

Taming *Amour-Propre*: A Study of Book IV of Rousseau's *Emile*

by

Antong Liu

Department of Political Science
Duke University

Date: _____

Approved:

Ruth W. Grant, Supervisor

Michael A. Gillespie

Thomas A. Spragens, Jr.

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in the Department of
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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

Amour-propre is a crucial concept of Rousseau's philosophy. Although recent studies have confirmed its moral ambiguity, they paid insufficient attention to Rousseau's account of *amour-propre* in his *Emile* and thus failed to appreciate the method Rousseau proposes therein to tame Emile's *amour-propre*. By close textual examinations of *Emile*, especially of the first part of its Book IV, this paper analyzes the moral ambiguity of *amour-propre* and Rousseau's remedy for its almost inevitable inflammation. Rather than eliminating *amour-propre*, the education of Emile aims at preventing his innocuous *amour-propre* from being inflamed. This at first requires that a cosmopolitan type of friendship be cultivated in Emile's heart so as to further cultivate his pity. Yet since the origin of the problem of inflamed *amour-propre* is the relativity intrinsic to human society and comparisons, pity, which is equally relative/inter-subjective, may suffer from the same problem of *amour-propre*. Therefore, Rousseau bases his remedial project upon the indestructible "true relations of man" (i.e. natural equality of man) that is objective (or non-relational) and guides Emile's affections towards these relations so as to make it possible for Emile to know all human relations and comparisons without taking any of them seriously.

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This thesis is an apprentice's practice, a tiny achievement on my long road to accomplishment of a masterpiece (or "doctor-piece," to be more precise) the prospect of which is not yet known but not unpromising.

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I. Introduction

Amour-propre is one of the central themes of Rousseau's works, but its nature remains unclear to his readers. Too often Rousseau condemns it as the source of human wickedness, yet it is this same Rousseau who sometimes attributes to *amour-propre* good qualities. Perhaps the moral ambiguity of *amour-propre* is best manifested in Rousseau's claim that, "*Amour-propre* is a useful but dangerous instrument."¹ If *amour-propre* is dangerous, then for what purpose do we have to use it? If *amour-propre* is useful, then how can we avoid its danger? This paper is intended to deal with the moral ambiguity of *amour-propre* and these subsequent questions derived from it. Since Book IV of *Emile* devotes considerable number of pages to describing the nature of *amour-propre* and ways to put it under our control, an intensive reading of this Book, especially the part² before the *Profession of the Savoyard Vicar*, is thus helpful to shed light upon our questions.

Given that Rousseau seems paying more attention to warning us the danger of *amour-propre* than to demonstrating its usefulness, we are justified to begin our study of *amour-propre* by working on the question about how we can avoid its danger. This project is thus properly named "taming *amour-propre*." It is not "eliminating" *amour-propre*,

¹ Jean-Jacques Rousseau: *Emile, or On Education* (Allan Bloom trans.). New York, NY: Basic Books, 1979: 244.

² Though Rousseau did not make this identification, for convenience, I would denote this part as the first of the three parts of Book IV of *Emile*. The substantial content of the second part is the *Profession*, but may also include paragraphs before it on the education of religion as well as on the background of the *Profession*. The third part is all the rest of Book IV (short of the paragraph immediately after the *Profession*).

because such elimination is neither realistic nor desirable, as I will soon demonstrate.

Rather, an educator has to be aware of the fact that *amour-propre*, if left unattended, will easily go wild and become damaging to both his pupil's happiness and the well-being of society at large.

In recent years, there have been several illuminating studies concentrating upon the issue of *amour-propre*. Unlike earlier studies that simply treat *amour-propre* as a vice, Nicholas Dent, Laurence Cooper, Frederick Neuhouser, and Michael McLendon³ all confirm the ambiguity of the role of *amour-propre* to man's morality and happiness and thus take more careful approaches to examine the possibility to deal with negative effects of *amour-propre*. Although their accounts shed much light upon Rousseau's general idea of *amour-propre*, none of them conducts in their writings intensive textual analysis of *Emile*. It follows that all of them more or less underestimate the special character of *amour-propre* illustrated in *Emile* (especially its Book IV) and thus fail to appreciate the educational method Rousseau proposes therein as well as its philosophical foundation. For example, faced with the problem that pity may produce, Neuhouser claims that Rousseau's solution to the inflammation of *amour-propre* is so

³ Nicholas Dent: *Rousseau: An Introduction to his Psychological, Social and Political Theory*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988. Lawrence Cooper: *Rousseau, Nature, And the Problem of the Good Life*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999. Frederick Neuhouser: *Rousseau's Theodicy of Self-Love*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. Michael McLendon: "Rousseau and the Minimal Self: A Solution to the Problem of *Amour-Propre*," *European Journal of Political Theory* 0(0), 2013: 1-21.

sketchily described in *Emile* that "[t]he suspicion that is hard to dispel... is that Rousseau's powerful case for the malignant potential of *amour-propre* ends up formulating so enormous a problem that his remedial project cannot fully solve it."⁴ However, careful analysis of *Emile* clearly illustrates that Rousseau provides a sound remedy for this problem. In my analysis of *Emile*, I will comment on each of their interpretations of Rousseau's account of *amour-propre* where they have particular relevance to the immediate topic, and subsequently point out their misunderstandings.

In the following pages, I will at first reconstruct an account of Rousseau's understanding of *amour-propre* in *Emile* in order to reveal the ambiguous nature of *amour-propre*. (Section II) This reconstruction is followed by an analysis of difficult problems Rousseau will have to encounter when trying to tame *amour-propre*. (Section III) Conscious of these difficulties, I will then illustrate what Rousseau specifically proposes as the first step to tame *amour-propre* without being trapped in them. This proposal hinges upon his idea of a cosmopolitan type of friendship and its close relation to pity. (Section IV) In the next section, however, I will reveal that pity is probably as problematic as *amour-propre*, and that their problems actually have a same origin. (Section V) This requires us to find a more solid ground on which Rousseau is able to articulate a sound solution to the problems of both *amour-propre* and pity and the ways

⁴ Neuhouser: 180.

in which the educator makes it possible to draw Emile's attention towards it. This solid ground, as I will illustrate, is what Rousseau calls "the true relations of man," and these true relations may become Emile's moral caliber only by moving his affections. (Sections VI-VII) In the light of "the true relations of man" as well as the ways to teach it, I will then turn back to the issue of pity and point out both its usage in taming *amour-propre* and its limits that we have to be aware of. (Section VIII) Finally, I will conclude by illustrating the successfulness of Rousseau's task of taming *amour-propre* and further suggest the philosophical implications of this success. (Section IX)

II. Rousseau's Account of *Amour-Propre*: Innocuous or Inflamed

To understand how to tame *amour-propre*, it is necessary to firstly understand what *amour-propre* is. This is no easy task because, as Lawrence Cooper points out, "Rather than identify its abstract, purposive essence, his [Rousseau's] discussions of *amour-propre* are more phenomenological."¹ There is thus danger that our abstraction of Rousseau's account of *amour-propre* from these phenomenological discussions is merely partial.² However, for present purposes, this difficulty could be overcome to some extent. For two reasons, I would argue that it is unnecessary to grasp the "essence" of *amour-propre*. First, given Rousseau's strong aversion against abuses of reason and metaphysics, this essence seems so metaphysical that Rousseau himself might not be happy to see it being abstracted from his writings. Second, insofar as we limit our discussion of *amour-propre* within Book IV of *Emile*, what we acquire from this discussion would suffice, at least for the time being, to support our understanding of Rousseau's ways to tame *amour-propre* explicated in this Book alone.

To begin with, three particularly relevant descriptions of *amour-propre* appear in Book IV (bold mine):³

¹ Cooper: 138.

² Cooper admirably identifies eight different generalizations of the meaning of *amour-propre* and proves that none of them catches the true essence of it. (Cooper: 137-50)

³ *Emile*: 214, 221, 235.

(1) "*Amour-propre*, which makes *comparisons*, is never content and never could be, because this sentiment, *preferring ourselves to others, also demands others to prefer us to themselves*, which is impossible. This is how the gentle and affectionate passions are born of self-love, and how the hateful and irascible passions are born of *amour-propre*."

(2) "The sight of a happy man inspires in others less love than envy. They would gladly accuse him of usurping a right he does not have in giving himself an exclusive happiness; and *amour-propre suffers*, too, *in making us feel that this man has no need of us*."

(3) "The first sentiment aroused in him by this *comparison* [comparing Emile himself to his fellows] is the *desire to be in the first position*. This is the point where love of self turns into *amour-propre* and where begin to arise all the passions which depend on this one."

At the first glance, these three descriptions share one significant similarity: *amour-propre* intrinsically requires comparison of oneself to others. It is due to this characteristic that Rousseau asserts that *amour-propre*, in contrast to the "absolute sentiment" of *amour de soi*, is merely relative.⁴

⁴ Rousseau: *Second Discourse* Note XV. From *The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings* (Victor Gourevitch trans.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997: 218.

Yet closer examinations reveal subtle differences among these descriptions. In (1), *amour-propre* has a two-fold requirement: it requires not only one's preference of oneself, but also a return of preference, or recognition, from others. This return of preference, however, is not required by *amour-propre* in (3).

Closer readings suggest that, when asserting in (1) that *amour-propre* not only requires one's self-preference but also others' preference of oneself, Rousseau is actually describing a discontent type of *amour-propre* ("never content and never could be"). But why is this type of *amour-propre* discontent? The reason lies not essentially in *amour-propre*'s requirement of self-preference, but in that of others' preference of one to themselves. Since it is impossible that others would always prefer one to themselves, this requirement of *amour-propre* could never be fulfilled.⁵ The account of *amour-propre* in (2), where Rousseau states that *amour-propre* could *suffer*, further strengthens this argument. When seeing a happy man, one feels oneself not being much needed. This feeling suggests that one finds one's self-recognized importance not being recognized by that happy man, because one is unimportant to that man's happiness. Since from this discontent/suffering *amour-propre* comes "the hateful and irascible passions," man becomes bad when one's *amour-propre* "suffers." *Amour-propre* is thus inflamed.

⁵ Several reasons explain why this is impossible. For present purposes, I will only focus on the reciprocal nature of love and friendship, which I will analyze in Section III.

If it is true that *amour-propre* gets inflamed due to the impossibility to let others always prefer one to themselves, and that this inflamed *amour-propre* makes man bad, then the accounts of *amour-propre* in (1) and (2) implicitly suggest that the type of *amour-propre* that solely requires one's self-preference does not "suffer" and thus may not necessarily lead to human wickedness. We are thus directed to examine the account in (3), where *amour-propre* is seen as one's "desire to be in the first position," but not necessarily be so *recognized* by others. Rousseau states that "This is the point where love of self turns into *amour-propre*." This statement is significant in that it suggests that the type of *amour-propre* which does not demand recognition from others plays a transitional role in the development from *amour de soi* to certain well-developed type of *amour-propre*. In other words, *amour-propre* that only requires one's self-preference might be seen as incomplete and innocuous. From this incomplete/innocuous type of *amour-propre* "begin to arise all the passions which depend on this one." Indeed, the inflamed type of *amour-propre* thus originates from it, and, given its destructiveness to human goodness, the inflamed type of *amour-propre* can be seen as the well-developed (namely, fully-corrupted) type of *amour-propre* that becomes a real problem to Emile's education.

The incompleteness and transitional nature of the type of *amour-propre* that solely requires one's self-preference is manifested not only in its similarity to the inflamed type

of *amour-propre*, but also in that to *amour de soi*.⁶ To be sure, *amour de soi* differs from any type of *amour-propre* because it requires no comparison of oneself to others, which comparison is essential to *amour-propre*. Yet it is still similar to the incomplete/innocuous type of *amour-propre* because both of them are essentially self-focused. When one prefers oneself to others, one does not have to rely on the opinion of others. This reliance becomes necessary only when *amour-propre* is inflamed. It thus follows that this incomplete type of *amour-propre*, before any further development, is truly free from "suffering" simply because *amour-propre* "suffers" only due to the absence of the recognition of others when one demands it.⁷

To conclude, from Rousseau's account of *amour-propre* in Book IV, we could identify two different but closely related types of *amour-propre*. One type is what we

⁶ Lawrence Cooper claims that, "Only passion that is wholesome and benign, that expresses nature's order, derives from *amour de soi*... Whatever is not wholesome and benign, whatever does not express nature's order, does not derive from *amour de soi*." (Cooper: 134) I believe this claim is inaccurate. First, Rousseau explicitly states that "The source of our passions, the origin and the principle of all the others, the only one born with man and which never leaves him so long as he lives is self-love (*l'amour de soi*) -- a primitive, innate passion, which is anterior to every other, and of which all others are in a sense only modifications." (*Emile*: 214) Therefore, all the passions other than *amour de soi* have *amour de soi* as their origin in addition to "alien causes." (*Ibid.*) Second, it might be wrong to see passions as either wholesome or not wholesome. *Amour-propre*, for instance, is morally ambiguous. If badly guided, *amour-propre* indeed suffers and becomes the source of all the human evilness; yet if well guided, which is a rare case but deserves striving for, *amour-propre* can develop into human virtue. In fact, the moral ambiguity of *amour-propre* is one of the central points that Cooper makes in his book. It is thus unclear to me why he offers such a claim that is not only inaccurate but also contrary to his own arguments.

⁷ The strongest support for my differentiation between the two types of *amour-propre* can be found in Book V where Rousseau compares Emile's *jealousy* and that of others. Emile's jealousy is parallel to the incomplete type of *amour-propre* and jealousy of others to the suffering type. The governor does not eliminate Emile's jealousy because this is impossible. Rather, he guides it by education so that Emile "will pay far more attention to winning his mistress than to threatening his rival", because Emile understands that "the right of preference is founded solely on merit and that honor is to be found in success." As a result, "he will redouble his efforts to make himself lovable, and he will probably succeed." (*Emile*: 431)

called the incomplete, or innocuous type of *amour-propre*, which requires only one's self-preference to others and is yet to develop into a more complete type. The other type is what we called the inflamed type of *amour-propre* because it is developed from the innocuous type and demands in addition others' preference of one to themselves. While the inflamed type necessarily leads to the corruption of human goodness due to its constant reliance on the opinion of others, which is impossible to constantly attain, the innocuous type is not easily corrupted because it essentially points to oneself and only to oneself, and thus will not "suffer." Since the incomplete/innocuous type of *amour-propre* will, without "art and care"⁸, necessarily develop (or deteriorate) into the inflamed type from which all human evils emerge, an inquiry into the ways of taming *amour-propre* is reasonably transformed into an inquiry into those of preventing the inflamed type of *amour-propre* from being aroused.

⁸ *Emile*: 214.

III. Human Need of Companion And the Problem of Taming *Amour-Propre*¹

To understand how the arousal of the inflamed type of *amour-propre* can be prevented, it is worthwhile to know how the transformation of the incomplete/innocuous type of *amour-propre* into the inflamed one is possible. We know that *amour-propre*, in general, has to develop in one's adolescence, and "[a]s soon as *amour-propre* has developed, the relative I is constantly in play, and the young man never observes others without returning to himself and comparing himself with them."² It does not follow, however, that *amour-propre* has to "suffer" in this development. We have seen from above that *amour-propre* "suffers" only if it requires others to prefer one to themselves, which preference could never be fulfilled, but comparing oneself to others and thereby *knowing* the opinion of others does not necessarily entails one's *reliance* on that opinion as one's standard to judge oneself. For the emergence of the inflamed type of *amour-propre*, there still lacks an impulse that motivates one to willingly take the opinion of others seriously and subject oneself to it.

This impulse, as Rousseau suggests, is "need of a companion." Once one feels this need, "all his relations with his species, all the affections of his soul are born with this one." This need of a companion exhibits itself in two forms, love and friendship. From

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all citations in this section are from *Emile*: 214-5

² *Ibid*: 243.

them "dissensions, enmity, and hate" will arise.³ It thus indicates that the passions of love and friendship are responsible for the transformation of the incomplete/ innocuous type of *amour-propre* into its inflamed type, namely, for the emergence of one's reliance on the opinion of others: "From the bosom of so many diverse passions I see opinion raising an unshakable throne, and stupid mortals, subjected to its empire, basing their own existence on the judgments of others."

How do love and friendship lead to this transformation? The answer lies in the nature of love and friendship: they are both reciprocal.⁴ That is to say, they are not satisfied until favor is returned: "To be loved, one has to make oneself lovable." Similarly, "it is only in returning or feigning to return friendship that one can obtain it."⁵ Consequently, one needs to win the preference of the beloved over others in order to attain love or friendship (which can be deemed as "love by everyone," an extension of "love by a mistress"). "To be preferred, one has to make oneself more lovable than another, more lovable than every other, at least in the eyes of the beloved object." However, as we have seen, it is impossible to fulfill this demand imposed onto others. Since comparison, which differentiates, is required by love and friendship, love and friendship usually appear intrinsically partisan, and one cannot equally love or befriend

³ Ibid: 215. The sequence between the birth of love and that of friendship is crucial to this paper, which I will examine in Section IV.

⁴ See also *ibid*: 233.

⁵ *Ibid*.

everyone.⁶ It is thus inevitable that he who loves her is not necessarily loved by her, or at least not necessarily loved as much as he loves her. As a result, from the need to win preference of others, *amour-propre* will "get the form we believe natural to it." Feeling oneself not being equally loved, one is tortured by the thought that one does not receive equal recognition from others that one believes one deserves. *Amour-propre* thus "suffers."

If need of a companion is exhibited as love and friendship, if the reciprocity and partisanship required by love and friendship necessarily lead to the inflammation of *amour-propre*, and if reciprocity (as well as partisanship) is the essence of love and friendship (which means that love and friendship without them are by definition love and friendship no more), then it is tempting to conclude that the way to prevent the emergence of the inflamed type of *amour-propre* can be nothing but the elimination of this dangerous need of a companion.

However, Rousseau makes it clear that this elimination is neither possible nor desirable. In the first place, human need of companion originates from human insufficiency: "It is man's weakness which makes him sociable... Every attachment is a sign of insufficiency. If each of us had no need of others, he would hardly think of

⁶ Masters confirms this argument by describing love and friendship as "human affections" that are both exclusive and reciprocal. (Roger Masters: *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968: 40, 49.) Note, however, that Rousseau does not see friendship as necessarily partisan, and that the possibility of a nonpartisan type of friendship is his hope that pity can be so well cultivated in friendship as to restrain the negative effects of *amour-propre*. I will examine this point in Section IV.

uniting himself with them."⁷ The savage man in the state of nature may be self-sufficient, but once socialized, men can never again return to that state. In the second place, and more importantly, Rousseau further rejects this option on the ground of its undesirability: "I do not conceive how someone who needs nothing can love anything. I do not conceive how someone who loves nothing can be happy."⁸ Happiness comes from love, which requires this very need of companion.⁹ It is thus nonsensical to eliminate the need of companion in order to tame *amour-propre*, because such elimination is contrary to the very aim of preventing *amour-propre* from inflammation: to allow Emile to preserve his goodness, to stay within himself, and, subsequently, to enjoy his happiness therein.¹⁰ Moreover, another reason that renders it undesirable to eliminate love is that love plays a particularly important role in the study of human relations. This study becomes suitable for man when he reaches his adolescence and "begins to sense his moral being" because without knowledge of human relations it is impossible to remain uncorrupted in the face of *amour-propre*.¹¹ Yet reason is insufficient

⁷ *Emile*: 221.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Only in this light can we understand why Rousseau claims in the *Second Discourse* that, rather than the state of nature, the "period in the development of human faculties, occupying a just mean between the indolence of the primitive state and the petulant activity of our *amour-propre*, must have been the happiest and the most lasting epoch... *the best for men*," (italic mine) because love, which is absent in the state of nature, has emerged here. (*Second Discourse*: 167)

¹⁰ *Emile*: 229-30.

¹¹ For an intensive study of "the true relations of man" and of its crucial role to taming *amour-propre*, see Sections VI and VII.

to clearly see these relations. Rather, love "has better eyes than we do and sees relations we are not able to perceive." In other words, love is not only powerful to push *amour-propre* to corruption, but also crucial for taming it.

Thus, we encounter a problem that makes it difficult to tame *amour-propre*. On the one hand, one's need of a companion is the impulse that necessarily propels one to constantly rely on the opinion of others and thus makes one's *amour-propre* "suffer." On the other hand, it is precisely this need that brings about one's happiness. Therefore, the task to tame *amour-propre* has to face the challenge that, while one needs to restrain the sources of the inflammation of *amour-propre*, namely, love and friendship, one at the same time must not restrain them so much as to stifle them. Yet as long as these sources are not completely restrained and thus remain, their reciprocal nature will necessarily lead to the clash between the desire to win preference of others and the reality that this desire cannot be always fulfilled, thereby causing *amour-propre* to "suffer" and probably announcing the failure of the task of taming *amour-propre*. Are we truly able to tame *amour-propre* without undermining human happiness?

IV. Friendship and Taming *Amour-Propre*: A Preliminary Survey¹

Rousseau's delicate solution to this challenging task of taming *amour-propre* begins with his attention to the sequence of emergence of love and friendship. On the one hand, Rousseau suggests that the birth of love precedes that of friendship: "From the need for a mistress is soon born the need for a friend. He who senses how sweet it is to be loved would want to be loved by everyone."² On the other hand, he tells us that, "The first sentiment of which a carefully raised young man is capable is not love; it is friendship. The first act of his nascent imagination is to teach him that he has fellows." There is no contradiction between these two statements. Whereas in most cases of education love is born before, and then gives birth to, friendship, only in "a carefully raised young man" can friendship emerge before love.³ Since *amour-propre* and all its evils are subsequently born from the former case,⁴ which are exactly what we take pains to avoid, it becomes essential for taming *amour-propre* as its first step to give a young man enough "art and care" so as to let him feel friendship before love.

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all citations in this section are from *Emile*: 220-1.

² *Emile*: 215.

³ This point is further substantiated by Rousseau's assertion that, "Puberty and sexual potency always arrive earlier in learned and civilized peoples than in ignorant and barbarous peoples." (*Emile*: 215) In most cases, the word *civilized* used in his comparison between the learned and the ignorant is equivalent to *corrupted*, and *barbarous* to *natural*.

⁴ "Extend these ideas, and you will see where our *amour-propre* gets the form we believe natural to it, and how self-love, ceasing to be an absolute sentiment... feeds itself constantly in all at the expense of their neighbors." (*Emile*: 215)

To appreciate this solution, we need to understand why love coming before friendship is harmful to the task of taming *amour-propre*, and why friendship coming before love is helpful to it. The answer lies in the relations of love and friendship to pity, which seems playing a central role in taming *amour-propre*.

For the time being, I will not expand our discussion of pity and how it serves in taming *amour-propre*, because this discussion turns out to be far more complicated than it appears.⁵ For present purposes, it suffices for us to understand that, according to the second and third maxims of pity,⁶ one becomes compassionate only when one truly feels the suffering of others and when one identifies oneself with the sufferers. Love, however, undermines these two conditions. "[Y]oung people who are corrupted early and given over to women and debauchery are inhuman and cruel." They have no idea of the suffering of others and thus know "neither pity nor mercy." This inhumanity and cruelty is the result of love, which, as we have argued, is profoundly partisan. Therefore, rather than having the idea of fellows in general and identifying oneself with humanity at large, "[t]heir imaginations, filled by a single object, rejected all the rest."

Friendship, in contrast, is the womb of pity. For "a carefully raised young man" who is "raised in a happy simplicity" and who enjoys "prolonged innocence," "the first act of his nascent imagination is to teach him that he has *fellows*; and the *species* affects

⁵ See Section VIII.

⁶ *Emile*: 224-5.

him before the *female sex*." Consequently, "the first seeds of *humanity*" will be sowed in his heart, and "[h]is *compassionate heart* is moved by the sufferings of his *fellows*."

(Bold mine)

Regarding this understanding of the relations between friendship and pity, there are two objections to which I need to respond. One objection is raised by Roger Masters. He rejects the similarity between friendship and pity, and sees them differing in nature and origin. He argues that pity and friendship belong to different types of sentiment. While pity is a relative sentiment whose relativity makes it similar to *amour-propre*, friendship is "merely a 'sentiment'" that is similar to love due to its reciprocity.⁷ His argument, though correct in several minor places, is fundamentally flawed. If a relative sentiment such as pity is defined by its requirement of comparison, then a sentiment different from relative sentiment must require no comparison, which is thus called absolute sentiment. As Cooper argues, the categories of relative sentiment and of absolute sentiment are logically exhaustive, and there cannot be a third independent category.⁸ If friendship is not a relative sentiment, it has to be absolute, which is obviously contradictory to Masters' argument that friendship requires reciprocity, which is the result of comparison and awareness of others.

⁷ Masters: 43-4.

⁸ Cooper: 133.

Another objection is related to the partisan nature of friendship. If, as we have argued, friendship is partisan and thus capable of inflaming *amour-propre*, then how is it possible to cultivate pity, which is intrinsically nonpartisan, from friendship? To this objection, I would reply that, for Rousseau, friendship could be partisan, but not necessarily so. In the first place, friendship is partisan if it is born out of love, because love is necessarily partisan. This birth of friendship, however, is corrupted and exactly what should be avoided. In the second place, we should note that Rousseau's definition of friendship itself is different from its partisan type. According to that definition, one does not merely want to be a friend of a certain figure or a group of people, but of "everyone," of "his fellows." In this sense, rather than being partisan, friendship is essentially cosmopolitan.⁹ To be sure, I am not claiming here that the cosmopolitan type of friendship is the only type that Rousseau envisions, but this argument at least shows that, through education, friendship is not necessarily partisan and is thus capable of giving birth to pity.

⁹ To pick up a couple of examples: "The first sentiment of which a carefully raised young man is capable is not love; it is friendship. This first act of his nascent imagination is to teach him that he has *fellows*." (*Emile*: 220) "When the first movement of his senses lights the fire of imagination, he begins to feel himself in his *fellows*, to be moved by their complaints and to suffer from their pains." (*Emile*: 222) (Italic mine)

V. Pity as Remedy for *Amour-Propre*: Possibility and Difficulty

So far, we have seen that, although *amour-propre* begins to differ from *amour de soi* as soon as one's comparison of oneself to others becomes active, *amour-propre* truly develops into the origin of human wickedness and thus a problem to human goodness when it demands more than one's self-preference but also others' preference of one to themselves, which, due to the reciprocal nature and partisan nature of love and of that type of friendship that originates from love, is destined to be frustrated and thus "suffers." Given that it is impossible to remove *amour-propre* itself from human life, the real task of taming *amour-propre* is to prevent the innocuous type of *amour-propre* from degenerating into the inflamed type. However, since love and friendship, which are manifestations of human need of a companion, are the impulse that propels *amour-propre* to develop into the inflamed type, and since it is impossible as well as undesirable to eliminate them, the task of taming *amour-propre* becomes problematic and challenging in that it has to carefully preserve what constantly drives one's *amour-propre* to "suffer," on the one hand, and make sure it does not "suffer," on the other hand. In the face of this highly demanding task, Rousseau suggests that we reverse the sequence of the birth of love and that of friendship. While love always precedes friendship and gives birth to it in a corrupted man, a carefully raised man must be given enough care to learn friendship before love, so that his friendship can be cosmopolitan rather than partisan

and thus gives birth to pity, which seems to be Rousseau's hope of taming *amour-propre*. In this way, it seems possible that without undermining love and friendship, one can still prevent *amour-propre* from being inflamed.

Why might Rousseau think pity could bridle *amour-propre* before it has gone wild? Prior to understanding this, we need to understand how *amour-propre* can be tamed at all. In Section IV I have shown the importance of a cosmopolitan type of friendship to answering this question, since any other types of passion will inevitably inflame *amour-propre* due to their reciprocal and partisan nature. Thus, it must be avoided that passion, be it friendship or love, focus on a particular object. In fact, Rousseau envisions this very cosmopolitanism as the general solution to the inflamed type of *amour-propre*: "Let us extend *amour-propre* to other things. We shall transform it into *a virtue*, and there is no man's heart in which this virtue does not have its root. The less the object of our care is immediately involved with us, the less the illusion of particular interest is to be feared. The more one generalizes this interest, the more it becomes equitable, and the love of mankind is nothing other than the love of justice."¹ (Bold mine)

Yet one may wonder why the virtue into which the extended *amour-propre* is transformed is the one which in "no man's heart... does not have its root." Nothing is more plausible than suggesting that the root of this virtue must be natural, and thus, be pity, which is one of the only three elements of human characteristics that Rousseau

¹ *Emile*: 252.

attributes to human nature in the *Second Discourse*.² Pity as a natural human capacity might be shrouded by social inequality. Yet however weak it might be, it is still there with all its potentiality: it is "the only Natural virtue which the most extreme Detractor of human virtues was forced to acknowledge", "a "sentiment that is obscure and lively in Savage man, developed but weak in Civil man."³

In *Emile*, Rousseau further confirms this plausible argument based upon the *Second Discourse*: We are attached to our fellows by "the sentiment of their pains," namely, pity, and only in this can "we see far better... the identity of our natures with theirs and *the guarantees of their attachment to us*."⁴ (Bold mine) In other words, provided its conditions are met, pity as a natural sentiment that lurks in everyone's heart will be triggered in men, however corrupted they may have been, so that they may pity us when we suffer, as we do when they suffer. Moreover, pity lets us see "the identity of our natures with theirs."⁵ Or as Rousseau himself puts it in a slightly different way, pity

² The other two elements are *amour de soi* and human perfectibility. *Amour de soi* is the basis of pity, since pity makes one happy because one's *amour de soi* is satisfied. "In seeing how many ills he is exempt from, he feels himself to be happier than he had thought he was." (*Emile*: 229) Needless to say, perfectibility can hardly be relied upon in order to tame *amour-propre*, as it is exactly the cause that stimulates *amour-propre* in the natural man and that further corrupts human soul in society.

³ *Second Discourse*: 152-3.

⁴ *Emile*: 221.

⁵ *Ibid*.

moves us "by transporting ourselves outside of ourselves and identifying with the suffering animal, by leaving, as it were, our own being to take on its being."⁶

Thus, this thread of arguments seems leading to a plausible conclusion about the relations between pity and *amour-propre*: *amour-propre* can be tamed if its object is extended to the entire human species; this extension can be achieved by cultivating pity because pity allows one to identify oneself with one's species; and in theory, pity can be cultivated within everyone because it is part of indelible human nature. As a result, without eliminating it, pity prevents one's *amour-propre* from being inflamed.

This account of the relations between pity and *amour-propre*, however, faces a serious difficulty. Although pity is capable of transporting one out of oneself and identifying one with one's species, this very transportation and this very identification are the premises not only of the *amour-propre* as "a virtue," but also of effective pity. As shown in the analysis of Section IV, these premises are clearly reflected in the three maxims of pity, and are the reason why pity can be cultivated out of the cosmopolitan type of friendship rather than of partisan love.

⁶ Ibid: 222. Clifford Orwin asserts in his study of the concept of compassion in the *Second Discourse* that, "Compassion is the last refuge of nature in our state of greatest estrangement from it. It constitutes the sole remaining possibility of communion or intimacy with our fellow human beings." See Clifford Orwin: "Rousseau and the Discovery of Political Compassion," *The Legacy of Rousseau* (ed. Clifford Orwin et. al.), Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1997: 298.

It follows that *amour-propre* and pity flourish and wither simultaneously. If Emile has already been able to identify himself with human being at large, then there is no need to direct his pity against his *amour-propre*, since the latter must have already become a virtue. If Emile is inflicted with the inflamed *amour-propre*, then there does not seem to be possibility to put it under control by directing his pity, since his pity must have already become less pure and thus less effective to let Emile identify himself with his species rather than with specific objects. Clifford Orwin correctly explains this ineffectiveness of the pity that bases itself upon a limited identity: "Fired with the sufferings of a visible victim, Emile may lose sight of the common good; succumbing to pity for a criminal, he may neglect the interests of society."⁷ In short, having lost its cosmopolitan nature, pity becomes softness. Even Rousseau himself admits, "To prevent pity from degenerating into weakness, it must, therefore, be generalized and extended to the whole of mankind."⁸

Here we see how pity is linked to *amour-propre*. *Amour-propre* emerges with one's comparison of oneself with others. So does pity. Pity is thus "the first relative sentiment."⁹ It is the first because it is natural; but a more important point is, it is relative because it presupposes comparison. In other words, pity can be seen as a specific form of

⁷ Orwin: 307-8.

⁸ *Emile*: 253.

⁹ *Ibid*: 222.

amour-propre. Yet if pity relies on comparison as *amour-propre* does, then pity may as well suffer from the same kind of problem that *amour-propre* does due to the relativity. The only difference is, while the inflamed *amour-propre* is more closely related to *envy* due to the impossibility to constantly receive other's returned preference, pity more probably produces *vanity*: "In pitying them, he will despise them; in congratulating himself, he will esteem himself more, and in feeling himself to be happier than them, he will believe himself worthier to do so."¹⁰ This is the outcome of using one form of *amour-propre*, namely, pity, to fight another form, namely, the inflamed *amour-propre*. It is here that Rousseau claims that, "*Amour-propre* is a useful but dangerous instrument."¹¹ Moreover, this vanity is "the error most to be feared, because it is the most difficult to destroy."¹² At least three reasons explain why vanity caused by pity is the most difficult to destroy. First, while envy might be suppressed by pity, there does not seem to be any other type of *amour-propre* that can be directed to suppress vanity caused by pity. Second, even if there were any other type of *amour-propre* that serves to suppress this vanity, since it did not have natural human tendency in support (as pity does), it could not equally occur to everyone. Third, because of the shared premise of the effective pity and the *amour-propre* "as a virtue" -- general identification of oneself with one's species -- pity might be even

¹⁰ Ibid: 245.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

unable to suppress envy, as an envious man cannot identify himself with human being at large and thus cannot at all have effective pity in his heart. To conclude, these difficulties raise serious doubts about the possibility of using pity to tame *amour-propre*.

VI. "The True Relations of Man": Its Philosophical Soundness

The difficulties of pity as solution to the problem of *amour-propre* leads us to more carefully investigate Rousseau's account of taming *amour-propre*. Immediately before introducing the concept of pity into *Emile*, Rousseau claims the following:

"This is, then, the summary of the whole of human wisdom in the use of passions:

(1) To have *a sense of the true relations of man*, with respect to the species as well as the individual. (2) To order all the affections of the soul *according to these relations*."¹ (Bold mine)

As "the summary of the whole of human wisdom in the use of passions," these two items are definitely of considerable significance. In fact, both of them revolve around one essential concept: "the true relations of man."

What are "the true relations of man?" They are by definition not the false ones. Yet what are these false ones? -- Let us consider this question at first.

Apparently, human relations seem by definition presupposing human society, since in the state of nature, each savage man lives in his own solitude and never comes into constant contact with other savages; human relations thus do not appear to exist. However, if this argument is valid, it then follows that, rooted in human society, these relations in question are closely linked to human corruption, since, as Rousseau

¹ *Emile*: 219.

illustrates in the *Second Discourse* and as Ruth Grant convincingly argues, human society, which is intrinsically characterized by human interdependence and thus almost inevitably by inequality, necessarily entails human corruption.² It thus becomes impossible to base Emile's education upon these relations, because they are capable of facilitating everything but one's independence from corrupted social norms, which independence is the very end of this education.

In *Emile*, Rousseau further falsifies this argument. Immediately following the account of pity, Rousseau claims the need to let Emile "know what position he feels he has among men, and what kinds of obstacles he may believe he has to overcome to reach the position he wants to occupy," because only by doing so can we decide whether Emile's passions, which arise from the innocuous type of *amour-propre*,³ "will be passions of *beneficence and commiseration* or of envy and covetousness."⁴ (Bold mine) Thus, Emile must learn to understand human society. However, by understanding society, Emile is going to keep a distance from it, rather than to embrace it, since "[i]n the civil state there is a de jure equality that is *chimerical* and vain, because the means designed to maintain it themselves serve to destroy it."⁵ (Bold mine) Disguised by chimerical

² Ruth Grant: *Hypocrisy and Integrity: Machiavelli, Rousseau, and the Ethics of Politics*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1997: 151-3.

³ See Section II. The innocuous type of *amour-propre* is distinguished from both *amour de soi* and the inflamed type of *amour-propre*.

⁴ *Emile*: 235.

⁵ *Ibid*: 236.

equality that society inevitably undermines, human relations in society are inequality in essence.

Furthermore, driven by their inflamed *amour-propre*, most people in society are not in unity with themselves. Since they rely upon the opinion of others as their standard of life, they wear "masks." Yet "If the object were only to show young people man by means of his mask, there would be no need of showing them this [i.e. "the human heart"⁶]; it is what they would always be seeing in any event. But since the mask is not the man and his varnish must not seduce them, portray men for them such as they are -- not in order that young people hate them but that they *pity* them and not want to resemble them."⁷ (Bold mine) In other words, even *men* appearing in society are not real, and it further follows that the inequality of society is not real either (though in a different sense from saying the "chimerical equality" is unreal). With masks on, those who *appear* superior to others only *appear* happy. Behind this appearance of superiority and of happiness lie equal miseries. In short, the inequality pervading on the phenomenal level of the world is by no means "the true relations of man." They are indeed relations, but false ones.

Emile should be deceived neither by that social inequality nor by its outcomes. This deception is the common symptom of envy caused by *amour-propre* and vanity

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

caused by pity. As for preventing envy, one should not show Emile "the *deceptive* image of the happy man," because "[t]o show him the world before he knows men is not to form him, it is to corrupt him; it is not to instruct him, it is to *deceive* him."⁸ (Bold mine) As for preventing vanity, "[i]f he thus believes himself to be of a more excellent nature and more happily born than other men, Emile is wrong. He is *deceived*."⁹ (Bold mine) It is thus clear that only through the knowledge of the true, rather than deceptive, relations of man can Emile be free from the ills caused by both *amour-propre* and pity. Unfortunately, this knowledge cannot be found in society.

However, simply claiming men's equal misery and the equal loss of unity is merely presenting a psychological speculation that may be applicable to one's experience but invalid to another's. Therefore, Rousseau needs a solid philosophical ground to base this claim upon. This ground, as it turns out, is the state of nature. "The true relations of man" cannot be found in society, but "[i]n the state of nature there is *a de facto equality* that is *real and indestructible*, because it is impossible in that state for the difference between man and man by itself to be great enough to make one

⁸ Ibid: 222.

⁹ Ibid: 245.

dependent on another."¹⁰ (Bold mine) Simply put, "the true relations of man" are the natural equality among men.

Yet in what way should we understand this natural equality? It should not be forgotten that there is an apparent contradiction between the state of nature and human relations. As I have noted, it seems that human relations come into being only when society replaces the state of nature. Then, in what sense can it be possible that "the true *relations* of man" be embodied in the state of *nature* where savage men lead their own life in solidarity? I will argue that this contradiction is resolved only if we comprehend the extent to which Rousseau's understanding of "true relations" is influenced by methodologies of modern natural science.¹¹

Analytically speaking, there can be two different types of relations. One type is what I call *inter-subjective*. Multiple conscious subjects start a relation when they interact, and end it when the interaction ceases. Human relations are usually perceived in this sense, because human society appears basically conventional and thus to be the outcome of constant human interactions. The other type, however, is *objective*. Rather than interaction between parties involved in a relation, its sole basis is their own

¹⁰ Ibid: 236.

¹¹ I am not going to argue for the connection of methodologies of modern science to treatments of human being as objective thing for the purpose of finding "the true relations of man," because not only of its irrelevance to present purposes, but also of the fact that Leo Strauss and Marc Plattner have already convincingly connected them. See Leo Strauss: *Natural Right and History*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1953: 265; Marc Plattner: *Rousseau's State of Nature*. De Kalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1964: 51.

properties¹². To put it in another way, this type of relations is thing-thing relation. (For example, one pound of wood is relatively bigger in size than one pound of iron; or, one pound of raw wood worthy of \$10 is as heavy in weight and as big in volume as a piece of wooden furniture worthy of \$1000 made out of one pound of wood.) Since man is a *thing* capable of interaction -- he has physical properties as other animals and things do - - this type of relations is definitely applicable to man as well. Thus, all savage men are, for instance, equally strong in body, and this equality in strength still holds even if they may have never seen any other members of their species throughout their lives (that is, may have never had interaction with them).¹³ In this sense, natural equality can be seen as non-relational and actually means natural similarity.

This latter type of relations is exactly the one upon which Rousseau bases his education of Emile. Only in the light of these "objective" relations can Rousseau denounces those inter-subjective relations of society as chimera. Textual evidences in support of this interpretation of Rousseau's understanding of the objective nature of "the true relations of man" are abundant in *Emile*. Apart from the one cited above concerning the "de facto equality" of the state of nature, perhaps the best recapture of these "true relations" in Book IV is the following: "Men are not naturally kings, or lords, or courtiers, or rich men. All are born naked and poor; all are subject to the miseries of life, to

¹² The word "property" here certainly has nothing to do with one's financial possession. I use it to denote all characteristics that a thing has in the sense of physics.

¹³ In fact, the first part of the *Second Discourse* is mainly devoted to explaining this.

sorrows, ills, needs, and pains of every kind. Finally, all are condemned to death. *This is what truly belongs to man*. This is what no mortal is exempt from. Begin, therefore, by studying in human nature what is *most inseparable* from it, what *best characterizes humanity*.¹⁴ (Bold mine) In other words, all human identities and thus social relations among them do not necessarily belong to man, are separable from human nature, and badly characterize humanity. Moreover, "...[M]an is the same in all stations; the rich man does not have a bigger *stomach* than the poor one and does not *digest* better than he; the master does not have *arms* longer or stronger than his slave's; a man of great family is no *greater* than a man of the people; and finally, as *the natural needs* are everywhere the same, the means of providing for them ought to be equal everywhere...The only ineffaceable characters are those printed by nature; and nature does not make princes, rich men, or great lords."¹⁵ (Bold mine) This clearly indicates that the true relations of man in the state of nature are essentially physiological, and thus objective, similarities among men. They are "the only ineffaceable characters" of man, and the lack of significant difference with respect to these objective characters prove the "de facto equality" of man in the state of nature. -- This argument is invincible, because the similarities among men upon which Rousseau bases his argument are precisely what biologically define the species of human being. A man born with wings is obvious

¹⁴ Ibid: 222.

¹⁵ Ibid: 194.

different from other men, but it might be questioned if the winged man is biologically a man at all. Rousseau, whose interest in botany and natural history it is life-long, thus successfully finds an unchallengeable ground for all of his arguments about man.

To conclude, "the true relations of man" as natural/objective equality of man is the most essential concept in "the summary of the whole of human wisdom in the use of passions" because it is the most solid philosophical foundation for Rousseau's solution to the inflammation of *amour-propre*.

VII. "The True Relations of Man" Continued: Its Pedagogy

I have illustrated the foundation of Rousseau's project of taming *amour-propre*.

The only thing left to be explained is how Emile may learn to embrace this truth about human relations. Two epistemological obstacles must be overcome before we can properly understand it.

The first obstacle is that, since this truth has been buried under deceptive social phenomena and thereby becomes almost unobservable, it remains to be seen how Emile is able to grasp what he cannot directly see.

My answer is the following. I have shown in Section IV that, before his heart is corrupted by society, a "carefully raised" young man such as Emile naturally develops in his heart a cosmopolitan type of friendship that extends him to human being at large. A young man as such therefore initially bears in his heart identification of himself with the species. Since this identification is fragile as both his passions for sex and social prejudices may easily put an end to it, it is necessary to implant in him the solid natural equality of man, the truth about human relations, so as to secure that cosmopolitan self-identification.¹ This implantation as the way to preserve this cosmopolitan self-identification does not appear groundless, since in this identification lies already an

¹ "Although I want to form the man of nature, the object is not, for all that, to make him a savage and to relegate him to the depths of the woods. It suffices that, enclosed in a social whirlpool, he not let himself get carried away by either the passions or the opinions of men, that he see with his eyes, that he feel with his heart, that no authority govern him beyond that of his own reason." (*Emile*: 255)

unconscious confirmation of human equality as its presupposition. To put it in a more modest way, though Emile has knowledge of neither equality nor inequality, he is friendlier to the former, provided no influence of society affects him. Therefore, it is less of letting Emile see what he does not have in mind than of preserving an innate tendency of his, which is in accordance with "natural goodness," in the face of social corruption.

The second obstacle is more difficult to tackle. As I have suggested in Section III, what is known is not necessarily what is taken seriously. -- This suggestion makes it possible to identify the innocuous type of *amour-propre* from its inflamed type, but it at the same time burdens us to show how Emile learns not only to know the truth about human relations, but also to take it so seriously as to live with it as his guide to moral actions.

We thus need to go back to "the summary of the whole of human wisdom in the use of passions." After claiming the necessity to "have a sense of the true relations of man," Rousseau further suggests the need "[t]o order *all the affections of the soul* according to these relations."² Here, affection is in contrast to reason. For Rousseau, moralities are not purely "formed by understanding." Rather, they "are true affections of the soul enlightened by reason."³ Therefore, to know these relations in mind is one thing;

² Ibid: 219.

³ Ibid: 235.

yet in order to let Emile act according to them as his moral caliber, it is more important to let him feel this natural equality in heart: "by reason alone, independent of conscience, no natural law can be established; and [...] the entire right of nature is only a chimera if it is not founded on a natural need in the human heart."⁴

It might even be doubted to what extent Emile needs to consciously know (on this stage of his growth, at least) that the natural equality of man *is* the truth about human relations. Emile needs to "have a *sense* of the true relations of man." This expression suggests that it is not necessarily for him to have the knowledge of the true relations. Moreover, Rousseau claims that, "we must *know* what position he *feels* he has among men, and what kinds of obstacles he *may believe* he has to overcome to reach the position he wants to occupy."⁵ (Underline and bold mine) As Emile's educator, the governor himself needs to consciously know the value of the truth about human relations so as to teach Emile of it, whereas Emile needs not to do so; it suffices for him only to "feel" it. Simply put, to let Emile take the natural equality of man seriously is more to let his heart moved by this equality than to acquaint him with the knowledge of it.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

"But is man the master of ordering his affections according to this or that relation?"⁶ Thus questions Rousseau rhetorically immediately after summarizing "the whole of human wisdom in the use of passions." And his answer is clear: "Without a doubt, if he is master of *directing his imagination* toward this or that object or of giving it this or that habit."⁷ (Bold mine) I am not going to start a lengthy discussion of imagination, which has been duly paid attention to in numerous books and articles. In this paper it is sufficient to note that, to direct Emile's imagination, the governor must "put all the lessons of young people in actions rather than in speeches."⁸ In other words, the governor's strategy is what Rousseau elsewhere states as "to persuade without convincing."⁹

First, Rousseau suggests the following: "Put their nascent imaginations off the track with objects which, far from inflaming, repress the activity of their senses... Show them only scenes which are touching but modest, which stir them without seducing them, and which nourish their sensibilities without moving their senses."¹⁰ For example, a young man should be occasionally but not too frequently exposed to the suffering of

⁶ Ibid: 219.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid: 251.

⁹ Christopher Kelly convincingly argues for the importance of this strategy to the Legislator as an alternative to both rational persuasion and conversion by force. See Christopher Kelly: "'To Persuade without Convincing': The Language of Rousseau's Legislator," *American Journal of Political Science* Vol. 31, No. 2 (May, 1987): 321-335. This non-rational approach of persuasion is widely adopted in Rousseau's advices to both personal and civil education, and its crucial role to Rousseau's teaching is thus obvious.

¹⁰ *Emile*: 230-1.

sick persons, so that without being hardened by them, his heart will be struck by the pains that he realizes he may equally suffer. Second, the governor should teach his pupil history. "It is by means of history that, without the lessons of philosophy, he will read the hearts of men."¹¹ History, especially biography, penetrates the appearance of great men and reveals their hearts as well as their miseries that they try to conceal. Having examined history, the pupil comes "to know in what rank among his fellows he will put himself"¹² -- more precisely, to know the equality of men behind social masks. This is a better way to know so than being instructed by "the lessons of philosophy," namely, by abstract eloquences, since philosophers see men "only through the prejudices of philosophy."¹³ Third, personal experience is equally important, especially given that, "For this [vanity] there is no cure other than experience."¹⁴ The pupil must be humiliated (rather than scolded) in a proper way when he leans towards vanity, because concerning the fact that "he is a man like others and subject to the same weaknesses," the governor needs to "[m]ake him feel it, or he will never know it."¹⁵ Emile, for example, is struck by his actual stupidity in "the adventure with the magician" and thus understands that he is no clever than other spectators of the magic. Moreover, it is necessary for the governor

¹¹ Ibid: 237.

¹² Ibid: 243.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid: 245.

¹⁵ Ibid.

not to teach Emile of the harm of vanity in speech, since that will only inflame his *amour-propre* and thus make him resist the governor.¹⁶ Fourth, fables are needed to deepen the pupil's lessons from his experience: "[B]y means of the fable the experience he would soon have forgotten is imprinted on his judgment."¹⁷ Yet the pupil must draw maxim from the fables by himself, rather than be told so by the storyteller, since what is told is not as touching as what is felt.

"I believe that in following the one I have indicated," states Rousseau after illustrating the above, "your pupil will purchase knowledge of men and of himself as cheaply as possible, and that you will put him in a position to contemplate his games of Fortune without envying the fate of its favorites, and to be satisfied with himself without believing himself to be wiser than others."¹⁸ Finally, this positive effect of his education is perpetuated by "the exercise of the social virtues," which "brings the love of humanity to the depths of one's heart," rather than by "oratorical art," because "It is in doing good that one becomes good; I know of no practice more certain."¹⁹

In these ways, Emile's imagination is properly directed and his affections thus ordered according to the indestructible natural equality of man. Envy, the problem of *amour-propre*, and vanity, the problem of pity, are finally solved.

¹⁶ Ibid: 247.

¹⁷ Ibid: 248.

¹⁸ Ibid: 249.

¹⁹ Ibid: 250.

VIII. Pity Revisited: Its Uses and Limits

We are still justified to wonder what positive role pity plays in taming *amour-propre* if pity is as problematic as the inflamed type of *amour-propre*. Based upon my previous arguments, pity is definitely useful, but not omnipotent.

On the one hand, most of my previous reconstruction of Rousseau's account of pity is still valid. Since pity is a natural sentiment that comes into effect in the face of miseries of others, it serves as one of the "affections" to show Emile "the true relations of man" without convincing him of their truthfulness. As Rousseau puts it, "If our common needs unite us by interest, our common miseries unite us by affection."¹ Moreover, pity is probably more reliable than other affections, because it is natural in the sense that it has the potentiality to be successfully triggered in everyone's heart.

On the other hand, the difficulties intrinsic to pity warn us of two things and impel us to revise the previous reconstruction. First, pity is not able to let young pupil identify himself with his species. It can only help him confirm this identity before social inequality corrupts his heart and induces him to deny it. For pupil who has already been corrupted and thus unable to completely identify himself with his species, pity alone is not enough to save him from negative effects of *amour-propre*. Other remedies, such as

¹ *Emile*: 221.

religion, must come in aid.² Second, pity must be used with caution, because there are more than one types of pity with respect to its object (the human species, or particular individual), whereas Rousseau only acknowledges the usefulness of one specific type that presupposes a common identity of human being. Pity that fails to take this common identity as its presupposition and thus fails to take the human species as its object is ineffective in taming *amour-propre* because pity as such cannot prevent one from separating men into different groups of different values, from identifying oneself with one of these groups, and thus from taking seriously comparisons among these groups.

With regard to these two warnings, it must be noted that a few scholars fail to notice Rousseau's differentiation among diverse types of pity. They treat features, mostly weaknesses, of one type of pity as the essential characteristics of Rousseau's general idea of pity, and thus fail to see that the specific type of pity Rousseau actually seeks to achieve in Emile's education is designed precisely to avoid these weaknesses.

Based upon his close examination of the *Second Discourse*, Richard Boyd claims, "[P]ity rests inexorably on a sense of difference, is fueled by an aversion to suffering, and

² This is illustrated in the story of the young man and the Savoyard vicar immediately following the first part of Book IV. The young man's education does not end when his pity is reinvigorated. Having been blinded by his passions and opinions of others, he cannot understand through his pity of others that real happiness can only be acquired beyond human relations and comparisons. Yet if he is unable to understand this, he will not be able to give up the mode of thinking that presupposes happiness to be found in certain social standings. This is why the vicar needs to teach the young man of religion, which decisively breaks this mode of thinking, exactly when the young man, whose pity it has already been reinvigorated and who has thus realized the miseries of those who appear happy, is suffered at the thought that he may not be able to find happiness at all.

is more likely to yield a world of 'reluctant spectators' than one of simple souls eagerly rushing to the aid of others." He thus concludes that these features of pity challenges the idea that pity "leads ultimately to communion with our fellow-creatures."³ This view of pity is obviously trapped by the thought that pity is the cause of one's identification with the species. On the contrary, Emile, who has already been able to identify himself with his species, is taught to practice "the exercise of the social virtues," which further helps foster his sense of natural equality of man and directs him to have an "active beneficence"⁴ that encourages him to assist the people whom he pities.⁵ Therefore, that pity presupposes a sense of difference is not a problem to Emile's education because Emile's pity should be a different kind that has an entirely different presupposition. Moreover, the problems that Boyd's version of pity may cause are precisely the ones that Emile's education particularly aims to eliminate.

Similarly, arguing that Rousseau regards pity "as a stepping-stone to justice," Richard White infers that Rousseau "believes that there are proper limits to compassion: not only is it difficult to feel compassion for those who are bad, but it would actually be

³ Richard Boyd: "Pity's Pathologies Portrayed: Rousseau and the Limits of Democracy," *Political Theory* Vol. 32, No. 4 (Aug, 2004): 519.

⁴ *Emile*: 251.

⁵ "If he sees discord reigning among his comrades, he seeks to reconcile them; if he sees men afflicted, he informs himself as to the subject of their suffering; if he sees two men who hate each other, he wants to know the cause of their enmity; if he sees an oppressed man groaning under the vexations of the powerful and the rich, he finds out what maneuvers are used to cover over those vexations; and, with the interest he takes in all men who are miserable, the means of ending their ills are never indifferent to him." (*Emile*: 251)

wrong to feel compassion for them." Therefore, he concludes that, "This limited and conditional compassion divides the world into separate souls -- those who are worthy of compassion and those who do not deserve it. It separates rather than unifies."⁶ White's conclusion is correct in that it sees that Rousseau sets certain limits to pity. However, White does not notice that Rousseau also claims that, "In a word, teach your pupil to love all men, even those who despise men."⁷ Moreover, although he is aware of Rousseau's claim that, "For the sake of reason, for the sake of love or ourselves, we must have pity for our species still more than for our neighbor, and pity for the wicked is a very great cruelty to men"⁸, White ignores Rousseau's apparent self-contradiction in this claim: If one should pity one's species as a whole, then why the wicked men should not be pitied? If only good people (in contrast to the wicked) should be pitied, then how is it possible to pity our species as a whole rather than mere certain members of our species? In contrast to White's claim, my understanding is the following. The wicked are also members of the species. They commit crimes when they despise men (otherwise they will pity men and thus will not benefit themselves at the cost of others' miseries). Emile should not pity them as criminals - pity as such is mere softness, because it is "a blind preference founded solely on consideration of persons" rather than of the human

⁶ Richard White: "Rousseau and the Education of Compassion," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* Vol. 42, No. 1 (2008): 43.

⁷ *Emile*: 226.

⁸ *Ibid*: 253.

species⁹ -- nevertheless, as members of the human species, they deserve Emile's pity because they also suffer from their own folly (in particular, from their inflamed *amour-propre*). Thus, pity neither necessarily separates nor necessarily unifies. When one sees through all kinds of social masks and treats everyone as equal member of the species, one's pity tends to confirm this sight and treatment. However, when one has already been deceived by social masks and thus separated the species into different groups of people (criminals, non-criminals, etc.), one's pity hardly does anything but confirming this deception and separation.

⁹ Ibid: 252.

IX. Conclusion: *Amour-Propre* Successfully Tamed

Having freed Emile from both envy and vanity by directing his imagination and thus basing his moral standard upon natural equality of man, the education of Emile against his *amour-propre* ends up in success, theoretically if not practically.¹ It is successful, because this basis of natural equality of man, solid and indestructible, can truly overcome the unavoidable weakness of human comparison in society.

As we have seen, it is due to a same reason that *amour-propre* tends to deteriorate into envy, and pity into vanity: both *amour-propre* and pity are characterized by relativity that entails one's comparisons with socialized men. Since these comparisons themselves (not to mention their substantial content) are inter-subjective in nature and are thus products of society, one fails to truly stand aloof from society as soon as one begins to take seriously any comparison between oneself and others, even if it is driven by neither love nor the partisan type of friendship -- as shown in vanity caused by pity, for example.

Therefore, the only way to prevent this failure is to base one's judgment upon something so real as to be indestructible in a fluctuating world. This indestructible thing

¹ McLendon argues that Rousseau's solution to the inflammation of *amour-propre* is retreatment to rural life from commercial, urban societies. This argument is convincing due to sufficient textual evidences provided by Rousseau, but it is less a theoretical solution than a practical one, whereas the probability of any practical solution hinges firstly upon its theoretical possibility. Although he correctly points out that the reason why the rural life is a plausible way-out is that it most helpfully cultivates a cosmopolitan identity of Emile's and at the same time minimizes his self-identity, McLendon does not notice that the cosmopolitan identity and the minimal self-identity appear more justified and thus more persuasive to Emile than other possibilities only because they have the natural equality of man as their basis. (McLendon: 1, 7-9).

is exactly the natural equality (or similarity) with respect to man's physiological/objective properties, that is, "the true relations of man." With this image of natural equality of man perpetuated in his mind, Emile is able to not take social relations seriously in an age when he has to know them. His *amour-propre* can thus remain innocuous. More specifically, having been touched by this indestructible natural/objective equality, Emile will not envy those who appear superior and happy, because he is sure that they are equally constituted as he is and thus all of them necessarily suffer from same miseries. Similarly, he will not despise those whom he pitied, because his knowledge of the natural equality ensures him that, as long as he is a man, there is nothing of his constitution essentially superior to/different from others'. It is based upon this equality that Emile identifies himself with his species.²

Only in this light can we understand how one of Rousseau's major statements in Book II of *Emile* still makes sense in Book IV. There, Rousseau differentiates two kinds of dependence, which "serve[s] to resolve all the contradictions of the social system." "There are two sorts of dependence: dependence on things, which is from nature; dependence on men, which is from society." Whereas dependence on things "is in no way detrimental to freedom and engenders no vices," dependence on men "engenders

² From this perspective, we can better understand why Emile is "a man who is superior to others and, unable to raise them to his level, is capable of lowering himself to theirs." (*Emile*: 253) This "lowering himself to theirs" of course does not mean that Emile participates in their corruptions.

all the vices."³ This understanding is still valid even when Emile has to get involved in social life. Emile will not become dependent on men, since by relying upon "the true relations of man," man's essence is understood as thing with stable physiological/physical properties. In other words, Rousseau eliminates the need of dependence on men not by eliminating dependence but by re-categorizing men as things.

One important theoretical implication thus follows. Since *amour-propre* is tamed only when one disregards any inter-subjective comparison, simply relying on equal acknowledgement of each individual's moral value is not enough to tame it, because the equal acknowledgement itself is inter-subjective. This, however, is what Dent fails to see. His solution to *amour-propre* is thus problematic.

Dent signifies the importance of "the true relations of man" to the education of Emile, but he understands it as the inter-subjective kind of relations and thus claims that the education of Emile against inflamed *amour-propre* is to teach him the importance to treat everyone as equal moral beings, since all kinds of "de-humanization" of others are, as Dent argues, the origin of the inflamed type of *amour-propre*. Once Emile acknowledges the equal moral value in each, he will give equal respect to each

³ *Emile*: 85.

accordingly. Having been equally respected, each is thus no longer "de-humanized," and the origin of the inflammation of *amour-propre* is thus eliminated.⁴

This solution is problematic in at least two ways.⁵ First, the connection of "de-humanization" (that is, treating others as things rather than as equal moral beings) to inflammation of *amour-propre* is tenable only if the one who "de-humanizes" others fails to equally "de-humanize" oneself. While this failure is indeed able to trigger the feelings of superiority and inferiority, equal de-humanization, which brings everyone down to a same level, renders these feelings impossible.

Second, and more importantly, the equal acknowledgement of moral values of each and the subsequent equal respect to each are fundamentally relative.⁶ They thus may as well rely upon the opinion of others as any inter-subjective comparison does. Emile lives in a wicked world beyond his control. His giving equal respect to others has nothing to do with others' giving equal respect to him in return. -- We must keep in mind that Emile in his adolescence is indeed loving, but not necessarily lovable. In fact, it is more probable that he is less lovable in the eyes of society, as Rousseau implies in

⁴ Nicholas Dent: *Rousseau: An Introduction to his Psychological, Social and Political Theory*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988: 21-7, 114.

⁵ For more critiques of Dent's solution, see Neuhouser: 59-70, McLendon: 11-2.

⁶ As Neuhouser understands, "It is important to note... that a relative standing is not necessarily a superior or inferior one. If what one's *amour-propre* leads one to seek is simply the respect one deserves as a human being - respect one is willing to return to others in the same measure - then the standing one seeks is comparative (defined in relation to that of others) but not superior; equal standing, in other words, is still standing relative to others." (Neuhouser: 33)

this statement: "I do not know whether my young man, because he has not learned to imitate conventional manners and to feign sentiments he does not have, will be less loveable."⁷ -- Therefore, Emile's conviction in equal moral value of man may always be frustrated when others do not respect him as much as he does them. This frustration is precisely the thing that leads one's innocuous type of *amour-propre* to transform into the inflamed type, as I have already illustrated in Section II.

Another theoretical implication of Rousseau's solution to Emile's *amour-propre* follows from the previous one. Knowing all the social relations without taking any of them seriously, Emile is fundamentally a spectator of human society. -- He is in it, but not part of it. Thus, Emile's education is not and probably must not be extended to the whole society due to not only the practical impossibility to educate each child in such a meticulous way but also the philosophical nature of this education: its general application will lead to nothing but the demise of society, as everyone will thus retreat to one's own realm without truly caring about the life of others except for being occasionally driven by sudden impulses to temporarily do so when they suffer. In the *Discourse on Political Economy*, a work discussing an ideal political rather than personal arrangement, Rousseau states that, "It seems that the sentiment of humanity evaporates and weakens as it is extended over the whole world." Therefore, "Commiseration must

⁷ *Emile*: 230.

in some way be confined and compressed to be activated."⁸ As a result, if society is changeable, then perhaps the alternative that the legislator may try to tame the *amour-propre* of a group of men is to organize them into a people and to confine their commiseration therein, rather than to refer to a cosmopolitan identity -- This is the content of *Social Contract*. Nevertheless, if one cannot change one's society, then taming one's *amour-propre* in the way adopted in the case of Emile is probably a better choice. This choice cannot save the whole society from corruption, but can at least save one individual with success.

Finally, it must be noted that the entire account above of the way of taming *amour-propre* is based only upon the first part of Book IV of *Emile*. It must be remembered that in this account, love, which is both partisan and reciprocal, and which constantly induces adolescents' *amour-propre* to get inflamed, is only postponed rather than confronted. One may thus wonder how the governor would educate Emile when Emile's love cannot be delayed any longer. As we proceed with our textual analysis of the rest of Book IV and the entire Book V, we will see that this apparently sound solution to the problem of *amour-propre* is in tension with Rousseau's further account of Emile's education, and textual evidences will show that Rousseau is well conscious of this tension. A full explanation of this tension, however, has to be developed elsewhere.

⁸ Rousseau: *Discourse on Political Economy*. From *On the Social Contract, with Geneva Manuscript and Political Economy* (Roger D. Masters et. al ed.), New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1978: 219.

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