brothers." The two threats to this utopian harmony are brothers who desire what society does not and political fathers who make tyrannical demands. **[End Page 193]**

In Rousseau's comments on the punishment of criminals in his essay "On Social Contract," he suggests how such disruption of social harmony should be addressed. First, he discusses exile and death, which are, interestingly, the ways in which his father and mother left him. But when he writes of corporal punishment, which he claims had driven his brother away (*Confessions*, 21), he wavers in his clarity of expression. He begins strongly: "the frequency of corporal punishment is always a sign of weakness and laxity in the government. There is no evildoer who could not be made good for something" (105). But as he discusses the right to pardon a guilty person ("du droit de faire grâce"), ¹² he is unable to finish his argument: "I feel my heart murmuring and holding back my pen; let us leave the discussion of these questions to the just man who has never erred, and who himself never needed pardoning" (105). Why this hesitation, this gesture towards personal confession, this self-censorship in a political treatise?

The seeds of this concern are, I believe, found in Rousseau's account of the beating of his brother in *The Confessions*. Many critics have examined two later beatings in Rousseau's childhood, one by Mlle Lambercier and the other by Rousseau's Uncle Bernard, but the beating of Rousseau's brother is generally overlooked entirely or mentioned only in passing. ¹³ Each of the three childhood beatings involves a figure representative of a member of Rousseau's family. The first beating is of Rousseau's brother; the second is administered by a surrogate

mother figure ("Mlle Lamercier treated us with a mother's love"--*Confessions*, 25); and the third is given by a surrogate father figure, Uncle Bernard, who was responsible for Rousseau after Rousseau's father fled into exile. All three beatings provide crucial insights into Rousseau's autobiographical and political writings, although Rousseau only acknowledges the second two as formative. He claims that Mlle Lamercier's beating, interacting with an innate sensuality, determined "my tastes and desires, my passion, my very self for the rest of my life" (*Confessions*, 26). Of his Uncle Bernard's beating, he writes: "That first meeting with violence and injustice . . . powerfully reinforced" an innate opposition to and rage against tyranny (*Confessions*, 30).

However, neither of these beatings is as fundamentally formative as Rousseau asserts. They are rather, in Rousseau's experience of them, reworkings of the earliest beating. In the account of the brother's beating is the first and most formative experience of sin, punishment, and forgiveness at an intensely primal level: a *mélange* of blows, embraces, tears, and cries rather than verbal confessions, explanations, or excuses. It is this primary experience of mediation, punishment, and forgiveness, as well as of homoerotic violence, that *The Confessions* and many of the political writings aim to recover, an experience that the lost brother seems to have taken with him when he fled. Rousseau describes the event: "I remember once when my father was correcting [my brother] severely and angrily, throwing myself impetuously between them, and clasp[ing] my arms tightly around him. Thus I covered him with my body, and received the blows intended for him. So obstinately did I maintain my hold that, either as a result of my tearful cries or so as not to hurt me more than him, my father let him off his punishment [lui fit grâce]" (*Confessions*, 21).¹⁴ The final words of the passage echo the political passage on punishment precisely at the point where **[End Page 194]** Rousseau breaks off his narrative. What is it about corporal punishment, about the beating of his brother that Rousseau cannot or will not explore in writing?

Although Rousseau is startlingly frank about his sexuality in *The Confessions*, a major dimension of his sexual psyche is not didactically expressed. I will argue that the heterosexual sensuality aroused by Mlle Lamercier's beating had its origins in a homosexual eroticism aroused by the beating of Rousseau's brother. Of Mlle Lamercier's beating Rousseau writes: "I had discovered in the shame and pain of the punishment an admixture of sensuality which had left me rather eager than otherwise for a repetition by the same hand. No doubt, there being some degree of precocious sexuality in all this, the same punishment at the hands of her brother would not have seemed pleasant at all" (*Confessions*, 25-26). Why, one might ask, is her brother in his mind at all at this point? Is Rousseau recalling an erotic dimension in the shared beating of his brother? In order to argue that Rousseau's erotic response to Mlle Lamercier's beating is a reworking of homoeroticism in the beating of his elder brother, I must first return to an earlier account of Rousseau's relationship with his father. Jean-Jacques describes long, passionate nights of reading with his father, significantly (especially for psychoanalytic theorists) romantic novels that had belonged to his dead mother. Rousseau further tells us he looked like his mother, and that his father would repeatedly entreat him: "Give her back to me, console me for her,

fill the void she has left in my heart! . . . Should I love you so if you were not *more to me than a son?*" (*Confessions*, 19, emphasis added). These verbal entreaties were accompanied by sighs and convulsive embraces ("ses convulsives étreintes," *Les Confessions* 45).

Clearly, Isaac Rousseau's treatment of the young Jean-Jacques not only caused gender confusion but also generational confusion. In his insistence that Jean-Jacques be more than a son, and in his subsequent assertion that he, the father, is "more of a child" than his son (*Confessions*, 19-20), Rousseau's father left him with a contradictory sense of inflation and deprivation that permeates the autobiography. On the one hand, Rousseau's autobiographical claim that he was "used to living on terms of perfect equality with [his] elders" (*Confessions*, 40) feeds into his radical claims about the equality of fathers and sons in the political writings. On the other hand, more than once, and most notably at the end of the "Discourse on Inequality," Rousseau declares with some bitterness: "it is manifestly contrary to the law of nature . . . for a child to command an old man" (57). Perhaps further addressing the sexual threat of his father, Rousseau firmly denounces the practice of fathers who possess not only the belongings but the *person* of their child-subjects, insisting that the father, and by extension the state, must care for rather than feed off the child ("Discourse on Inequality," 48, emphasis added). However, on one level at least, Rousseau clearly enjoyed this unconscious erotic intimacy with his father, safely mediated by an idealized mother and her romantic fiction: "soon my interest in this entertaining literature became so strong that we read by turns continuously, and spent whole nights so engaged" (*Confessions*, 19-20). Then he stumbled on the unmediated, unsafe, passionate physical beating of his brother by his father. Significantly, immediately before this account, Rousseau announces that his mother's "novels gave out in the summer of [End Page 195] 1719, and that winter we changed our reading. Having exhausted my mother's library, we turned to that portion of her father's which had fallen to us," mostly political histories (*Confessions*, 20).

Although we cannot discount Rousseau's claim that he intervened in the beating from impulses of distress and compassion, the language of the account is more erotic than altruistic: "je me jetai impétueusement entre deux, l'embrassant étroitement. Je le couvris ainsi de mon corps, recevant les coups qui lui étaient portés" (*Les Confessions* 47). One could posit that Rousseau envies and comes between the violent passion of the father for the elder son. In order to receive the father's violent physical attention, Rousseau must make his body one with his brother's, as his language clearly expresses. While Rousseau's initial impulse may have been to come between his father and his brother to receive the father's passionate contact in place of his brother, the focus of physical contact then shifts to the brother. Perhaps seeking the violent physical contact of his father, young Rousseau by chance discovered the eroticism of fraternity as he made his body one with his brother's.

After the third beating by Rousseau's Uncle Bernard, Rousseau describes a similar intimate and physical solidarity with his cousin, whom he says was more of a brother to him than his own brother (*Confessions*, 24): "Lying together in the same bed, we embraced wildly [nous nous embrassions avec des transports

convulsifs], almost stifling one another" (*Confessions*, 30; *Les Confessions*, 57). Once again, the bodies of the "brothers" are tightly intertwined; the earlier convulsive embraces of the father are now replaced by the convulsive embracing of a surrogate brother in resistance to a tyrannical beating by a father figure. Bernard had also been unjustly beaten: "when our young hearts were somewhat assuaged and we could give voice to our anger, we sat up and shouted a hundred times in unison at the tops of our voices: 'Carnifex! carnifex! carnifex!' ['Butcher! butcher! butcher!']" (*Confessions*, 30). In the violent, all-male beating of the brother, I believe we see not only Rousseau's erotic initiation into sadomasochism, but also his defense against a simultaneously threatening and desired hierarchical sexuality through fraternal love. Fraternal love is thus inextricably linked to the violence it seeks to redress and carries both the seeds of this violence in rebellion and revenge and the seeds of brotherly compassion in solidarity under oppression. In the maternal beating, he finds a masochistic pleasure; in the paternal beating, he mounts resistance; but in the shared beating of the brother, he discovers both pleasure in the beating and power to stop the beating.

Here, too, I believe, we see the seeds of Rousseau's paranoia. Sigmund Freud's essential equation of paranoia with repressed homosexuality, as well as his association of paranoia with narcissism, idealized fathers, abusive fathers, secrets, sadomasochism, fantasies of child beating, hypochondria, exhibitionism, and the desire to be the source of world order and salvation are well-documented. All of these characteristics apply to Rousseau's representation of himself in *The Confessions*. Micheline Enriquez has written a more brief and accessible summary of these clinical manifestations, including a discussion of Freud's "A Child is Being Beaten," for which her note reads:

"A child is being beaten" is a very well-known phantasy, [which] can be articulated into three phases: **[End Page 196]**

--My father is beating the child I hate (the unconscious sadistic phase).

--My father beats me (the unconscious masochistic phase).

--A child is being beaten (the conscious phase produced by the repression of my father's love for me. He only loves me; he doesn't love the other child, since he beats him). ¹⁵

In this three-pronged explication, the conflation of violence and love, of fathers and brothers, of sadism and masochism clearly point to the complex nature of political fraternal sexuality, which contains both violence and benevolence, authoritarianism and egalitarianism, sadism ("become my brother or die at my hands") and masochism ("give me fraternity or give me death"). ¹⁶

In the autobiographical accounts of fraternal solidarity against paternal authority are images not only of Rousseau's political ideals, but also of the ideals of fraternity surrounding the 1789 revolution. However, as many critics have pointed out, the revolutionary brothers who cried out against butchers, as Rousseau and his cousin had cried out, themselves became butchers in the name of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Commentators have extensively and consistently pointed to the more ominous aspects and totalitarian descendants of Rousseau's political thought. ¹⁷ Although Baker argues that this is an unfortunate evolution of fraternity determined by nineteenth- and twentieth-century dynamics, I would contend that both the violence and the essential

beneficence of fraternity are present in the family romance of Rousseau, a romance he projected onto politics and society, and which society eagerly welcomed as an ideological structure. Part of the reason that Rousseau's family romance was embraced as a political structure is that it took place in an all-male triangle, and politics in eighteenth-century France was still exclusively a masculine domain. ¹⁸ In the political writings, Rousseau addresses the male-dominated realm of politics, in which women are subjugated to men, have no political power, and the feminine becomes a symbolic, idealized backdrop of nature and nation. In political thinking (as opposed to romantic reverie or autobiographical narrative), Rousseau can focus on relationships between brothers and fathers in a distanced, generalized, and objectified discourse. At the heart of his political writing is a social pact between fathers, sons, and brothers, with women scarcely visible.

Rousseau's largely sublimated and conflicted "fraternité" can be linked more explicitly to the highly complex and repressed form of "homosexualité" one finds in *The Confessions*. On a purely definitional level, there are significant similarities between "fraternité" and "homosexualité." Both are bonds between males; in the first case, men share parents and blood; in the second, they share bodies and semen. In the first, they originate from the same genitals; in the second, they interchange similar genitals. Homosexuality brings fraternity to an even more horizontal level, in that men are no longer primarily connected by their vertical relationships to parents, but by their intimate relationships with each other. In his all-male pact, as in homosexual intercourse, "men cannot engender new forces but merely unite and direct the existing ones" ("Social Contract," 92). Rousseau's anti-procreational model is also an anti-female model, for this statement occurs in the context of men uniting against the ominous power of Mother Nature, who threatens the survival of ever-weakening, increasingly socialized man. This male solidarity against the female becomes **[End Page 197]** fraternity when it forms a further union against the power of political tyrants and fathers. In Rousseau's social and political configurations, man is weak and impotent both in nature and society, and the solution to this double threat lies in fraternity, in a political homosexuality where two bodies or many bodies are stronger than natural or political tyranny, just as they were against the beating of the brother by the father.

In the autobiography Rousseau increasingly finds support against tyrannical fathers from brothers. When he flees his flagellant master in Geneva, Rousseau criticizes his father's lack of effort to find him: "By a similar negligence my brother had been lost, so finally lost indeed that it has never been known what became of him" (*Confessions*, 61). On the same page, he writes of his father's cooling paternal feelings, and of his remarriage to a woman, of whom Rousseau complains that "she was no longer of an age to give me *brothers*" (emphasis added). Rousseau blames his father's lack of concern on pecuniary greed. In the absence of his sons, Rousseau's father appropriates an inheritance Rousseau and his brother shared from their mother. Similarly, in the political writings, Rousseau lambastes avaricious rulers who live off the property of their subjects, claiming the birthright of every citizen to a subsistence, an inheritance from the motherland (see, for example, "Political Economy," 75-77).

While in the political writings, the female is relegated to the backdrop of nature and motherland, in Rousseau's autobiography and fiction, she looms large. Rousseau spent his early childhood in an all-male triangle of two siblings and one parent rather than the traditional Oedipal triangle of two heterosexual parents and a child. It thus involves a shift in both gender and generation from the Freudian model, providing a compelling historical and autobiographical argument against the narrow scope and rigidity of psychoanalytic theoretical models; classical Oedipal triangles have been and are still frequently ruptured and restructured by death, political and economic necessity, and increasingly, by divorce and remarriage. In Rousseau's case, while the absent mother has been widely addressed by psychoanalytic critics, very little attention (if any) has been paid to the actual all-male, one-parent/two-sibling triangle in which Rousseau spent his most formative years. In what ways did these males compensate for or demand that others make up for the absence of the mother, who, according to Freudian theory, should be the universal object of desire? Or, when does hatred for the rival male give way to erotic desire for that same rival as surrogate for the absent female?

Such answers need not be entirely speculative. Having pondered the three beatings in *The Confessions* for some time, I was stunned when I came across this passage in Rousseau's *Julie*:

giving himself up to his fit of passion with a violence equal to the effort he was making, he beat me mercilessly, although my mother had thrown herself between us, covered me with her body, and received some of the blows intended for me. In shrinking back to avoid them, I stumbled, I fell, and my head struck the leg of a table, which caused me to bleed. **[End Page 198]**

At this point, the triumph of anger was ended and that of nature began. My fall, my bleeding, my tears and my mother's moved him. ¹⁹

This passage corresponds almost exactly to the account of the brother's beating in *The Confessions*. ²⁰ However, there are some crucial differences: Rousseau's brother has been feminized and sanitized in the character, Julie, while Rousseau's part is played by a fictional mother, just as his father had cast him in the role of surrogate wife. This recasting of his fictional characters in terms of gender and generation to approximate the Oedipal triangle emphasizes the erotic dimension of the beating, and Rousseau's intense identification with his brother, from whose point of view the incident is narrated.

In *Julie*, the fictional scene of passionate embracing that follows her beating occurs between father and child rather than same-sex siblings (as opposed to the autobiographical account of the beating by Uncle Bernard), reinforcing the impression that the primary object of erotic desire in the earliest beating of Rousseau's brother is the father. When Julie falls and strikes her head, her father is seized with concern, shame, and embarrassment, and ends by caressing and embracing her on his lap: "Only sweet and peaceful innocence was wanting in my heart to make this natural scene the most delightful of my life . . . I should think myself only too happy to be beaten every day for this reward, and there was no treatment so harsh that a single caress could not efface from my heart" (*Julie*, 144). The erotic masochism of this passage is clear. The postlude to Julie's beating corresponds to Rousseau's autobiographical and political desire to see

fathers, sons, and brothers united, yet the narrative points to the erotic nature of this bond by feminizing some of the actors.

I have stressed the appeal of Rousseau's all-male family triangle for his own political writings. In his autobiography, however, Rousseau sublimates male bonds, stressing relationships with women, perhaps as a defense against the threatening, erotic power of fathers and brothers, or perhaps as a means of lending male bonds further erotic intensity. As in his fictional writings, the ostensible objects of erotic desire are all women, but behind each of his romantic infatuations lurks a father or brother figure (sometimes a conflation of the two) who is the unconscious object of desire.²¹ Throughout *The Confessions*, Rousseau expresses horror and disgust for homosexual behavior.²² Rousseau is clearly uncomfortable with unmediated homosexual desire. Just as his mother's novels mediated his passion for his father, so Rousseau can only enjoy homosexual sensuality when mediated by a woman. Rousseau's first love, Mlle de Vulson, used Rousseau as a mediator between her real objects of sexual interest just as his father had done: "Such artful maidens know how to make use of little men as covers for their affairs with their elders, or to tempt real lovers by making an attractive show with unreal ones" (*Confessions*, 36). But Rousseau also uses Mlle de Vulson to mediate his own erotic desires, as his fictionalized mother and her romantic novels had mediated his passion for his father: "I think that, at bottom, my violent feelings were not all for her; the amusements of which she was the center had their share in them too" (*Confessions*, 38). These amusements were largely comprised of flirtations with other males: "In company I was beside myself with love for her; alone with her, I should have been constrained and cold, perhaps bored" **[End Page 199]** (*Confessions*, 37). But direct fraternal erotic desire is another component of his infatuation: "I loved her as a brother, but with a lover's jealousy" (*Confessions*, 37).

More often the object of fraternal love in *The Confessions* is male, with the erotic component of desire mediated by women. Venture de Villeneuve is a brother figure with whom Rousseau is infatuated for a time. It is Venture's feminine alto voice that makes the most powerful first impression on Rousseau (*Confessions*, 123).²³ Venture fills the paragraphs surrounding the romantic encounter with Mlles Gaffenried and Galley. Immediately before he meets the two young women, Rousseau writes:

I sought out M. Venture, to whom I had not even given a thought since my departure, despite my infatuation [with him]. I found him sparkling and feted by the whole of Annecy; the ladies fought for him. His success completely turned my head. I saw no one at all except M. Venture, and he almost made me forget Mme de Warens. In order to have greater profit from his example, I proposed to him that I should share his lodgings . . . [in the afternoons] I went off to walk alone, meditating upon his great virtues, admiring and envying his rare talents. (*Confessions*, 131)

It is while he is meditating upon Venture's "great virtues" that he meets Mlles Galley and Gaffenried, struggling to get their horses across a stream. In the scene are two impelling motivations from the brother's beating: the desire to help and the dreaded and desired whip. Rousseau writes: "I wanted to use the whip," but the ladies refuse. Mlle Gaffenried's words about the absent mother further

stimulate Rousseau: "No electric spark could be quicker than the effect [those] words had on me," he says (*Confessions*, 133). This reference completes the family circle: the absent mother, the flagellant father, and the sibling in need of aid are all represented in Rousseau's account.

Immediately after the encounter with Mlles Galley and Gaffenried, Rousseau returns to his narration of Venture and then, strikingly, tells a disconnected anecdote about the effeminate and diminutive M. Simon, who is often mistaken for a woman. He then resumes the story of Mlles Galley and Gaffenried without any logical narrative transition. But the underlying unconscious transitions are coherent. The narrative shifts from the young ladies to Venture, and then to M. Simon, an effeminate man often mistaken for a woman, all point to Venture's function as a male object of desire, adding a shadowy fourth corner to the heterosexual romantic triangle, just as Rousseau's brother impinges on the more explicit Oedipal triangle of Rousseau's family of origin.

If the mother is merely an absent referent in the escapade with Mlles Galley and Gaffenried, she fills another romantic triangulation of Rousseau's autobiography. Rousseau tells us that Mme de Warens was the most significant person in his life, the definitive mother figure of *The Confessions*, linked to Mother Church and Mother Nature, a popular character with Freudian critics, in that Rousseau has what feels like an incestuous relationship with her. In the context of this essay, however, I would argue that making love with her feels incestuous not because she functions as **[End Page 200]** both mother and lover, but because she is the medium for an incestuous love with a combined father-brother figure, her servant and lover, Anet. "She was to me more than a sister, more than a mother, more than a friend, more than a mistress; and that is why she was not a mistress to me. In short I loved her too much to desire her; that is the clearest idea I have on the subject" (*Confessions*, 189). The "more than" here is an echo of the incestuous father insisting that Jean-Jacques is "more than a son" to him. In the love triangle with Mme de Warens and Anet, Rousseau, who had earlier declared, "I could never bear to remain with a third party [when with Mme de Warens]," now writes: "instead of taking a dislike for the man who had stolen her from me I actually felt the affection I had for her extending to him" (*Confessions*, 107, 173). More tellingly, he says: "How many times did she melt our hearts and cause us to embrace in tears . . . in spite of our private relationships even our *tête-à-têtes* were less delightful than our being all three together" (*Confessions*, 193-94). Anet in this configuration functions for a time as an idealized father figure: "so mature and grave that he almost looked on us as two children who deserved indulgence, and we both looked on him as a man worthy of respect" (*Confessions*, 195). But when a fourth person intrudes on their happy triangle, a Doctor Grossi, whom Rousseau describes as "the most caustic and brutal fellow I have ever met" (*Confessions*, 195), Anet's benevolent father role is replaced by Grossi's brutal paternal function. In Rousseau's eulogy, not only for Anet but for the *ménage à trois*, Anet is no longer the grave father, but a peer: "the staunchest friend I had had in all my life" (197). In Rousseau's narrative of Anet's death (Rousseau's version differs from other sources that more reliably suggest Anet committed suicide after finding himself replaced in Mme de Warens' bed by Rousseau), Anet becomes aligned with the lost brother whom the chastising

father drives away, whom Rousseau cannot save. His death is reinscribed as a family romantic tragedy: "Despite all Grossi's art--and he was certainly a very clever man--and despite the infinite care we took of him, his kind mistress and I, he died in our arms on the fifth day, after the cruellest suffering, with no other spiritual exhortations than my own; and these I lavished on him amidst transports of such heartfelt grief that if he had been in the state to understand me, he should have received some consolation" (*Confessions*, 197). After Anet's death, the physical affair with Mme de Warens quickly deteriorates, significantly first through an illness that reintroduces a brutal doctor figure. This doctor is the first in a long line of physicians who treat Rousseau invasively and painfully, providing him with intimate and painful male contact. An argument could be made for Rousseau's recurring urinary infections as a way of receiving sadistic homosexual attention from doctors, whom he overtly detested but nevertheless kept on requiring. His urinary tract infections are eventually used as a reason for abstaining from intercourse with women (*Confessions*, 548-49). ²⁴

Rousseau's second way of escape from the unwelcome dyad with Mme de Warens is borrowed from his brother: he runs off on a Venture-like venture (which becomes a Bâcle-like debacle), ²⁵ ostensibly to seek a fortune for Mme de Warens, actually fleeing the unmediated relationship with her, substituting the medium of money. Although Robert Elbaz argues that Rousseau abhorred the mediating dimensions of **[End Page 201]** money as well as mediation in general, it seems here that the pursuit of money, society's great mediator, substitutes for the lost mediated, triangular relationship. ²⁶

But nowhere is there more didactic evidence for woman as a mediator of homoerotic desire than in Rousseau's infatuation with Mme d'Houdetot. Rousseau had already devoted himself to an erotic fantasy based on the episode with Mlles Gaffenried and Galley when he tells us an encounter with Sophie d'Houdetot propelled her into his narrative: "At the height of my reveries I received a visit from Mme d'Houdetot . . . Her intimacy with M. de Saint-Lambert, with whom I was beginning to be on close terms, made her still more interesting to me . . . she arrived at the Hermitage in a pair of boots" (*Confessions*, 402). A second time, "she came on horseback, in man's clothes . . . and this time it was love" (*Confessions*, 408). Not only Sophie's masculine dress, but her highly verbal and explicit passion for her male lover aroused Rousseau. It is worth quoting several passages together and at length, since they so clearly support this interpretation:

He had exhorted her [to see me], for he quite rightly supposed that the friendship which was beginning to grow up between us would make our relationship pleasant for all three . . . To complete my undoing, she talked to me of Saint-Lambert like a passionate lover . . . I imagined that I was only sympathizing with her feelings, when really *I was beginning to feel as she did* . . . Love was always the third party when we were together . . . Poor Jean-Jacques, love as you will, with a safe conscience, and do not fear that your sighs will do Saint-Lambert any harm! . . . I found her so loveable in her love for Saint-Lambert that I could hardly imagine her being so if she had loved me . . . [I] never for one moment looked on her lover as my rival, but always as my friend. It may be suggested that this was not really love.

Very well, then, it was something more [again, an echo of the father's erotic "more than"] . . . Was it not he who had sent her to me? . . . I certainly should have thrown myself unreservedly into her lover's arms, have submitted myself wholly to his guidance (*Confessions*, 410, 414, 411, 429, 444, emphasis added)

After Sophie ends the relationship with Rousseau, he is far more concerned about Saint-Lambert: "as I went away I scarcely gave [Sophie] a thought; my mind was entirely taken up with Saint-Lambert" (*Confessions*, 464).

Rousseau tells us that this triangular fantasy and the one with Mlle Galley and Gaffenried was the basis for his novel, *Julie*. While most readers and critics equate Rousseau with his hero, St. Preux, the name, approximating as it does Saint-Lambert, points to an alternative configuration. I would suggest that, while Rousseau might have wished himself to be St. Preux just as he had earlier emulated and even taken on the name of Venture (*Confessions*, 145), the fictional character who most corresponds to Rousseau in the love triangle is Claire.

Feminizing Claire makes her sexually available to men and to various triangulations with principal characters of both genders, as I have argued the autobiographical Rousseau unconsciously desired. Claire writes to her fiancé: "as a woman I am a kind of monster, and, I know not by what caprice of nature, my friendship outweighs my love. I tell you that my Julie is dearer to me than you . . . What is more, I have such an affection for everyone [End Page 202] who is dear to her that both her lover [St. Preux] and you hold almost the same place in my heart" (146-47). Yet Claire's passionate relationship with Julie also eroticizes same-sex relationships, so that the desire for the same sex and the desire for the male are both represented by this gender shift. St. Preux responds to a scene of Claire's physical intimacy with Julie:

what ecstasy to see two such touching beauties tenderly embracing . . . I was jealous of so tender a friendship. I found in it something indefinably more interesting than in love itself, and I wished to be somehow *punished* for not being able to offer such tender consolations without disturbing them by the *violence* of my passion. No, nothing, nothing on earth is capable of exciting so voluptuous a tenderness as your mutual caresses, and in my eyes, the sight of two lovers might have offered a less delightful sensation. Ah, in that moment I might have been in love with that adorable cousin [Claire], if Julie had not existed. (*Julie*, 96, emphases added)

St. Preux's pained reference to his own violent sexuality and his desire for punishment again invokes the beating of Rousseau's brother, and by extension, Rousseau's autobiographical abhorrence of homosexuality, an abhorrence that extends to male sexuality in general. Recording his first encounter with homosexual behavior, Rousseau writes: "I know of no more hideous sight for a man in cold blood than such foul and obscene behaviour, nothing more revolting than a terrifying face on fire with the most brutal lust. I have never seen another man in that state; but if we appear like that to women, they must indeed be fascinated not to find us repulsive" (*Confessions*, 72). In the passage from *Julie* cited above, Rousseau explores the alternative of a less violent female homoeroticism.

But this essay is not only concerned with triangles: in its attempt to restore Rousseau's brother to the family romance, it is very much interested in the

shadowy fourth corners of Rousseau's triangular configurations. While Sophie's husband, the Count d'Houdetot, does not present much of a threat to Rousseau's triangle with Sophie and Saint-Lambert, the arch-villain of *The Confessions*, Grimm, like Grossi in the Mme Waren-Anet triangle, lurks menacingly at the fourth corner when he tries to start an affair with Sophie (417). Although Grimm knocked unsuccessfully at the triangle revolving around Sophie, he is certainly present in other configurations. Rousseau's central complaint about Grimm is that he refused to triangulate his own friends with Rousseau, and that he turned Rousseau's triangles against him: "He never introduced me to any of his friends. I introduced him to all mine, and finally he took them all away from me" (*Confessions*, 436). Indeed, if one looks at *The Confessions* from the point of view of Rousseau's triangulations, Grimm becomes omnipresent. He replaces the Le Vasseur father by becoming the protector of Mme Le Vasseur (*Confessions*, 468); he tries to start an affair with Sophie (*Confessions*, 417); he has an affair with Mme d'Épinay (*Confessions*, 432), Rousseau's benefactress, who aroused passionate emotions in him when she had her undergarments made into a vest for him (*Confessions*, 407).

Initially, he seems to function as a brother for Rousseau, a "foreigner and a newcomer" in need of Rousseau's patronage. Grimm is a German: **[End Page 203]** Rousseau's brother was last heard of in Germany. Rousseau's infatuation with Grimm is similar to earlier infatuations with brother figures and, as Venture had made him forget Mme de Warens, Grimm makes Rousseau neglect his long-time mistress and later wife, Thérèse: "At length I became so firmly attached to this young man and we became so inseparable that even poor 'aunt' [Rousseau's name for Thérèse] was neglected" (*Confessions*, 329). But soon Grimm further impinges on Rousseau's family romance when he moves into the fourth corner of Rousseau's *ménage à trois* with Thérèse and her mother, Mme Le Vasseur. Rousseau was resistant to fourth corners, and had already disposed of M. Le Vasseur and all of his and Thérèse's children, sending them to death or obscurity in charitable institutions. Grimm undertakes to support Mme Le Vasseur, chastising Rousseau for his neglect of her (*Confessions*, 355). They are jealous of each other's women lovers: Rousseau takes exception to Grimm's passion for Mlle Fels, and Grimm takes pleasure in telling Thérèse that Rousseau went with him to a prostitute. In this joint sexual venture, they share a common prostitute, which is as close as the autobiographical Rousseau ever comes to homosexual intercourse.

Why, one might ask, is Grimm the ultimate, omnipresent villain in *The Confessions*? Is it possible that he shared Rousseau's brand of unconscious homosexuality and was thus a mirror of all that Rousseau most desired and feared in himself? Although by the time Rousseau writes *The Confessions* Grimm is called a "brutal villain" (the adjective in this phrase is the one most commonly used by Rousseau to describe homosexual behavior, as well as males beating other males), he is physically depicted as a beau "with a fancy for womanish beautification" who wore makeup, and spent "two hours every morning polishing his nails." Rousseau's derision and anger at this practice seems to stem more from the fact that Grimm's beautification is aimed at the ladies than because he despises effeminate men (*Confessions*, 434).

Reverie is increasingly replaced by paranoia as Grimm appears to infiltrate all Rousseau's relationships. By the end of his life, Rousseau's passion for triangulation has become a persecution complex: "Such has always been my fate; the moment I have brought two friends together, who I had made independently, they have never failed to combine against me" (*Confessions*, 370). Towards the end of *The Confessions*, we see the first all-male quadrangle, and it is a hostile one: "three men [Grimm, Diderot, d'Holbach] united against a fourth [Rousseau]." This all-male configuration, recalling the beating of Rousseau's brother, "moved freely in the fashionable world and divided almost all of its circles between them" (*Confessions*, 456-57). Eventually, triangles expand and become networks plotting against him. Rousseau sees spies and enemies everywhere. The all-male conspiracy extends to include fate: "every individual will, every turn of fate, every change in fortune, has served to consolidate this work of men's hands, and such a striking and incredible combination of circumstances leaves me in no doubt that it is Heaven's eternal decree that their designs shall be crowned with complete success." [27](#)

Women are no longer benevolent mediators. Thérèse and her mother are referred to as the "two bosses" (*Confessions*, 407), and Rousseau stops having intercourse with Thérèse (*Confessions*, 548). Women cease to be benefactors: **[End Page 204]** Rousseau's money now comes from M. Rey and M. de Luxembourg. Mme de Luxembourg and her daughter-in-law are depicted as mocking, spiteful figures by contrast to the kind Marshal. [28](#)

By the time Rousseau writes the *Reveries*, he is both outcast and in self-imposed exile from society. Interestingly, he opens the book: "So now I am alone in the world, with no brother" (*Reveries*, 27, emphases added). But his solitary self is nevertheless a social self: "In spite of men I shall still enjoy the charms of company, and in my decrepitude I shall live with my earlier self as I might with a younger friend" (*Reveries*, 34-35). The search for his lost childhood has been replaced by "the children of my imagination" (*Reveries*, 131), just as his literary progeny replace his physical offspring. His fictional children alternate in a paranoid pattern with his fantasized enemies and leave him no peace. Rousseau ends with an autobiographical self seeking to live only in relation to self: a self that is its own father and master, its own friend and brother, its own children and its own enemies, writing for itself as its own public. In the final analysis, "liberté," the breaker of social bonds, has consumed both "égalité" and "fraternité," the sustainers of social bonds.

Ultimately, Rousseau fails in his quest to recover his life at its origins or to find his lost brother, because he cannot consciously come to terms with the bad child. The lost brother represents both the lost child and the bad child in Rousseau that confession is supposed to retrieve and redeem. Being bad and being lost cohere in Rousseau's brother: "In the end my brother became so *bad* that he ran away and completely *disappeared*" (*Confessions*, 21, emphasis added). The lost child and the bad child are one in his account, and cannot be found independently of each other, yet Rousseau insists on sanitizing childhood as the age of innocence in both his autobiographical and political writings. To attribute sin to nature would be to confront his mother fixation, which Rousseau cannot afford to do,

since the ideal mother is all that stands between him and the unmediated, violent passion of the father. Evil must therefore be projected and blamed on fate, society, or others, while the roots of these projections consume him from within. While in the political writings the search for origins is largely one of intuitive imagination, in the autobiographical writings the path to the original self is one of imaginative memory. The French "souvenir," literally "to come from before or below," aptly describes Rousseau's quest toward the past and the unconscious; while the English, "re-member," emphasizes his search for unity, merger and integration. Rousseau writes: "I know nothing of myself till I was five or six" (*Confessions*, 19). The brother seven years older would have possessed the memories of these years, but he is lost. Even before his disappearance, he is an elusive figure: "I hardly ever saw him. Indeed, I can hardly say that I ever knew him" (*Confessions*, 21).

Jean-Jacques' brother, who is significantly not named in *The Confessions* and thus only another Rousseau, bears the sins of Rousseau's youth. He is depicted as the family villain and wastrel, while Rousseau's almost identical behaviors are designated "childish misdeeds" (22) and "idle pranks" (43). In Rousseau's account of his own childhood, the bad child runs away from the narrative entirely along with his elder brother, and the disappearance of Rousseau's brother is followed by **[End Page 205]** one of the most unbelievable passages in *The Confessions*, a romanticized account of Rousseau's own childhood, in which he claims not only sinlessness, but the total absence of desire and will: "My desires were so rarely excited and so rarely thwarted, that it never came into my head to have any." Rousseau thus presents his younger self as a perfect young model of the citizen adhering to the general will within the pseudo-political structure of the family (22). But this account of his idyllic childhood is not allowed to progress without painful emotions: the memory of a childhood song interrupts his narrative and makes him weep "like a *child* . . . I cannot explain why I am moved," he says (*Confessions*, 23, emphasis added). Nor can he recall all the words of the song. Accompanying the forgotten lyrics, buried in the nonverbal music that makes him weep, one imagines the more painful and perhaps guilt-ridden memories of Rousseau's own lost childhood that he will not recall nor give expression to in words. This pain and guilt not only drives Rousseau to scapegoat his brother, but also to emulate his adolescent sins--perhaps in an attempt to retrieve what the lost brother represents through imitative identification. In the beating passage from *Julie* cited above, the event is told from Julie's (the brother's) point of view, an indication that Rousseau's physical oneness with his brother in the beating extended to a need to identify imaginatively with him as well. Rousseau, like his brother, develops a predilection for running away. The first time he absconds, he leaves behind his surrogate brother, Bernard, exactly as his brother had left him. His later abscondings are often *with* brother figures, like M. de Bâcle and Venture de Villeneuve, adding fraternal solidarity to the rejection of patriarchal bonds. Between Rousseau's attempt to save his brother from beating and his political plan of salvation for society lies an adolescent period of compulsive stealing, punishment, and self-justification. This process is a reenactment of the beating of the brother, in which crime, punishment, and salvation cohere in the body of the young Rousseau. As a young apprentice, Rousseau recreated his brother's

dishonest and rebellious behavior, and was beaten by his master, just as his brother had been beaten by his father. In Rousseau's account, stealing and beating create a circular rather than a linear process, in which beating is not only the retribution for stealing, but the justifying power for the next theft, an authorizing base for the structure of rebellion: "I reckoned that to be beaten like a rogue justified my being one. I found that thieving and beating belonged together, and were in a sense a single state" (*Confessions*, 43).

In the beating of Rousseau's brother, we see the formative stage of this authorizing symbiosis: Rousseau both steals the blows meant for his brother and is punished for this theft by these very blows, at the same time that he saves his brother from those blows. Thus, salvation (whether personal, familial, or political) is coextensive not only with punishment, but also with the sins that require that punishment in the context of sadomasochistic male physical contact. Consequently, there is no final salvation or extrication from sin, only endless cycles and revolutions, as in politics. Salvation, crime, punishment, and homoerotic desire converge in the three major confessions that Rousseau makes in the first three books of *The Confessions*. The first intensely difficult and prominent confession is the admission that he is sensually aroused by beating. My arguments on that point should by now be clear: that erotic pleasure is equated with blows and caresses, with punishment and forgiveness. **[End Page 206]** The second major confession is the widely-discussed tale of the purloined ribbon. ²⁹ Rousseau confesses that he blamed fellow-servant Marion for the theft because he was ashamed of being publicized as a thief. But this explanation follows pages of innumerable incidents in which he stole, was caught, and was punished for stealing. He even tells us at one point that the more he stole, the less ashamed he felt about stealing (43). A more convincing reason for Rousseau's shame, and one consistent with the arguments of this essay, emerges when we consult the passage in which the rose ribbon reappears, the description of the effeminate M. Simon. Rousseau mocks the androgynous M. Simon, but also pauses to imagine him naked (*Confessions*, 137-38). At night, Rousseau tells us, M. Simon wore "a beautiful night cap of finest white linen decorated with two great knobs of *rose-coloured ribbon*." In these ribbons, M. Simon was often mistaken for a woman. Could it be that the real source of Rousseau's shame and embarrassment was his desire for this feminizing article, and that he not only lied to M. de la Roque in blaming Marion, but also to the reader in claiming that he intended to give the ribbon to Marion?

Rousseau's third major confession is his abandonment of M. le Maître in the midst of a violent epileptic fit, bringing about the loss of the man's livelihood when his music is confiscated by authorities (*Confessions*, 127). Rousseau describes but cannot explain his terror of M. le Maître's seizure. But an earlier reference to epilepsy in *The Confessions* sheds light on Rousseau's excessive and inexplicable reaction. In his first and most frightening homosexual encounter, Rousseau likened the Moor's ejaculation to a "fit of epilepsy or some other seizure even more terrible" (*Confessions*, 71). Like his father's convulsive hugs, and the convulsive embraces with cousin Bernard, the epileptic fit of M. le Maître evokes the convulsions of the Moor's homoerotic male orgasm. This is what causes Rousseau to flee.

But to end with Rousseau's three major "sins" would be to lose sight of Rousseau's three major forms of writing (autobiographical, political, and fictional) and to obscure the value and significance of Rousseau's life work along with the lost life work of M. le Maître. Just as the violent, guilt-ridden, ashamed undercurrents of fraternity coexist with its beneficent, creative, and justice-oriented elements, so too, the self-destructiveness of the representational brother is accompanied by creative and nurturing dimensions. Rousseau's anger and guilt over the unequal treatment and education that he and his brother received subsequently becomes an impassioned concern about educational theory and practice, as well as a more generalized zeal for political equality. Rousseau's brother is poorly educated; Rousseau becomes an educational theorist. His brother is a "libertin" (*Les Confessions*, 47); Rousseau becomes a libertarian.

Subsequent brother figures had a similar impact on Rousseau's expression. Anet, Venture, and Saint-Lambert were not simply erotic substitutes for Rousseau's lacking and lost family bonds. Just as Rousseau's brother aroused a lifelong interest in education and equality, so too, Anet generated a creative interest in botany for Rousseau, which grew with time to become the central occupation of his final days. In the *Reveries*, Rousseau writes: "It is the chain of accessory ideas that makes me love botany. . . . It carries me off to quiet places, among good and simple people such as those I once knew. It reminds me of my youth and my innocent pleasures, [End Page 207] it allows me to enjoy them anew" (120-21). In botany, Rousseau not only emulated a beloved brother, but he also discovered a specific and objective approach to nature to counter his purely imaginary and idealized one.

Similarly, Rousseau's early romanticized childhood delight in the singing of his mothering aunt becomes a concrete profession and source of income through Venture: "I always imitated my great model as closely as I could" (*Confessions*, 144-45). The forgotten songs of childhood become the written compositions and musical copying of adulthood. Furthermore, the unfulfilled infatuations with Venture and Saint-Lambert are in part responsible for Rousseau's transformation of reverie to romance, of novel reading to novel writing:

I confined myself for a long time to so vague a plan because it was sufficient to fill my imagination with pleasant objects, and my heart with those feelings on which it loves to feed. This fiction, by constant repetition, finally assumed greater consistency and took a fixed and definite shape in my brain. It was then that the whim seized me to set down on paper some of the situations that it suggested to me and, by recalling all that I had felt in my youth, to give some sort of expression to my desire to love which I had never been able to satisfy, and which I now felt was devouring me (*Confessions*, 401)

A less prominent but similarly loved friend in *The Confessions*, M. de Conzié, encouraged Rousseau's interest in literature and philosophy: "The seeds of literature and philosophy, which were beginning to stir in my brain, and which required only a little care and competition for their complete development, found both in him" (*Confessions*, 205). What distinguishes this from a pseudo-

maternal nurturing of talent is the word, "competition," evoking as it does the dynamic of sibling rivalry, just as it was the essay competition that inspired Rousseau's first political essay.

The love of brothers, whether in projected political "fraternité" or repressed private "homosexualité," seems to have been not only threatening and destructive for Rousseau, but also encouraging and inspirational, a productive, materializing force in his life work. Whereas the mother can arouse fictional reverie and the father, political indignation, without the brother figures in his life, Rousseau might never have put pen to paper. The loss of the brother who never wrote ("he did not write at all"--*Confessions*, 21) may well have made a writer of Rousseau, turning maternally inspired romantic reveries into novels and paternally aroused moral indignation into political treatises. Without Rousseau's elder brother, there might have only been reveries and ideals that never came to expression. In his imaginative identification with his brother reside strong motivational and inspirational stimuli to Rousseau's thinking, but in the corporeal identification with his brother in the homoerotic beating lie the seeds of Rousseau's material productions.

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Notes

1. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "On Social Contract," *Rousseau's Political Writings*, trans. Julia Conway Bondanella (New York: Norton, 1988), 86. Further references to this work follow parenthetically in the text.
2. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on Political Economy," in *Rousseau's Political Writings*, 73. Further references to this work follow parenthetically in the text.
3. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Confessions*, trans. J. M. Cohen (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 19, 21, 23. Further references follow parenthetically in the text.
4. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men," in *Rousseau's Political Writings*, 56. Further references to this work follow parenthetically in the text.
5. See Marie-Hélène Huet, "Le Défaut de l'Histoire: écriture et paternité chez Rousseau," *Modern Language Notes* 104 (1989): 804-18; Michel de Certeau, *L'Écriture de l'Histoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975); Lieve Spaas, "D'un Clarens à l'autre: structures du désir sexuel dans *La Nouvelle Héloïse*," *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* 284 (1991): 73-82; Susan Grayson, "Rousseau and the Text as Self," in *Narcissism and the Text: Studies in Literature and the Psychology of Self*, edited by Lynne Layton and Barbara Ann Schapiro (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1986), 78-96; Fred. C. Alford, "Rousseau: Political Theory in Defense of Self-Esteem," in his *The Self in Social Theory* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1991), 156-70, to name just a few recent essays.
6. Theodore Lidz, *The Relevance of the Family to Psychoanalytic Theory* (Madison, Connecticut: International Universities Press, Inc., 1992), 173. Despite his championing of the inclusion of siblings in psychoanalytic theory, in 224 pages of

text on the family, Lidz devotes less than two pages to the impact of siblings on development; of 219 references, Lidz can cite only three studies that examine sibling relationships in psychoanalytic research.

[7.](#) In "On Social Contract," Rousseau writes: "If we enquire into exactly what constitutes the greatest good of all, which should be the end of every system of legislation, we shall find that it comes down to these two principal objectives: *liberty* and *equality*" (115). He does not mention fraternity, but there are scattered references to brothers and a qualified democracy throughout the political writings. Felicity Baker says that "in Enlightenment writing on liberty and equality, there is not much to collect before 1789." See her "Rousseau's Oath and Revolutionary Fraternity: 1789 and Today" in *Romance Quarterly* 38 (1991): 273-87. I am indebted to Baker's summary of the historical and critical background material on fraternity.

[8.](#) Cited by Baker, "Rousseau's Oath," 283.

[9.](#) Baker, "Rousseau's Oath," 283.

[10.](#) Cited by Baker, "Rousseau's Oath," 281.

[11.](#) Baker, "Rousseau's Oath," 278-79, 284.

[12.](#) French quotations are from Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Du Contrat Social*, ed. Pierre Burgelin (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1966). This passage is found on page 73.

[13.](#) See, for example, Jean Starobinski, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Transparency and Obstruction*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1971, 1988); E. S. Burt, "Developments in Character: Reading and Interpretation in 'The Children's Punishment' and 'The Broken Comb,'" *Yale French Studies* 69 (1985): 192-210.

[14.](#) French quotations are from Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Les Confessions*, ed. Michel Launay, 2 vols. (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1968). This passage is found in volume 1, on page 47. Further quotations from this text will be cited parenthetically, referenced as *Les Confessions*.

[15.](#) See her "Paranoiac Fantasies: Sexual Difference, Homosexuality, Law of the Father," in *Psychosis and Sexual Identity: Toward a Post-Analytic View of the Schreber Case*, edited by David B. Allison, Prado de Oliveira, Mark S. Roberts, and Allen S. Weiss (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1988), 102-29. The note cited here is on page 128. Enriquez's article has further implications for Rousseau in her discussion of the importance of secrets for paranoiacs and particularly of homosexuality as a secret hidden from the paranoiac self (118).

[16.](#) Kenneth Lewes, in his *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Homosexuality* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), writes of a later paper Freud wrote in 1922, declaring a case of homosexuality to be a reaction against murderous feelings towards rival siblings, linking fraternity and homosexuality in a new way (Lewes, 48). Lewes also points out that Freud's child-beating paper applied to a female child's anal, regressive substitute for an incestuous relationship with the father, and to Freud's inability to transfer this model to boys because he could not accept the idea of a boy's passive incestuous attachment to his father (105-6). My reading of Rousseau, rather than being simple heresy, joins much contemporary revisionist criticism of Freud in terms of gender-bias, arguing for Rousseau's passive incestuous love for his father.

[17.](#) Baker suggests Robert Wokler's "Rousseau's Two Concepts of Liberty," in *Lives, Liberties and the Public Good*, eds. George Feaver and Frederick Rosen

(London: Macmillan, 1986), 61-100 as a valuable critical summary of the liberal critique of Rousseau.

[18.](#) I, of course, acknowledge the significant role played by women in the French Revolution, whether by Marie Antoinette or the knitting head-counters, but in the literature, politics is predominantly a male contract, as it is in Rousseau's own writings.

[19.](#) Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Julie, or the New Eloise*, trans. Judith H. McDowell (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1968), 143. The reader should note that *Julie* was written (late 1750s; published 1760) before *The Confessions* (books 1-6 were written 1765-77; books 7-12, from 1767-70).

[20.](#) I am particularly thinking of the passage in the account from *The Confessions* that reads: "throwing myself impetuously between them, and clasping my arms tightly around him. Thus I covered him with my body, and received the blows intended for him" (21).

[21.](#) Rousseau tries out different family roles in his autobiographical relationships and casts the same character in different roles at various times. As with his complex and often confusing statements about the general will, his conflation of persons and roles renders a consistent, one-to-one correspondence of autobiographical character to archetypal family role impossible.

[22.](#) Nevertheless, he seems to repeatedly occasion and partially acquiesce to homosexual advances. See *Confessions*, 71-73 and 161-63 for three such accounts.

[23.](#) Mme de Warens' most attractive feature for Rousseau is also her feminine voice (*Confessions*, 188).

[24.](#) By contrast, Doctor Salomon restores Rousseau's health largely through lending him books, reviving the benevolent reading father rather than the abusive beating one. Although I am not at all disputing the physical manifestation of Rousseau's symptoms, medical science is once again acknowledging the power of the psyche to produce or at least intensify various somatic responses, including illness.

[25.](#) Rousseau was also infatuated with M. de Bâcle and ran away with him on an abortive adventure.

[26.](#) See Robert Elbaz, "Autobiography and Political Theory in Rousseau," *Neohelicon* 12 (1985): 9-33.

[27.](#) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Reveries of the Solitary Walker* (New York: Penguin, 1979), 44-45. Further references follow parenthetically in the text.

[28.](#) The casting of M. de Luxembourg as a benevolent figure in the midst of all Rousseau's paranoia may have something to do with his staying with Rousseau during a painful genital procedure:

with a courage indeed rare, and most meretorious in a great nobleman, he stayed with me during the operation, which was both long and painful. It was only a question of being probed, but I had never been able to stand it . . . Brother Côme, who had rare skill and lightness of touch, finally succeeded in introducing a very small probe, after giving me two hours of suffering during which I forcibly smothered my groans in order to spare the tender-hearted Marshal's feelings. (*Confessions*, 528)

In this episode there is a painful, but benevolent male triangle involving a hierarchical, fatherly figure (in terms of age and of economic support) and a monastic brother. From that time, Rousseau says, he lost his fear of a painful

death from urinary disease and suffered less from urinary maladies.

[29](#). See, for example, Paul de Man, "Excuses," in his *Allegories in Reading* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1979), 278-301; Michael O'Dea, "The Double Narrative of the Stolen Ribbon in Rousseau's Confessions," *Nottingham French Studies* 23 (1984): 1-8.