In the introduction to his translation of *Emile*, Allan Bloom says that what Rousseau attempts “is to present an egalitarian politics that rivals Plato’s politics in moral appeal.” In imagination, Rousseau “takes an ordinary boy and experiments with the possibility of making him into an autonomous man—morally and intellectually independent, as was Plato’s philosopher-king.” In contrast, Rousseau himself says, “Read Plato’s *Republic*. It is not at all a political work, as think those who judge books only by their titles. It is the most beautiful educational treatise ever written” (p. 40). In fact, the *Republic* is both a political and an educational treatise, and so is *Emile*; moreover, if Plato’s title has misled generations into supposing his greatest dialogue to be solely a political work, Rousseau’s title, *Emile*, or *On Education*, has led them to the opposite error of supposing this great book to be solely about education.

To understand fully the political and social dimensions of *Emile*, it is necessary to do something seldom done, namely to read carefully what Rousseau has to say about the education of Sophie. Then the darker side of the egalitarian politics unfolded by Rousseau in *The Social Contract*, his explicitly political treatise published in the same year as *Emile*, is revealed, and the irony of Bloom’s judgment that Rousseau’s egalitarianism does not debase man “for the sake of the will-o-the-wisp, security” (p. 6) becomes apparent. Plato’s guardians, upon whom Emile is modeled, are destined to contemplate the Good and rule the state. Stripped of private home, family, marriage, and child rearing, their lives are to be dedicated to the specific role for which their education prepares them. Emile too is destined to rule, albeit as a citizen in a democracy rather than as a philosopher king. The big difference between his life and that of Plato’s guardians, however, is that Rousseau restores the very insti-

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Rousseau’s Sophie

The Difference of Sex

“Everything that characterizes the fair sex ought to be respected as established by nature,” Rousseau says (p. 363). As book 5 proceeds, however, it becomes clear that in attributing traits to Sophie and calling them “natural,” Rousseau is selective. What exactly are Sophie’s characteristics? To know the answer to this question, one need only recall the song Irving Berlin wrote in 1946 for *Annie Get Your Gun*. The girl that he marries, sings the hero of that musical comedy, must wear lace, satin, nailpolish, and cologne. Soft and pink, she must be a doll he can carry.4

Rousseau’s Sophie “awaits the moment when she will be her own doll” (p. 367). She has an agreeable and nimble mind. She loves adornment. Guile is a natural talent of hers, as is the art of coquetry. Rousseau, however, does not envision these or Sophie’s other “natural” characteristics as emerging full-blown at birth. Like the traits of fierceness and gentleness Plato attributes to his future guardians, Sophie’s natural qualities at birth are simply aptitudes or potentialities that require training and education so that they will be neither stunted nor abused.

In Sophie’s case Rousseau clearly embraces Plato’s Postulate of Specialized Natures: Sophie’s nature is for him as inborn, fixed, and specific as the natures of the inhabitants of the Just State are for Plato. Rousseau
also embraces the Postulate of Correspondence: Sophie’s nature suits her for one and only one role in society, that of wife and mother. Her proper purpose, Rousseau says, is to produce not just a few but many children. If this appears to be a biological rather than a societal role, let it be understood that Sophie must also give the children she bears to her husband; that is to say, she must make it clear to him and the world, through her modesty, attentiveness, reserve, and care for his reputation, that he is their father. The unfaithful woman, Rousseau says, “dissolves the family and breaks the bonds of nature. In giving the man children that are not his, she betrays both” (p. 361). Thus Sophie is destined to be not simply the bearer of children but the preserver of family bonds. She is destined also to govern her husband’s household, oversee his garden, act as his hostess, rear his children, and above all please him. In sum, she is to play the traditional female role in the traditional patriarchal family.

Rousseau speaks the language of nature, but his conception of education is, like Plato’s, that of production. Sophie is raw material to be turned by education into a finished product. The product happens to be one that Plato rejects, at least for the guardian class of his Just State; also Plato’s assumptions about his raw material are quite different from Rousseau’s. Nonetheless, the basic structure of Rousseau’s account of the education of Sophie is identical to that of Plato’s account of the education of the artisans, auxiliaries, and rulers in his Just State. Plato’s is not a pure production model of education and neither is Rousseau’s. Sophie’s education has the task of equipping her for her societal role. “Whether I consider the particular purpose of the fair sex, whether I observe its inclinations, whether I consider its duties, all join equally in indicating to me the form of education that suits it” (p. 364). Rousseau thus embraces the Functional Postulate as well as the Postulate of Specialized Natures and the Postulate of Correspondence. And when he says, “Once it is demonstrated that man and woman are not and ought not to be constituted in the same way in either character or temperament, it follows that they ought not to have the same education” (p. 363), it becomes quite clear that he also embraces Plato’s postulates of Identity and Difference. As Plato formulates these postulates they connect educational treatment with societal roles. Because, for Plato, societal roles correspond to people’s natures, he ultimately connects educational treatment with people’s natures. That is just what Rousseau does when he prescribes different educational treatments for Sophie and Emile according to their natures.

Historians of educational thought see Rousseau’s guiding metaphor as growth: he conceives of the child as a plant whose development is determined by nature, and of the educator as a gardener whose task is to ensure that corrupt society does not interfere with the predetermined pattern of development. But if a conception of education as growth were implicit in his account of Sophie, Rousseau would not devote so much attention to the possibility of Sophie’s acquiring characteristics that he says are not by nature hers. Roses may fail to blossom if their gardener does not tend them, but whatever the gardener’s skill and diligence, a rosebush will not bear avocados. For one who directs his readers time and again to follow nature, Rousseau is inordinately concerned that Sophie might become something other than the obedient wife and nurtrant mother he wants her to be. Will Sophie “be nurse today and warrior tomorrow?” Rousseau asks. “Will she suddenly go from shade, enclosure, and domestic cares to the harshness of the open air, the labors, the fatigue, and the perils of war?” (p. 362). Not if Rousseau has his way. Yet the very questions acknowledge that she might were her education not strictly supervised. “To cultivate man’s qualities in women and to neglect those which are proper to them is obviously to work to their detriment,” he continues (p. 364). In Rousseau’s concern to tell mothers not to make men out of their daughters, a production interpretation of his theory of education finds its vindication.

As Rousseau imagines Sophie, she is born with a wide range of capacities and potentialities. The traits he calls natural are those that, in his view, should be developed, but they are certainly not the only ones that could be developed. Because Sophie can acquire any number of traits that Rousseau would rather she did not, it is not plausible to attribute to him a conception of the teacher or tutor as a gardener who provides the proper conditions for a plant to flourish. Rousseau’s educator must attend to every detail of Sophie’s education so that the traits Rousseau deems inappropriate to the role of wife and mother in a patriarchal context are frustrated and those he thinks belong to that role are fostered. Rousseau appeals to nature, but he does not trust it. Just as Plato insists that positive steps be taken to shape his future guardians to meet relatively clearly defined specifications, so Rousseau does this same thing in regard to Sophie.
Thus, the education of Sophie constitutes an anomaly for the standard interpretation of *Emile*. What Rousseau has to say in book 5 is not merely left unexplained; it cannot be explained by an interpretation that abstracts education from societal influences and constraints and pictures it as a process of natural growth and development. Nor can it be explained by an interpretation that assumes, as this one does, that Rousseau posits autonomy as a universal ideal.

The object of the education Plato claims for his female guardians is to develop reason to the point where it can grasp the most general principles and ultimately discern the Good, so that the individual can rule herself and her fellow citizens. The education Rousseau would provide women could not be more dissimilar. Sophie, the prototype of a woman, is to be educated not to rule but to obey. She is to learn to be modest, attentive, and reserved; to sew, embroider, and make lace. Works of genius are out of her reach, Rousseau says, nor does she have the precision and attention to succeed at the exact sciences. The end product that Sophie is to become is Emile's dependent wife. Small wonder that historians of educational thought ignore Sophie or else dismiss her as an aberration. Rousseau's account of her education raises serious questions about the emphasis on growth and autonomy in the traditional interpretation to which they subscribe.

How could such radically different proposals for the education of women be arrived at by philosophers who make the same fundamental assumptions about education? As we have seen, the postulates of the production model of education are purely formal. Plato gives them content by positing three distinct societal roles. Instead of singling out for Sophie one of these roles distinguished by Plato, Rousseau specifies the traditional female role in a patriarchal society and maps its associated traits and skills onto her nature. The nature of the future female guardians suits them to rule the state, whereas Sophie's suits her to obey her husband. Because both Plato and Rousseau conceive of the task of education as fitting people into slots in society, it is to be expected that Sophie and Plato's female guardians will receive very different educations.

Why do Plato and Rousseau give such radically different contents to the postulates of the production model of education? As we know, the role Rousseau assigns to Sophie is not available to Plato. He could perhaps have made his female guardians responsible for carrying on the reproductive processes required by the Just State. Had he done so, he might have designed an education for them that would overlap Sophie's: one that would prepare them to care for and rear children, if not preserve family bonds; to cook and clean, if not protect a husband's reputation and obey his commands. But he did not, for what he considered good reasons. Plato and Rousseau, philosophers who make the same fundamental assumptions about education in general, have given us divergent theories about it for women because Rousseau consciously rejects two elements in Plato's philosophy. Against Plato he argues that if the family is removed from a society, the bonds of love which Plato wants to establish among members of the guardian class and the attachment he wants them to have for the state cannot develop. It is "by means of the small fatherland which is the family that the heart attaches itself to the large one," Rousseau says (p. 363). Also contrary to Plato, Rousseau maintains that sex is the determinant of a person's nature.

Aware of Plato's opinion on the difference of sex, in *Emile*, book 5, Rousseau argues that being male or female is a difference that makes a difference in determining a person's place in society; indeed, a close reading of book 5 suggests he believes sex is the only difference that makes a difference. "Sophie ought to be a woman as Emile is a man," Rousseau says. "That is to say, she ought to have everything which suits the constitution of her species and her sex in order to fill her place in the physical and moral order" (p. 357). The implications of this statement are clear: Sophie has one place to fill, Emile another, and their education ought to equip them for their respective places. Because the places of the two sexes are different, it seems evident to Rousseau that the education each is to receive must also be different.

**Rousseau's Production Model**

How is one to explain the fact that the standard interpretation of Rousseau's educational philosophy as one of growth and autonomy does not fit what he says in book 5 of *Emile* about the education of girls and women? Some psychological theories that have difficulties incorporating findings about females have turned out, upon investigation, to have been derived from male data. Similarly, this interpretation of Rousseau's philosophical theory can be seen to be based on books 1–4 of *Emile*, in which he discusses only the education of boys.

In the past few years commentators on Rousseau have turned to the
study of Emile, book 5. Documenting thoroughly the sex bias not only in his theory of female education but in his political ideals, such feminist scholars as Zillah Eisenstein, Lynda Lange, and Susan Moller Okin have shown that Rousseau does not intend his proposals for Emile's education to apply to Sophie's, indeed does not even extend to women his political ideals of liberty and equality. Yet, while this new scholarship on Rousseau reveals the inadequacies of a growth interpretation of his philosophy of female education and his failure to hold up for women the ideal of personal autonomy, it has tended to assume the validity of the standard interpretation for Emile if not for Sophie. In the past, those commentators on Emile who have recognized Sophie's existence have usually taken it for granted that Rousseau makes fundamentally different assumptions about the education of males and that of females; indeed, that the education he proposes for men and women is based on directly conflicting principles. Recent scholarship does not challenge this perception of Rousseau as an educational dualist committed to two distinct theories of education, one for males and one for females.

The view that Rousseau embraces a growth model of education and the ideal of personal autonomy for Emile and Plato's production model and the ideal of dependency for Sophie is undoubtedly preferable to one that ignores Sophie altogether or misrepresents what Rousseau has to say about her. We should not attribute such a marked conflict in educational philosophy to a thinker of Rousseau's stature, however, without first determining if a unified interpretation of the education of Sophie and Emile can be given. Granted, we have now established that his proposals concerning Sophie do not embody a growth model of education. How sure are we, however, that the production model implicit in his account of her education is not also to be found in his account of Emile's? And if it is, what consequences has this discovery for the vision of Emile as Autonomous Man?

At the beginning of book 1 of Emile Rousseau says that on leaving his tutor's hands a pupil will be neither magistrate nor soldier nor priest; rather, he will be a man. If we take Rousseau at his word, we must conclude that a narrow, vocational mold is not to be imposed on Emile. It does not follow, however, that Rousseau places no mold at all on him. Despite the imagery of plants and shrubs, Emile's tutor is not to allow every aspect of his student's potential to flourish; on the contrary, Rousseau's attitude toward Emile's education is anything but laissez-faire.

Rousseau wants Emile to be a morally autonomous individual—a rational man who joins thought and action, whose judgments are objective, and whose beliefs are formed independently of others—and he would have the tutor arrange each detail of Emile's education toward that end. In Emile's training to be as self-sufficient as possible—"Let the child do nothing on anybody's word," Rousseau says (p. 178)—it is no accident that the first book he is allowed to read is Robinson Crusoe.

The mold Rousseau imposes on Emile of the rational, moral, self-governing, self-sufficient individual may seem independent of any function Emile is supposed to play in society. It matches Rousseau's definition, however, of what he takes to be the most important role of all—namely, that of citizen in his ideal city state. Emile should be read in conjunction with The Social Contract, for the two works are complementary. Emile provides the educational theory that any account of an ideal state requires but that is not to be found in The Social Contract itself; The Social Contract enables one to understand how Rousseau solves the problem he poses at the beginning of Emile—educating Emile simultaneously as an autonomous man and a citizen.

The fundamental philosophical problem Rousseau tries to solve in The Social Contract is reconciling individual autonomy or freedom with membership in civil society. How can a person be free, Rousseau wants to know, if the person is a member of a civil society and hence subject to its laws? Rousseau's solution lies in his concept of the General Will. In contrast to what Rousseau calls the Will of All, which is the sum of the private wills of all citizens and as such disregards the common good, the General Will has the common good as its object. It is the result of deliberation in isolation from one another by citizens who are rational, impartial, and sufficiently informed about the issues. Individual autonomy and obedience to law are reconciled in Rousseau's ideal state because the laws of that state are expressions of the General Will and because each citizen participates in that Will. The laws that each citizen must obey, which would seem to limit individual freedom, are enactments of the citizens' own objective deliberations about the common good. Thus, in obeying the laws of the state, each citizen in effect governs himself. Freedom is therefore preserved even as the state rules its subjects. Moreover, because for Rousseau the General Will is always right, the individual's moral integrity as well as his autonomy is preserved in the state.

As Bloom says, Emile is, in effect, taught The Social Contract. In
educating Emile to be a man, Rousseau would equip him with the traits and skills that a citizen of his ideal city state must have. True, in the opening pages of Emile Rousseau contrasts man and citizen and questions whether it is possible for a given individual to be both at once. Yet in book 3 he has Emile learn a trade on the ground that “rich or poor, powerful or weak, every idle citizen is a rascal” (p. 193). Clearly, Rousseau’s assumption is that Emile will be a citizen; he simply is not to be an idle one. In reading Emile one must distinguish between the role of citizen in the actual states Rousseau knew and that role in his ideal city state. Because his concept of the General Will was not embodied in any actual state, Rousseau believed that in an actual state an educator who wanted to raise a citizen would indeed be raising him to obey others. In Rousseau’s ideal state, however, an educator would not have to choose between raising a free man and a citizen, for they would be one and the same.

Sophie’s function as wife and mother, on the other hand, was well entrenched in the states with which Rousseau was acquainted, and there is no reason to suppose that he intended her function to disappear in the ideal city state of The Social Contract. Rousseau’s arguments alone against Plato’s abolition of the family are enough to suggest that Sophie would play the same role in that state as in Rousseau’s own France. Moreover, in insisting that she is by nature subordinate to Emile’s authority Rousseau makes it both necessary for her to remain in the traditional female role and impossible for her to be a citizen of the ideal state. Okin has said that Emile is educated to be his own man, and Sophie is educated to be his own woman. It certainly seems this way; as his own man, Emile can be a citizen—that is, a participant in the General Will—without sacrificing his freedom. As Emile’s own woman, Sophie can be neither a citizen in Rousseau’s sense nor free in the sense of being an autonomous person.

Rousseau makes the same fundamental educational assumptions about Emile and Sophie. Both are born with certain aptitudes and capacities—different ones because Emile is male and Sophie is female. Since no one’s natural talents are fully developed at birth, education is necessary for both. Their educations serve the function of equipping them to perform their respective societal role. Emile’s education is totally different from Sophie’s because, having a different nature, she is to have a different role. Were their natures and their roles the same, Rousseau would no doubt propose the same upbringing for them. The five postulates of the production model of education, which Rousseau embraces in relation to the education of Sophie, are also implicit in his account of the education of Emile.

Given the production model underlying Rousseau’s account of Emile’s education, Rousseau’s definition of Emile’s nature is not as open-ended as some have suggested. Emile is not “free to become whatever he can and will.” Just as Sophie must develop attractiveness, Emile must develop strength; as she must endure injustice, he must revolt against it. If Emile were really free to become anything at all, he would have no need for a tutor to control his total environment. Rousseau says to Emile’s tutor:

Do you not dispose, with respect to him, of everything which surrounds him? Are you not the master of affecting him as you please? Are not his labors, his games, his pleasures, his pains, all in your hands without his knowing it? Doubtless he ought to do only what he wants; but he ought to want only what you want him to do. He ought not to make a step without your having foreseen it; he ought not to open his mouth without your knowing what he is going to say. (p. 120)

Readers of Emile cannot help but notice that the tutor manipulates Emile. In fact, Rousseau requires the tutor to perfect that art. Let your pupil “always believe he is master, and let it always be you who are,” Rousseau says. “There is no subjection so perfect as that which keeps the appearance of freedom” (p. 120). Rousseau wants Emile from an early age to believe he is his own man. Manipulation is necessary, not because Emile’s nature cannot flourish unintended in a corrupt society, for until late adolescence or young adulthood Emile is to be educated in virtual isolation from all society, but because a citizen in Rousseau’s ideal state is both a person who can transcend private interests and a person of independent judgment who is subservient to none; hence a range of vices and other weaknesses, from lying to arrogance, is denied Emile. He has no more the option of becoming a gentle person and acquiring Sophie’s keen powers of observation than of becoming a thief, for his education must equip him not only to be a participant in the General Will but to be head of the family Sophie serves. Emile ends when, a few months after the marriage of Emile and Sophie, Emile informs his tutor that he will soon be a father. If Sophie is destined to be wife and mother in a patriarchal family, Emile is destined to be the patriarch.
Recent commentary on *Emile*, book 5, has delineated the societal role Rousseau assigns to Sophie. It has overlooked, however, the significance for Rousseau's educational philosophy of the fact that, since Emile is to be Sophie's husband, to him belongs the societal role of patriarch. Thus, insofar as Rousseau's definition of Emile's nature is more open-ended than his definition of Sophie's, it is because his dual role of patriarch and citizen is more open-ended. Emile is not free to become anything at all. He is the one who exercises authority in the family, who has the ultimate say in decision making, who represents the family in its dealings with the outside world. He has no choice in these matters; he cannot decide to be Sophie's subordinate or to keep the house and garden and rear the children.

I emphasize Emile's patriarchal role here for, although Rousseau never explicitly links Emile's education to his participation in the General Will, book 5 leaves no doubt that Emile will play the dominant role in "the small fatherland which is the family" and that his education must equip him for this task. Thus, if proponents of the standard growth interpretation of *Emile* want to deny my claim that Emile's tutor is training him to be a citizen in Rousseau's sense of the term, they will still have to contend with Emile's other role as head of family. That role, which they can scarcely deny belongs to Emile, lends additional credence to a production interpretation of Rousseau's educational thought.

The conclusion is inescapable that the definition of Emile's nature, as of Sophie's, is selective. Emile has at birth a wide range of talents and potentialities, but Rousseau considers to be natural only those that he wants to see fully developed. These are the traits and skills he associates with the dual role he assigns Emile: as head of family and citizen. One perceptive philosopher of education has said that if Rousseau's child "is to walk the path of nature, it will not be because there is a natural affinity between the child and this path, but because his tutor has led him along it." It should be clear by now that the path along which the tutor leads Emile is defined by Emile's function, indeed, that Rousseau maps Emile's function onto his nature as surely as he maps Sophie's function onto hers.

Whether one takes Rousseau to be determining Emile's nature or discovering it, the principles governing the boy's education reveal Rousseau's disdain for traditional pedagogy. "I hate books," says Rousseau. "They only teach me to talk about what one does not know" (p. 184). The senses alone should guide the first operations of the mind, he explains: "No book other than the world, no instruction other than the facts. The child who reads does not think, he only reads; he is not informing himself, he learns words" (p. 168). The principle that experience should precede verbal studies is important to Rousseau. In particular, books should be avoided until an age at which secondhand experience will amplify rather than substitute for firsthand experience.

It has been said that Rousseau discovered childhood. He certainly does tell Emile's tutor to respect childhood and to treat Emile according to his age. Rousseau understood what modern psychology now tells us, that children have their own ways of seeing, thinking, and feeling. "Nothing is less sensible," he says in book 2 of *Emile*, "than to want to substitute ours for theirs" (p. 90). That education must take age into account and, in particular, that the child's cognitive structures and emotional states must be respected are as central to Rousseau's philosophy of education as is the principle of delayed verbal learning.

Books 1 to 4 of *Emile* contain a number of important educational principles, many of which will sound familiar to those acquainted with the open classroom movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s and with the writings of radical school reformers of that period. Rousseau maintains that educators should discard the distinction between work and play. Of Emile he says, "Whether he is busy or playing, it is all the same to him. His games are his business, and he is aware of no difference" (p. 161). In disregarding the dichotomy between work and play accepted by most educators, he maintains that education comes to us from nature and things as well as from men, and that in the early years, at least, learning should be a by-product of the child's daily occupations.

The elements of books 1–4 of *Emile* that so many educators have found attractive are compatible with the unified interpretation of *Emile* presented here. Indeed, the principles of teaching and learning set forth in these books can be understood as specifying the content of the educational treatment ordered by the Identity and Difference postulates. This interpretation preserves these important features of Rousseau's educational philosophy while making clear their relationship to other elements of his thought. It also explains why manipulation plays so large a part in Rousseau's educational thought. Once it is understood that the task of Emile's tutor is to produce an end product to predetermined specifications, the principle that the educator should give the pupil the illusion of freedom while controlling carefully what the pupil learns is what one would expect of an educational theory that tells the teacher to be humane but gives that teacher a hidden agenda.

The educational metaphor of growth is said to embody "a modest conception of the teacher's role, which is to study and then indirectly to help the development of the child, rather than to shape him into some preconceived form." Given the total control the tutor exercises over Emile's education, it is difficult to understand how the standard texts in
the history of educational thought could have attributed a growth concept of education to Rousseau. The growth metaphor has been criticized for masking the fact that the educator must make choices no gardener ever faces. I would add to this the criticism that in drawing attention to the development of the child, the growth metaphor conceals the social and political dimensions of education. The opening pages of *Emile* testify to Rousseau's awareness that the educational is the political. He uses the language of growth, but he is not fooled by that language. His interpreters have been fooled by it and have done Rousseau the injustice of supposing that the large political concerns with which he wrestled all his life play no part in the education he prescribes for Emile.

A production interpretation of Rousseau's educational thought acknowledges his concern for the political. It enables one to see beyond the isolation in which Emile is to be raised to the theoretical standpoint from which Rousseau, like Plato, envisions education as an enterprise linked closely to political purposes and ideals. As we have noted, while Emile is to be educated for the role of citizen, and hence for the political realm, Sophie is not. Given the Difference Postulate, does this not mean that Emile's education will be governed by one set of principles and Sophie's by another, hence that a unified interpretation is not valid after all?

There are real differences in the education Rousseau proposes for Sophie and Emile but the same principles govern both. For example, Sophie is not given as much freedom as Emile. Because idleness and disobedience are a girl's most dangerous defects, she must learn to conquer herself. Instead of allowing dissipation, frivolity, and inconstancy to arise, as they will if her tastes are indulged, Sophie's teachers must see to it that she is industrious and vigilant. "Always justify the cares you impose on young girls, but always impose cares on them," says Rousseau as he tells Sophie to work all day alongside her mother. Sophie is to be subjected early to constraints Emile never knows, because all their lives girls "will be enslaved to the most continual and most severe of constraints—that of the proprieties" (p. 369). Still, she is not to be subjected to undue severity either; she ought not to live like her grandmother, Rousseau says, but rather ought to be "lively, playful, and frolicsome, to sing and dance as much as she pleases, and to taste all the innocent pleasures of her age" (p. 374).

Similarly, Rousseau's dictum that, in learning, work and play ought not to be separated applies to Sophie as well as to Emile. Sewing is Sophie's work, but it is also her play; she wants to sew and learns how to do it in order to adorn her doll. The principle of delayed verbalization holds for Sophie's education as well. The uses to which reading is put will vary for Emile and Sophie, and this in turn may dictate a different choice of books; one can be sure that *Robinson Crusoe* will not be given to Sophie. Rousseau says, however, "If I do not want to push a boy to learn to read, a fortiori I do not want to force girls to before making them well aware of what the use of reading is" (p. 368).

Furthermore, Sophie's age must be taken into account in determining what is suitable. Thus, to the extent that boys and girls think, feel, and see in different ways, the principle that childhood must be respected is not to be abandoned in Sophie's education, but is to be applied in the light of her particular modes of thinking, feeling, and perceiving the world.

The difference between the education Rousseau proposes for Sophie and the one he proposes for Emile is accounted for not by a difference in its governing principles but, as we have seen, by the differences in the societal roles he assigns males and females. Thus, his urging that teachers be humane is not countermanded in Sophie's case; her role simply requires that the humanity of her teachers take particular forms. Even the fact that Emile is to be educated in isolation and Sophie is not can be explained without positing a conflict of principles. Since the role of citizen exists in society only in corrupted form, Rousseau deems it necessary to remove Emile from society. But since Sophie's role exists in at least some segments of society in its pure form, there is no need to remove her from family and friends. As Rousseau says: "In order to love the peaceful and domestic life, we must know it. We must have sensed its sweetness from childhood. It is only in the paternal home that one gets the taste for one's own home, and any woman whose mother has not raised her will not like raising her own children" (p. 388).

Rousseau is ambivalent about whether it would be possible for Sophie to acquire the rationality, objectivity, and independence he demands of those who participate in the General Will. Even as he insists that a woman is by nature incapable of grasping abstract truths, Rousseau warns that "a brilliant wife is a plague to her husband, her children, her friends, her valets, everyone" (p. 409). Even as he claims that Sophie is necessarily a dependent being, he expresses the fear that a woman will "abruptly and regularly change her way of life" (p. 362). This ambivalence is neither here nor there, however, for if she is indeed capable of acquiring the attributes Rousseau associates with the good citizen, Sophie's education will ensure that she does not.
Although Emile is to fill the role of patriarch, Bloom considers the relationship between Emile and Sophie to be a union of complementary equals. It is not at all clear that a union in which one person must always obey the other, as Sophie must obey Emile, can be one of equals, although Catharine Beecher will try to convince us of just this when she enters our conversation. Bloom, however, seems to think that Sophie's nature and education will make it so: "Rousseau argues that woman rules man by submitting to his will and knowing how to make him will what she needs to submit to. In this way Emile's freedom is preserved without Sophie's will being denied" (p. 25). There is no doubt that through the use of her "native" guile, Sophie will acquire power over Emile that will serve as a counterforce to his authority. He will be the one with the right to command; she will have the skills of manipulation. However, since Rousseau does not grant Sophie the authority to make her own decisions, let alone Emile's, it follows that the egalitarian ideal for which Rousseau is famous is to hold in the political, not the domestic domain. Since the political domain is not open to Sophie, the limits to Rousseau's egalitarianism are clear: equality is a principle intended to govern relations among males, not relations between males and females.

Although it is not a union of complementary equals, the marriage of Sophie and Emile is definitely one between individuals possessing complementary traits. "A perfect woman and a perfect man," says Rousseau, "ought not to resemble each other in mind any more than in looks" (p. 358). In the union of the sexes, he continues, each contributes in different ways to the common end: "One ought to be active and strong, the other passive and weak. One must necessarily will and be able; it suffices that the other put up little resistance." The partnership between a man and woman produces "a moral person of which the woman is the eye and the man is the arm." If the man were as good at details as the woman, and she could grasp general principles as well as he, "they would live in eternal discord" (p. 377). The moral person created by the marriage of Sophie and Emile is supposed to be a harmonious whole. Its two parts, while perfect of their kind, are not in themselves complete, for Emile lacks those traits belonging by nature to males and Sophie lacks those belonging by nature to females. In their union, wholeness is achieved, not because each finds fulfillment in the other's love, but because the two sets of traits when joined together form a perfect whole.

For Sophie, caring for Emile is its own reward. He will not—indeed cannot—reciprocate. For how long can unreciprocated tenderness and care last? Will Sophie not come to resent the absence in Emile's behavior toward her of those dispositions she displays in such abundance? Will she not lash out at him in anger or else, turning her anger inward, silently withdraw? If, emotionally, Emile is no more mature than a child, will Sophie not come to perceive him as just one more of her boys? And if he does become in her eyes a figure of scorn, will she be able to maintain the level of concern required to make his life agreeable and sweet? In particular, will she be able to do this when he exhibits no concern at all for the quality of her life?

The quality of the marriage of Sophie and Emile is of interest here not simply because their happiness is at stake but because the very possibility of their being completely moral depends on the success of their union. Only in marriage, or at least in heterosexual pairing, can Rousseau's males and females be perfectly whole. Yet surely, if the marital relationship is characterized by discord and strife, the union of traits required for the moral life will not be accomplished. But it is not only the moral perfection of Sophie and Emile that is in doubt. Remember that in Rousseau's philosophy "it is by means of the small fatherland which is the family that the heart attaches itself to the larger one." Since marriage provides the foundation upon which the family rests and the family, in turn, provides a "natural base" upon which the "conventional ties" of the state rest, the marriage of Sophie and Emile is bound up not only with their personal fates but with the destiny of the state itself.

In maintaining that love of one's nearest is the principle of the love one owes the state, Rousseau explicitly challenges Plato's removal of private family, home, and marriage from the lives of the guardians of the Just State. "That noble genius had planned everything, foreseen everything," he says (p. 362), yet he forgot that it is "the good son, the good husband, and the good father who make the good citizen." Rousseau was not the first to criticize Plato's social policies concerning the family. Aristotle, for one, had argued that Plato's aim of the greatest unity possible for the state was unacceptable and that, in any case, the result of
the Platonic policies “would be the opposite of what Socrates intends: for it will weaken the ties between people.” 14 Rousseau’s disagreement with Plato is particularly instructive, however, because he accepts Plato’s ideal of unity and places ultimate responsibility for achieving it on Sophie. 15 If the good state requires the good son, surely the good son requires the healthy family that it is Sophie’s duty to create and maintain.

An inharmonious marriage may make a healthy family impossible, but supposing the latter to be achievable within the terms of Rousseau’s philosophy, there is then a puzzling problem to be resolved regarding his claim for its educational function. While the hearts of Rousseau’s citizens must be attached to the state, the thoughts and actions of these men are supposed to be both autonomous and governed by reason. So far as reason and autonomy are concerned, however, Rousseau takes the family to be a corrupting influence. 16 Why, after all, does he give up Emile’s education entirely to a tutor? Why is Emile to be reared in virtual isolation? The goal of autonomy Rousseau holds up for Emile requires, in his view, not only that the boy’s environment be tightly controlled but that Emile himself be kept from entering into intimate relationships with others.

If Emile does not grow up within a family, says Rousseau, he will not be able to develop the ties that as a citizen he must have to the state. If, on the other hand, he does grow up with parents and siblings, he will not be able to develop the rational autonomy a citizen must possess. He is thus damned if he does and damned if he doesn’t. And so is Sophie, for if Emile does not become a self-governing person, he will not constitute her “other half”; on the other hand, if Emile does not learn to be affectionate as a child in a loving family, he will not be able to develop the ties he must have to Sophie, let alone to his state.

Even if life in families is conducive to the development of the autonomy Rousseau wants Emile to acquire, the prospects of the small fatherland’s fulfilling its educational function in the state are dim. We must not forget that in this fatherland ruled by Emile, Sophie is the one who binds father to children, exhibits care for others, works to sustain relationships, and keeps in mind the interests of the whole family. She is the one who exemplifies what Nancy Chodorow refers to as “nurturing capacities” 17 and what Carol Gilligan has called an “ethics of care.” 18 As we shall see, Wollstonecraft argues that Sophie’s education makes it all but impossible for her to develop “other-regarding” virtues. But if, for the sake of argument, Sophie is granted the qualities she must have for the family to carry out its task of preparing citizens, it then appears that the wrong family members will receive the training in citizenship Rousseau intends the family to provide. It is “the good son, the good husband, and the good father who make the good citizen,” says Rousseau (p. 363). Yet if Sophie is the nurturant, caring parent, we must expect her daughters, rather than her sons, to follow her example. In the family ruled by Emile but cared for by Sophie, is not a hypothesis of differential socialization for boys and girls the most plausible one to entertain? But if so, will not Sophie’s sons develop over time their father’s, not their mother’s, traits and qualities?

One does not have to rely on a theory of socialization to reach the conclusion that only the girls born to Sophie and Emile will develop nutriturant capacities and an ethics of care. Rousseau’s complementary theory of traits and his philosophy of male and female education guarantee this. The qualities Sophie possesses by nature and education Emile does not. If educated properly, her daughters will share Sophie’s qualities as her sons will share Emile’s. We have already glimpsed the damage Rousseau’s gender-based division of traits will do to the marriage of Sophie and Emile over time. That theory also contains the seeds of destruction of Rousseau’s ideal state.

Rousseau considers the family a training ground for citizens because his state is to be a genuine community. Objecting to Plato’s proposals about women and family, and also rejecting his elitist premises regarding ruling, Rousseau nonetheless embraces an essentially Platonic political vision. Like the guardians of Plato’s Just State, his citizens are not intended to be unconnected, atomistic individuals of the sort posited by Hobbes in Leviathan but are to be tied to one another by bonds of mutual sympathy. Like Plato’s rulers, they are supposed to be able to put aside their own purposes and postpone their own satisfactions for the good of the state itself.

The question, of course, is whether Emile’s sons must acquire Sophie’s other-regarding virtues to be good citizens. As any survey of educational programs for citizenship would reveal, the qualities of nurturance, care, and concern for others are not usually taken to be essential for citizenship, or even relevant to it. Yet just as Sophie must sustain relationships within the family, Rousseau’s citizens must do this within the polity; and just as she must strive to preserve her family’s life,
they must strive to preserve the state’s. As citizens, Sophie’s sons must do and feel for one another and for the state what she does and feels for her husband and children. Unfortunately, however, as replicas of Emile they will lack the habits of mind, the repertoire of behavior, and the qualities of character this role requires.

Imagining a state whose citizens must possess Sophie’s virtues and a home in which these flourish, Rousseau defends the private family against Plato’s attack by assigning it the function of political socialization. Yet the family he envisions cannot fulfill this function because those members who at Sophie’s knee will learn to be nurturant and caring are not the ones Rousseau destines for citizenship. How ironic! By his own theory, the people Rousseau claims to be suited by nature to be citizens—males—do not possess by nature and are not allowed to acquire by education or socialization characteristics he himself deems essential for the good citizen. At the same time, the very people who do, or at least can, possess these characteristics by nature and education—females—are barred by his theory from the citizenship role.

Dependent Women, Dependent Men

Rousseau’s small fatherland, then, is incapable of performing the task that, in his argument against Plato, he makes its raison d’être. It cannot provide the political socialization it is supposed to offer because the community-oriented virtues the citizens of Rousseau’s ideal state must have are tied in his philosophy to the wrong gender. Worse still, instead of demonstrating that the family is a precondition of the ideal state, the union of Sophie and Emile vindicates Plato’s belief that the private family is a divisive institution.  

In Rousseau’s ideal state citizens must have the good of the whole in view; they must not act on the basis of their own private interests. Consider, however, that through long experience as the object of his tutor’s manipulative tactics Emile has been trained to be pliant while, at the same time, Sophie has been trained to be manipulative. Add to this the fact that although Sophie’s education is perhaps intended to make her sensitive to the good of her family, it is designed to keep her ignorant of the political, economic, and social issues a citizen of the ideal state must decide. Furthermore, as Okin points out, nothing in the education Rousseau prescribes for girls “leads to the expectation that patriotic loy-
alties will take precedence over personal or selfish ones.” Thus, a pliant Emile, whose manipulator is Sophie, will not be able to fulfill his function as a citizen, for Sophie’s power over him will be turned to her own advantages. Since she is a good wife and mother, her private interests will presumably encompass the well-being of her family, but they will not necessarily include the well-being of the state.

Chiding Plato for insisting that the institution of the family be abolished for his guardian class in the interests of the unity and preservation of his Just State, Rousseau fails to see that Plato’s script about divided loyalties will be acted out in Emile’s living room. Sophie’s domain is the home. By nature and education she is prevented from caring about any larger realm. Thus the only needs she will feel, the only desires she will have, the only aims she will pursue, will be personal and familial. When these are consonant with the public good the fact that she is accustomed to manipulating Emile to her own ends will be of no consequence. But when private and public purposes clash, as they inevitably must, Sophie’s considerable manipulative skills will be directed to causing Emile to favor familial interests over his public obligations. Rousseau evidently admires Sophie for the power she will wield over Emile, and Bloom attributes her freedom to it. Both men apparently forget that in manipulating Emile, Sophie is manipulating not just her husband but a citizen.

The problem Rousseau’s political philosophy faces is that by virtue of his theory of education and his theory of gender neither Sophie nor Emile will be qualified for citizenship. And if these theories are modified, then both Sophie and Emile will qualify for that role. In order to ensure that Emile alone is fit to be a citizen, Rousseau must give up his theory of the ideal state as a close-knit community and his characterization of Sophie as manipulative. Then it will not matter that Emile is unable to possess the traits belonging to an ethics of care or that Sophie has no concern for the state. This strategy, however, would make Rousseau’s assertions of Sophie’s power even less convincing than they already are. It would also make Rousseau’s political philosophy much less original and compelling than it is. Moreover, it would further undermine his arguments against Plato for the preservation of the institution of private family, for that rests on the claim that individuals must be socialized to the virtues of community.
Earlier I cited Okin as saying that Emile is his own man and Sophie his own woman. That is the way Rousseau intends matters, but when Rousseau’s account of the educations of Sophie and Emile are read together, one can see that the hidden curriculum in manipulation Rousseau arranges for Emile may well counteract Emile’s explicit curriculum in self-governance. If in theory Emile is to be his own man, he is likely in fact to go through life as Sophie’s marionette. As such, of course, he scarcely deserves the label Autonomous Man.

The autonomy Rousseau attributes to Emile actually has two aspects: Emile is to be self-governing in the manner of Plato’s rulers and self-sufficient in the manner of his fictional hero Robinson Crusoe. However, just as Emile’s self-governance is limited by Sophie’s manipulative impulses, so his self-sufficiency is limited by his need of her. In loving Sophie, if he does, Emile becomes dependent on her loving him in return. But apart from the question of love, Emile’s dependence on Sophie is marked. He needs her not just to love him but to feed him, run his household, bear his children, rear them, even teach him to love them. He can do none of these himself. Nor by himself can he be a complete moral person. For this, too, he needs Sophie, as she does if he is to possess the attachment to the state he must have in order to be a good citizen. What greater dependency than Emile’s can there be?

We have already seen how, in relation to the accepted growth interpretation of Rousseau’s philosophy of education, Sophie constitutes an anomaly. We are now in a position to see that Sophie’s existence also calls into question the standard interpretation of Emile as an autonomous person. So long as Emile’s relation to Sophie remains hidden, as it does when Emile, book 5, is ignored, this interpretation of his nature and destiny may seem warranted. Once Sophie’s place in Emile’s life is revealed, however, it can be seen that her manipulation of her husband undermines all claims to his being a self-governing person, just as his dependence on her for the material and emotional conditions of morality, citizenship, and, indeed, of life itself undermines the claims of his being a self-sufficient person.

Recent commentary on book 5 has made clear just how dependent on Emile Sophie is. Let us not forget that Sophie manipulates Emile because, possessing neither economic nor political power of her own, her sole alternative is to channel his resources to her ends. One who can get what she wants only by indirectness, who must act the coquette, flatter and dissimulate to achieve her purposes, is no more a self-sufficient agent than is the person she manipulates. Denied access to the role of citizen, prevented from developing her intellectual powers, confined to her home, trapped in a marriage to an untender mate all of whose decisions she must abide by, Sophie is profoundly dependent on Emile. Nonetheless, we must not overlook the fact that in Rousseau’s philosophy the dependency between females and males runs in two directions. Sophie’s dependence on Emile is neither deeper nor more fundamental than Emile’s on her. Just as in Plato’s Just State no individual is self-sufficient and every person needs the services others provide, so in the land of Sophie and Emile no one is absolutely self-sufficient and everyone is dependent on at least one other human being.