LAMBERT, L., Gary, 1937-
ROUSSEAU AND THOREAU: THEIR CONCEPT
OF NATURE. [ Portions of Text in French].

Rice University, Ph.D., 1969
Language and Literature, general

University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan
RICE UNIVERSITY

ROUSSEAU AND THOREAU:
THEIR CONCEPT OF NATURE

by

L. Gary Lambert

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Thesis Director's signature:

Houston, Texas

November 27, 1968
TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION ......................... 1

Chapter

I. FAMILY ENVIRONMENTS ................. 7
II. CHILDHOOD CONCEPTS OF NATURE .... 13
III. ROUSSEAU'S ENLARGED VIEW OF NATURE ... 30
IV. THOREAU'S ENLARGED VIEW OF NATURE ... 55
V. STIMULATION AND RESPONSE IN NATURE ... 79
VI. NATURE AS SYMBOL .................. 109
VII. NATURE: A MEANS TO AN END ....... 131

CONCLUSION ........................... 147
FOOTNOTES ............................ 157
BIBLIOGRAPHY .......................... 168
INTRODUCTION

Man's conception of nature and his reaction to it have varied from civilization to civilization. ¹ Those of ancient Greece and Rome found in it the supernatural influence of their many Gods, who were allowed arbitrarily to intervene in man's life for better or for worse. Nature, from the traditional moment in Western civilization when Adam followed Eve from the garden of Eden into the awesome and vicious world of mortality, to the present day when suburban living has been given sophistication and preference over unfriendly and noisy megalopolises, has provided strange values and has had contradicting effects upon man.

According to Hebraic tradition, the first parents of man were cast from a life of bliss in an idyllic natural environment, and thrust into a hostile physical world where good and evil struggled for power over them. For many, nature appears, even today in its uncontrollable and frequently devastating way, to work perniciously against man. Such natural phenomena as earthquakes, violent storms, famines and droughts have often been considered forms of punishment for man's evil-doings. Thus it is that nature is often viewed as a force essentially in contradiction with man's desire for happiness. On the other hand, less pessimistic or perhaps simply indifferent, others have turned to nature, as a
child to its mother, seeking in its bosom the tranquility, security, rest and physical restoration which they have been unable to find elsewhere. They have learned to accept the natural world as the source of much good as well as the cause of much misfortune. They have learned to use her to their own best advantage, often setting her up as an example or an ideal. As a result, nature has taught man much, and, in many instances, has been of great value to him.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Henry Thoreau are characterized, in the world of literature, by their strong identification with nature—nature as matter and nature as symbol. It should not be surprising, therefore, that each in his own century and in his own life had a significant appreciation of the natural world. It is the intention of this study to investigate this appreciation, in the hope of better understanding the meaning and significance of nature in the lives and works of Rousseau and Thoreau. Like many other eighteenth and nineteenth century writers, our authors turned a sympathetic ear to what they felt was nature's call and adopted a feeling for nature and a philosophy based on the need for a return to a natural way of living.

Of the many affinities in the lives and works of Rousseau and Thoreau, the most obvious is the appeal of the natural world and the trend toward a simple life in nature. Walden, for example, the best known of Thoreau's works, is an intimate portrait of the author based on his experiences,
during a period of two years, along the unsettled shores of Walden Pond in Massachusetts. A self-imposed exile, the stay at Walden taught Thoreau a lesson in self-reliance, instilled in him a renewed conviction of the need for a free and unpretentious life, and was the background for a personal interpretation of life based on his ideal of a return to nature. Less well known, but also an example of his interest in nature, is A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, Thoreau's first major work. A seven day journal of the river journey made with his brother John in 1849, five years prior to the publication of Walden, this work reflects the inspiration and poetic vision of Thoreau in the depths of his native, physical environment. Likewise, in his minor works—articles and poetry—and particularly in the many volumes of his private journal, there is continued interest in nature and vigorous scorn for the artificial and frivolous ways of contemporary society.

The Confessions, a panorama of the joys and sorrows, successes and failures of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's life, relate in intimate detail the author's discovery of and acquaintance with the natural world. Equally important is La Nouvelle Héloïse, a highly idealized epistolary novel, which is invaluable in revealing the attraction of physical nature and the preference for naive, idyllic country life. In addition, there is Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire, where the more mature Rousseau, reflecting upon the rewards of his
acquaintance with nature, laments with resignation the cruelties inflicted upon him by his contemporaries, who, in his view, had forsaken the spontaneous and unpretentious way of living according to nature.

In this study, we are not interested in investigating the avenue of influence or the romantic literary heritage which may link Rousseau with Thoreau. There is no evidence to believe that Thoreau was ever influenced directly by Rousseau's life or works, and even if he was, it would not affect our study. Still, there is an indirect road which leads from Geneva to Concord. The ardent expression of individualism, the relentless demand for self-analysis and the profound commitment of the self to higher principles tie the two men together. Even their willingness to question "the establishment" and their decision to withdraw from society mark some of the affinities in their ideas as well as their lives. Mark Temmer has ably noted these affinities in his article on Rousseau and Thoreau, wherein he underscores the debt of American Transcendentalism to the German Idealist philosophy which had found inspiration in Rousseau.

What we intend to do is compare and contrast the part which nature plays in the works and lives of Rousseau and Thoreau. By so doing, it is hoped that the traditionally accepted view of Rousseau as a hermit-naturalist will be challenged and that greater light will be shed on his relationship with nature. To dispel the commonly held
notion that Rousseau was a great nature-lover is, therefore, the focal point of our study.

In order to make this study, it has been necessary to select a writer who, in almost every sense of the word, is a naturalist. There can be no doubt that Henry David Thoreau qualifies as a worthy prototype. A grand observer of flora and fauna, a literary man with scientific inclinations, a poet and idealist who could not deny the beauty and reality of the natural world, Thoreau is an excellent example of one for whom nature has had a deep meaning and has played a salient role in his life. One of America's great naturalists and one who has often been identified with the hermetic life, he characterizes the true lover of nature. By using Thoreau as the archetype, it is hoped that it will be more evident that nature served other motives and satisfied different needs for Rousseau.

In the first chapter, a study of the family environment will be made in order to evaluate the persuasion which the family may have had in stimulating an interest in the natural world. In the second chapter, a look at the physical setting into which each author was born and educated will permit us to establish any influences which such an environment may have had on his penchant for nature, and will provide us with an insight into his childhood concept of nature. Chapters three and four will trace the development of each author's enlarged view of nature as he enters maturity and
eventually engages himself in his literary vocation. With chapter five, the focus will be centered on nature as matter and each author's response to its sway upon his senses. Turning from nature as matter to nature as symbol, chapter six will further investigate the function (or charge) which the natural world assumes in the author's life, and will delineate the role it serves in his major works. In the last chapter, the question of solitude is broached and a conclusion reached as to the role which nature played in each author's decision to withdraw from society.
CHAPTER I.

FAMILY ENVIRONMENTS

Just as is the case with many great authors, very little is known about Rousseau's and Thoreau's youth. Yet, for a full understanding of each author's relation to nature and the environment in which he lived, it is important to have some insight into the early years of his life.

Of Thoreau's youth, Walter Harding, one of the foremost authorities on Thoreau, writes that "apparently it was the typical childhood of any small town early-nineteenth century American youth..." As a child, however, Thoreau was not gregarious or self-imposing and frequently kept to himself. He grew up with and around the other children in the neighborhood, but he really was not one of them. "They could not recollect his ever having played with them," writes Harding, "for he preferred to stand on the sidelines and watch." It appears that his homelife was rather pleasant and rewarding. His father, a rather self-effacing man, maintained a working relationship with him and thus probably gave a little balance to what might have otherwise been a mother-controlled home. The next to the youngest of four children, Thoreau enjoyed long and lasting friendships with one of his two sisters (Sophia) and his older brother John.
The maternal image in the home was so strong that there could easily have been complete female dominance; yet, there was not. John Thoreau, his father, though less dynamic, very meek, and overshadowed by his wife, was an honest, enterprising man whom his neighbors found "an amiable and most lovable gentleman." He seems to have been happy to let his wife run the family as she wished, accepting her managerial capabilities as stronger and better than his own. His contribution, however, was to "bring home the bread" and to settle his family in a fine, proper house, all the while assuming the responsibilities of providing for its members. It is evident, moreover, that he provided his family with an example of determination and fortitude, never letting his financial failures get the better of him. His pencil business eventually achieved considerable success, and provided additional security for a well managed family. Cynthia, his wife, usurped the patriarchal authority, it is true, but she too gave stability and order to the family home. As husband and wife, Henry's parents were successful partners in running a good family. "Certainly the Thoreau's were a closely knit family," writes Harding. "There was a warmth about it to give the young Henry and his brothers and sisters the feeling of security so essential to a happy childhood." (The Days, p. 22) Though poor at first and forced to make some temporary moves owing to financial problems, the Thoreau family was very stable and quite normal.
There is more known today about Jean-Jacques Rousseau's family than he himself knew when he was alive; however the facts surrounding his childhood are still vague and may never be entirely known. His Confessions are incomplete and, owing to the lapse of time and the inevitable instances of faulty memory, not always accurate. Nevertheless, from what is contained in them and what has been learned since by patient scholars, it appears that Jean-Jacques did not live what might properly be termed a typical eighteenth century childhood. However, "it is not easy," as F. C. Green notes in his biography of Rousseau, "to form a clear, objective picture of young Rousseau's upbringing." Still it is apparent that the influence which Jean-Jacques' early relationship with his father had upon him was sufficient to orient the youth in a different direction from that of the average Swiss youth of the day.

A watchmaker, who once left his wife in search of fortune in Constantinople and who later worked as a dance instructor in Geneva (a city where dancing was looked upon as a courtship with sin), Isaac Rousseau offered little good to the development of his youngest son's personality and character. Jean-Jacques knew primarily the emotional affection of his father who frequently passionately embraced him and told him how much he reminded him of his dead wife and, according to Jean-Jacques, reminded him that his birth had cost the life of his mother. "Il croyait la revoir en moi,"
he recalls in the Confessions, "sans pouvoir oublier que je
la lui avois ôtée; jamais il ne m'embrasse que je ne sentisse
à ses soupirs, à ses convulsives étreintes, qu'un regret
amer se mêloît à ses caresses; elles n'en étoient que plus
tendres." 7

The sort of affection which his father poured out
upon him, however, could not replace the maternal love which
the young boy so desperately needed. His father's sister
tried to replace the mother's absence, but what she and his
other aunts seem to have offered was less a substitute for
the mother than an overabundance of sympathetic interest and
permissiveness. It is understandable that they could not
divorce sympathy from loving discipline since Jean-Jacques
was a sickly child to begin with and needed much constant
attention. In fact, so much attention was poured upon him
that one can appreciate why so little was left for his older
brother who was ten years his senior. 8 Very little is said
about the relationship of the two brothers and one assumes
that the difference in their ages provided a natural barrier
against communication. The family situation was thus not the
best despite the aunts' willingness to lend assistance. But
there is no reason to believe that it might have been better
if Suzanne Rousseau had not died during childbirth. She too
had had some rather interesting adventures, though Green is
probably right in dismissing them as "nothing more than the
escapades of a spirited, pretty girl of twenty-two from whom,
as the niece of the respected and venerable Pastor Bernard, public opinion demanded a very high standard of behaviour" (Green, p. 2). All in all, Rousseau's parents do not seem to have been the ordinary, demure, stable citizens of Geneva.

Jean-Jacques never knew his mother and this had profound psychological effects on his life. "Je coûtai la vie à ma mere," he confides, "et ma naissance fut le premier de mes malheurs" (O.C., i, p. 7). His longing for the maternal cares of his mother have given rise to a number of studies, one of the best of which is Ronald Grimsley's, wherein he writes that the difficulty of Rousseau's birth and his mother's subsequent death were to have "a disturbing effect upon the child's subsequent emotional life." He feels that "in Jean-Jacques' case there is the additional probability that his mother's early death deprived him from his very first days of an important source of emotional security and comfort."

It appears then that what Thoreau had in abundance, Jean-Jacques was to long for all his life. It was unfortunate that the latter's father did not have the strength of character to help the child through the trying period of childhood when he needed affection not sympathy, guidance not persecution, discipline not dotage, and homely routine not erratic living. So influential was the early parental influence, many psychoanalysts feel that Jean-Jacques "may have come to believe--unconsciously and irrationally--that
it was wrong for him to enjoy life, and especially everything connected with sex" (Grimsley, p. 27). From the beginning then, it is evident that the backgrounds of our two authors are poles apart. It will be interesting to watch how the two writers, each in his own way, turn to nature for solitude and literary inspiration.
CHAPTER II.

CHILDHOOD CONCEPTS OF NATURE

There is a question as to who exactly introduced Henry Thoreau to the fields and woods around Concord. Joseph Krutch, for one, believes that John, Henry's older brother, was responsible. However, Walter Harding notes that it was Henry's mother who was eager to foster a love of nature in her children, often took them out into the dooryard to call their attention to the songs of the wild birds. On bright afternoons she would gather them together and walk out to Nashawtuc Hill, the Cliffs at Fairhaver, or the 'little woods' between the river and Main Street, and there, after building a rough fireplace, would cook their supper while they enjoyed the flowers and bird songs. A chowder boiled on the Walden Pond sandbar when he was seven stood out particularly in her son's mind (The Days, p. 19).

If it was not his mother who interested him in nature, it was certainly she who encouraged and complemented any interest or attention he may have shown it. Here as elsewhere we are obliged to recognize the familiar influence of the mother in Thoreau's life. In any case, regardless of who was responsible, physical nature played an important role in the life of the Thoreau family. "The family were amateur naturalists," writes H. S. Canby in his biography of Thoreau. "Sophia was the family botanist. It was John, . . ., who kept the elaborate classification of birds. . . ." Thus the family penchant itself was ample encouragement for Henry to discover the outdoors.
Additionally, creeks, meadows, farms and swamps surrounded the Concord area, so that it was impossible to move in any direction without encountering some facet of nature's handiwork. Unlike Boston or the other principal cities on the coast, the area was true rural country, free of congestion, large numbers of people and buildings. It was proud to have the Fitchburg Railroad passing through the city limits. But under no circumstances was it more than a village. Thoreau was literally surrounded by a natural setting conducive to hunting, fishing, hiking and general exploration.

As for Rousseau, there is no evidence to support the belief that, like Thoreau, he was formally encouraged to know nature and her creations. Since his mother was dead, only his father or brother and possibly his aunts could have instructed him on the subject since he received no formal education in any school. Isaac Rousseau, according to the little we know about him and his relationship with his son, was not inclined toward outdoor activities. He remained inside most of his leisure time, reading and reminiscing with his youngest boy. Jean-Jacques writes that his father treated him like an only child, "idolâtré de tout ce qui m'environnoit;" consequently his older brother, neglected and mistreated by his father, finally ran away from home. François Rousseau "prit le train du libertinage, même avant l'âge d'être un vrai libertin," observed Jean-Jacques. Thus
he and his young brother had little time or encouragement
to know one another; hence from the estranged relationship,
it is highly unlikely that Francois could have exposed Jean-
Jacques to Geneva's natural setting. And as for the aunts,
there is little likelihood that they were of any influence
in fostering a natural "goût." Yet the mere fact that Geneva
lay on Lake Léman's\textsuperscript{12} shores is reason enough to conjecture
that he may have been given opportunities to stroll and play
along its banks. If so, these occasions still had to be
closely supervised, for, as Jean-Jacques confides, "jamais
une seule fois, jusqu'a ma sortie de la maison paternelle on
ne m'a laisse courir seul dans la rue avec les autres en-
fans: ... ."

Now there were several trips away from the city,
trips into the "pays de Vaud" which were to fix in his mind
certain graphic images with which he would later identify
"la douce vie." The memory of Lake Léman and the beauty of
the surrounding Vaud country made an indelible imprint on his
mind.

L'aspect du lac de Genève et de ses admirables cotes
eut toujours à mes yeux un attrait particulier, que je
ne saurais expliquer, et qui ne tient pas seulement à
la beauté du spectacle, mais à je ne sais quoi de plus
interessant qui m'affecte et m'attendrit. Toutes les
fois que j'approche du pays de Vaud j'éprouve une
impression composée ... de plusieurs voyages de plaisir
que j'y fis dans mon enfance, ... (O.C., i, p. 152).

Yet it was not until 1724,\textsuperscript{13} when he was twelve and fol-
lowing his father's encounter with the law, that he felt he
had truly discovered nature and had become aware of its beauty. And it was not until about four years after that he explored on foot and alone the Vaud country. It is more likely that these general impressions of the lake and countryside, being associated with the pleasant experiences of the many trips, were nothing more than happy memories, for there was certainly no true cognizance or appreciation of the beauty of the natural settings. For example, had the area been barren and arid and the experience still pleasant, he might well have felt the same way about the barren and arid areas as he did about Geneva and the Vaud country. It is difficult, therefore, for the reader to separate Rousseau's early view of nature from the general childhood experiences which he seems involuntarily to discolor owing to time and later experiences. His regard for nature is considerably different as he grows older. There is a tendency for him to associate the feeling for nature which he acquired later in life with the first youthful impressions which he had during the years 1724-28. As is true for most everyone, the more mature years most likely prejudiced his actual childhood understanding.

Jean-Jacques' first real introduction to nature did not take place until he was about twelve years old. Until this time he was an "enfant chéri," overly protected and limited in his experience and knowledge of the actual world. His understanding of life was primarily vicarious because he
enveloped himself, with the encouragement of his father, in political biographies and idealized romantic novels by such writers as D'Urfé, La Calprenede, and Mlle. de Scudéry. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* was also part of his selective reading material. Hence, his concept of the natural world was an artificial, dreamy, fictional world of fantasy.

Prior to the time he left for Bossey in 1724, he was certainly precocious in his ability to read. Like Thoreau's parents, his mother and father were avid readers and, for their rank and means, possessed a substantial library. His maternal uncle, Pastor Samuel Bernard, had a fine collection of books and by willing it to Suzanne Rousseau made it available to Rousseau. Unlike Thoreau, Jean-Jacques was attracted to romantic novels, biographies of ancient, virtuous republicans and religious history. His interest therefore protected him from the external world, keeping him inside, away from nature. Novels were rarely an attraction for Thoreau.

When Rousseau arrived at Bossey with his cousin Abraham Bernard, a new and pleasant discovery awaited him and perhaps initiated the long romance which he later had with nature. His stay there with the Pastor Lambercier was short. He arrived in August of 1724 and was back in Geneva before the end of the winter of 1724-25; yet the experience was delightful and indeed indelible. Despite his strong attraction for literature and political writings—"presque
mon seul amusement"—he found time to relax and discover for the first time the exterior world of nature. He immediately fell in love with it. His "aprêté romaine" softened, and he was led back into "l'état d'enfant" out of which he had been pushed by the kind of life he and his father had been living in Geneva. With his father in exile in Nyon, he now acquainted himself with a new dimension of reality.

La campagne étoit pour moi si nouvelle que je ne pouvois me lasser d'en jouir. Je pris pour elle un goût si vif qu'il n'a jamais pu s'éteindre. Le souvenir des jours heureux que j'y ai passés m'a fait regretter son séjour, et ses plaisirs dans tous les ages, jusqu'à celui qui m'y a ramené (O.C., i, p. 13).

There can be no doubt that Bossey was one of the earliest happy interludes in Jean-Jacques' tempestuous life. It was, it seems, the beginning of a series of "endroits" of particular significance to him. Jean Guéhenno, in his biography of Jean-Jacques,\(^\text{16}\) suggests that this moment in our author's life was an apprenticeship in preparation for a cerebral vocation: that of creating and coloring in times of stress a "monde idéal." At Bossey, he writes,

surtout il commençait de lier avec la nature, avec la campagne, avec les arbres, cette amitié qui devait le distraire de ses malheurs et il recueillait les couleurs et les impressions qui l'aideraient à composer ce 'monde idéal' où il a logé ses chimères (Guéhenno, p. 28).

Jean-Jacques does not describe Bossey's setting, nor does he tell us what it was that caused him to "prendre un goût" for it. He mentions the appearance of a nightingale,
but aside from this bird, which is frequently common in romantic novels, there is little reference to nature per se. It was probably the absence of city dwellers, many tall houses, carriages, and noise, in short, everything which reminded him of the city and nothing in particular about the physical setting, which attracted his interest. He simply enjoyed the spaciousness, the simplicity and the general ruralness of country living. He loved Bossey because he was happier here than he had ever been elsewhere; hence, it is not surprising that it will represent for him a sort of "paradis terrestre" to which he will long to return, the source of a "bonheur pur." But above all, it was his first major encounter with physical nature.

For Henry Thoreau, nature was always a temptation. The woods, swamps and ponds fascinated him. They frequently exerted a stronger attraction than did his studies at school. Academically, he was reputedly a mediocre student, and socially he found it difficult to mingle freely with other children. There are, however, conflicting reports. On the one hand, one thought Thoreau 'an odd stick, not very studious or devoted in his lessons, but a thoughtful youth and very fond of reading . . . , not given to play or to fellowship with the boys; but shy and silent. On the other hand, it has been reported that the boys used to assemble about Thoreau as he sat on the school fence to hear him talk' (The Days, p. 30).

In any case, he was constantly outdoors, enjoying the fresh air, discovering and familiarizing himself with all that the unsettled environment had to offer. An ardent sportsman, he
quickly learned the use of a rod and gun. Years later, in 
Walden, he recalls the spirit of hunting as being one of the 
stimuli which later sent him off in pursuit of a wider and 
fuller understanding of the world.

When some of my friends have asked me anxiously 
about their boys, whether they should let them hunt, I 
have answered, yes—remembering that it was one of the 
best parts of my education—make them hunters, though 
sportsmen only at first, if possible, mighty hunters at 
last, so that they shall not find game large enough for 
them in this or any vegetable wilderness—hunters as 
well as fishers of men.

However, long before Thoreau became philosophical 
about nature, it filled his life with some of the finest 
adventures, and his memory with some of the fondest remem-
brances. The river with its canal boats was exceptionally 
exciting; picking huckleberries on surrounding hills for 
family puddings was a delightful treat particularly when it 
meant staying home from school. These days were like "the 
promise of life eternal," he writes in his Journal. Harding 
sums up Henry's youth best when he lists the myriad "earthly 
things" which the author remembered best of his golden years.

Early things were what he most remembered of his 
youth—being kicked by a passing ox, catching an eel 
with his brother John, trying to smoke dried pond-lily 
stems, proudly going to bed with new boots and cap on, 
and peeping through a key hole at a pet chicken he was 
given to see that all was right. He recalled finding a 
sprouting potato and, at his mother's suggestion, 
planting it in the garden, only to have it dug up first 
by his brother and then by his older sister to plant in 
their garden (The Days, p. 20).

And so we see that Thoreau was far closer to nature 
and all her wonders than was Rousseau. Nature, as Joseph
Krutich writes, "was something of which he became aware, to which he felt himself drawn, as soon as he became aware of anything" (Krutich, p. 168).

In some ways, Rousseau's life reflects the common conditions to which eighteenth century youths were subjected. At age sixteen, for example, he was back in Geneva, after a brief romance with nature, soon forced to accept a vocation. For those not fortunate enough to be of the upper class or sufficiently wealthy to send their children to school, choosing and accepting vocational training were very important. Such was the case for the Rousseau family. Shortly following his return from Bossey, Jean-Jacques was hired out to Abel Ducommun, a twenty year old man who agreed to take him in as an apprentice engraver.\(^9\) The idleness of his new found "enfance" and "bonheur pur" and the general "sécurité de sa vie enfantine," therefore, came to a harsh and cruel halt. Work, responsibility and required submission were now the replacements for a previously pleasant life of ease.

Such was not the case, however, with young Thoreau. Except for occasional interruptions, he remained free to bask in nature. At the same age, sixteen, he was finishing up his last quarter of formal education at the academy in Concord and building a rowboat in which to explore the rivers and ponds in the area. In this first rowboat, he "spent . . . many an hour floating over Walden Pond's surface as the zephyr willed, paddling his boat to the middle and
A MAP OF THE CONCORD AREA

Theoeca in his Journals
Compiled by Herbert W. Gleason
1904
Scale of Miles
then, lying on his back across the seats, dreaming awake
until he was aroused by the boat's touching the sand. . . ." observes Harding (The Days, p. 31). On such days, Thoreau
thought "idleness was the most attractive and productive in-
dustry." Since he was not forced to accept a vocation until
after graduation from Harvard, his relationship with nature
continued uninterruptedly until that time. Though he fre-
quently worked side by side with his father, he spent count-
less hours in that happy state of idleness.

Like Thoreau, Jean-Jacques also felt that doing
nothing was very satisfying, an "attractive and productive
industry." But he would have to wait many years, until age
forty-three, before he could experience those wonderful
moments of bliss in a rowboat which Thoreau enjoyed at six-
teen. It was his flight to the lake of Bienne in 1765 which
led him to discover the blissful, dreamy sport of drifting
on a lake alone, lost in pleasant revery. It is, therefore,
understandable to find him in 1726-27 unhappy, resentful and
rebellious because of his apprenticeship; work and respon-
sibility were foreign and unappealing to him. Yet his abrupt
departure from Bossey did not totally arrest his involvement
in nature, as we shall see.

In the first part of the Confessions, Rousseau de-
votes much less space to his reaction to physical nature
than he does to describing what appear to be more important
events involving such subjects as friendship, liberty and
eroticism. However, despite the lack of attention to
to nature, we find that he frequently left the confines of the
city walls and escaped with his friends into the hilly
countryside. He writes that his preference was to be alone,
but that he often enjoyed the association of his friends. He
apparently spent a fair amount of time walking in the country
because his acquaintance with the farmers in the area was
quite good. Although we have next to nothing concerning
these adventures, the fact that he had acquaintances outside
the city limits, and could turn to them in time of need,
suggests that his confinement was not as complete as one
might have suspected. It was following his decision not to
return to Geneva and Ducommun's engraving shop that we learn
of these acquaintances.

J'errai quelques jours autour de la Ville, logeant
chez des paysans de ma connoissance, qui tous me
reçurent avec plus de bonté que n'auraient fait des
urbains. Ils m'accueillirent, me logeèrent, me
nourrirent trop bonnement pour en avoir le mérite
(O.C., i, p. 46).

His exposure to nature was thus not totally interrupted after
Bossey but continued and even increased during the first
years of his life.

Apparently the opportunity to escape work and sub-
servience in Geneva was ample impetus to leave the city; and
with the decision to do so came new opportunities for ex-
perience and travel. Up to this time, nature had been mean-
ingful, but only in that it presented a contrast to the
bleak and unexciting life in Geneva and was the milieu in which he had found a happiness heretofore unknown. Consequently, nature *per se*, the tree as a tree, the flower as a flower, was not so much the primary focus of attention as were the contentment and change which he found within nature. More importantly, it was the context in which he found happiness and freedom.

Such was not the case for Thoreau; nature was a true object of interest. His mother having had "a keen interest in the world of nature around her," it is not surprising, for example, to find him writing an essay on the subject at age ten. "'The Seasons'... is not a particularly remarkable work," writes Harding, "but it displays his already awakened interest in nature." (Handbook, p. 3). It was also impossible for him to remain sheltered from nature. Concord, for example, was an unusual community with one of the earliest organizations designed for adult education. The "Lyceum" provided ample opportunities for cultural enrichment, and Thoreau often attended the many lectures which it sponsored. In fact, it was this educational program which further projected him into the world of nature.

The numerous lectures he heard on geology, botany, and ornithology—for Concord even more than the typical New England town of the day was blessed with numerous citizens actively interested in natural history—undoubtedly were an important factor in developing just such interests in Thoreau himself (The Days, p. 29).

This, of course, is not to imply that he was being groomed as
a naturalist. On the contrary, only later, much later, did he turn in this direction. What this does reveal, as well as the countless entries in his Journal, is that nature, more than just a discovery, was a way of life. "I think that no experience which I have today," he writes in his Journal, "comes up to, or is comparable with, the experiences of my boyhood. ... My life was ecstasy" (Journal, II, p. 306).

Life was ecstasy because nature was the source of the ecstasy: trees were for climbing, streams for fishing, fields for hunting muskrat, ponds for drifting, canals for watching barges, hills for picking huckleberries, swamps for catching eels. Every facet of the natural world presented a world of experience.

For Thoreau, nature was understood empirically. Rousseau, on the other hand, depended on the "ambiance," for he knew nature as it affected him emotionally. This emotional attachment is clearly evident in an experience following his decision to leave Geneva. It is part of the story of his early involvement with Madame de Warens, which is too well known and too complicated to be treated here. It seems that it was she who suggested that he travel to Italy. To date, he had never left the intimacy of the Vaud country and the temptation was too great to resist, for, after all, he mused, "voir du pays est un appât auquel un Génevois ne résiste guères" (O.C., i, p. 58). Traversing the Alps was an adventure in itself. The intimate association with these
spectacular monuments was a rare treat; but it is noteworthy that the excitement of the trip, the subsequent swelling of emotion related to travel, dominated him and affected his over-all impressions of the surrounding country. Rather than nature, or the view of nature, initiating a response, the excitement of travel stimulated his interest, and it alone made the scenery meaningful. "J'étais dans ce court mais précieux moment de la vie où sa plénitude expansive étend pour ainsi dire notre être par toutes nos sensations, et embellit à nos yeux la nature entière du charme de notre existence" (O.C., i, p. 58). It is important, then, that for a simple appreciation of external nature Rousseau first had to become aroused emotionally.

Looking back over the youthful years of our authors, it is apparent that the subject of nature and the mode of its introduction into their lives differed considerably. For Thoreau, it was a question of environment, with all members of the household participating in some sort of outdoor interest, his mother taking extra pains to familiarize him with the Concord area. And his brother John might well have been his guide into the natural world. Rousseau, on the other hand, lived a protected and sheltered existence within the secure confines of Geneva's walled city. His father, preferring to remain inside, catered to his intellectual interests rather than fostering any interest in the outdoors. Romantic novels and biographies of political
heroes constituted young Rousseau's intellectual diet. Bossey was his first acquaintance with nature, but there is nothing to indicate what in nature attracted his interest. The mere contrast between country and city living was perhaps, in itself, the cause of the favorable reaction. Thoreau, in contrast, loved nature for nature's sake; the woods, fields and rivers were an actual temptation. His experiences were to be the source of invaluable, cherished memories. Whereas Thoreau's relationship with nature remained unchanged until the time he entered Harvard, Rousseau's romance was abruptly ended by a forced apprenticeship at sixteen. Jean-Jacques' life of preferred leisure was consequently given a jolt for the worse, and nature appeared to have all but lost its significance in his life. However, his ultimate decision to leave the walled city and discard the apprenticeship brought opportunity for travel. Nevertheless, his affinity for nature is more significantly related to the experiences which resulted following this decision than to a love of nature per se. Nature, for Thoreau, on the contrary, was not a belated discovery, it was always an integral part of his life.
MAP OF GENEVA AROUND 1715
CHAPTER III.

ROUSSEAU'S ENLARGED VIEW OF NATURE

As soon as Rousseau broke free of the chains which bound him to city life, his feeling for and his contact with nature became unlimited. He was soon to explore much of the Swiss, Savoy and French countrysides. Out of necessity, he found that walking offered many advantages in familiarizing himself with the country; it exposed him to the pleasures of outdoor activity. He learned to love the fresh air, the warmth of the sun, the cool breeze against his face, the scents of flowers, and the harmonious sounds of birds. In effect, it gave more and more opportunity for him to understand and enjoy nature. Out of this and other experiences grew his conception of nature, and far from being complex, the conception is quite simple. One finds that when Rousseau describes a picturesque setting, the same elements are usually present in very general descriptive terms. He finds the beauty of nature most apparent in the spring and summer, in the early morning hours, and usually at sunrise. Flowers are almost always present, generally in beds of verdant, dew-touched grass. Birds are, more often than not, singing in harmonious concert and most often the nightingale (rossignol) is evident to complement the settings. Occasionally the
rugged and primitive are mentioned. Let us look at some examples.

As early as 1730 and as late as his visit to England in 1766, this apparent idyllic appreciation of nature is evident. Even in his older age, and especially during those trying times when he was most depressed and lonesome in his world of persecution, Jean-Jacques' conception of nature remained fundamentally unchanged. During his unfortunate visit with Hume and his stay at Wootton in Staffordshire, he recalled vividly the pleasure and splendor of an early morning occurrence. Despite the precarious state of his mental condition at this time, Jean-Jacques is easily moved by the remembrance of a sunrise and renders a lucid, poetic description of it.

L'aurore un matin me parut si belle que m'étant habillé précipitamment, je me hâtais de gagner la campagne pour voir lever le soleil. Je goûtai ce plaisir dans tout son charme: c'était la semaine après la St. Jean. La terre dans sa plus grande parure étot couverte d'herbe et de fleurs; les rossignols presque à la fin de leur ramage sembroient se plaire à le renforcer: tous les oiseaux faisant en concert leurs adieux au printemps, chantoient la naissance d'un beau jour d'été, d'un de ces beaux jours qu'on ne voit plus à mon âge, et qu'on n'a jamais vus dans le triste sol où j'habite aujourd'hui (O.C., i, p. 135).

His understanding of nature is linked with the "campagnes charmantes" and associated with memories of his happier past. These former settings of "bonheur" tend to prejudice a true appreciation of nature.

As has been mentioned earlier, he could not visit
Lake Geneva or the Vaud country without recalling the sweet experiences of the past. He writes in the fourth book of the *Confessions* that unless he were settled on Lake Geneva's shores with an orchard on its banks, a cow, a boat and a friend near by, his happiness would be incomplete.

Quand l'ardent désir de cette vie heureuse et douce qui me fuit et pour laquelle j'étois né vient enflammer mon imagination, c'est toujours au pays de Vaud, près du lac, dans des campagnes charmantes qu'elle se fixe. Il me faut absolument un verger au bord de ce lac et non pas d'un autre; il me faut un ami sur, une femme aimable, une vache, et un petit bateau. Je ne jouirai d'un bonheur parfait sur la terre que quand j'aurai tout cela (O.C., i, p. 152).

It was during his early period of vagabondage from April 1730 to October 1731 that he discovered the small village of Vevey. He later made it his source of inspiration for the setting of his major novel *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. Vevey reflects the natural environment which appealed to him and *La Nouvelle Héloïse* is the perfect example of the kind of life he identified with such a setting. During this adventuresome period of nineteen months, he traveled to France, principally to Lyon and Paris, and to most of what is now the French and German speaking parts of Switzerland, visiting the cities of Fribourg, Lausanne, Vevey, Neuchatel, Berne and Soleure. Since he had ample opportunity to expose himself to various, contrasting topographies, both rural and urban settings, and yet consistently preferred the Vaud country and Lake Geneva, it is possible to associate his enthusiasm with a strong nationalism as does François Jost. In his book
Jean-Jacques Rousseau Suisse he writes that "Rousseau était orienté, par sa pensée, par ses goûts, par ses préférences, par tout son instinct, vers le Corps helvétique."

This is perhaps the case, but only after Jean-Jacques had experienced frustration in his bid for financial and literary success in France. Even then, however, his identification with the "Corps helvétique" was primarily a psychological search for an earlier state of happiness and security. His identification with "le Corps helvétique" is more a question of "transparence" which Jean Starobinski calls Rousseau's search for the true self.

Jean-Jacques was continuously desiring to return to those former times when he had experienced the greatest happiness with the least frustration or interference; hence to Bossey, Vevey and Les Charmettes. Consequently, the Swiss settings were deserving of his preference. It is, therefore, less nationalism and more sentimental attachment which leads our author to identify with the Swiss countryside.

Jean-Jacques would have us believe, however, that his love for "le Corps helvétique" was evident even before he reached Paris the first time. This may be the case, but there is no confusion as to his preference for the bucolic in nature, whether it be in France or in Switzerland.

Rousseau's first trip to Paris helped to convince him that urban life and military glory did not go hand in hand with his preference for the "douce vie" in an idyllic
setting. Take, for example, the incident on the road to Paris, when in a dreamy mood, he imagined himself a military hero in the middle of combat. The fame and glory of violence and victory, which he secretly desired, quickly lost their appeal when, refocusing on reality, he rediscovered the beauty and general pleasantness of the shaded groves and lazy streams along the roadside. In such moments of fantasy, nature would reawaken in him an affinity for the pastoral way of life, and inevitably "les travaux de Mars" were renounced in favor of those of Pan.

Cependant quand je passois dans des campagnes agréables, que je voyois des bocages et des ruisseaux; ce touchant aspect me faisait soupirer de regret; je sentois au milieu de ma gloire que mon coeur n'était pas fait pour tant de fracas, et bientôt, sans savoir comment, je me retrouvais au milieu de mes chères bergeries, renonçant pour jamais aux travaux de Mars (O.C., i, p. 159).

This curious affinity for a life among his "chères bergeries" is again apparent when, upon returning from Paris, he stops in Lyons. Tempted to visit the locale of his adored novel Astrée, he is repulsed when he learns that the area is now industrialized. His romantic idealism does not favor such mundane intrusions. "Je ne jugeai pas à propos d'aller chercher des Dianes et des Sylvandres chez un peuple de forgerons" (O.C., i, p. 164). This romantic identification with the virtues of heroism and the undemanding life of pastoralism noticeably reflects, in our view, the influence of Jean-Jacques' reading material in his early youth. 

And
it is significant that his first encounter with Paris prompted him to underscore his preference for the pastoral even further. Although it would not be until many years later, approximately twenty, that he would renounce social living in preference to solitude in nature, city life was already revolting to him. He saw Paris, he writes, not as he had always imagined it, but despicable. Filthy, odoriferous, black and depressed, it was a revolting contrast to the beautiful, idyllic areas of Switzerland.

Combien l'abord de Paris démentit l'idée que j'en avois! La décoration extérieure que j'avois vue à Turin, la beauté des rues, la simétrie et l'alignement des maisons me faisoient chercher à Paris autre chose encore. Je m'étois figuré une ville aussi belle que grande, de l'aspect le plus imposant, où l'on ne voyoit que de superbes rues, des palais de marbre et d'or. En entrant par le faubourg St. Marceau je ne vis que de petites rues sales et puantes, de vilaines maisons noires, l'air de la malpropreté, de la pauvreté, des mendians, des chartiers, des ravaudeuses, des crieuses de tisane et de vieux chapeaux. Tout cela me frappa d'abord à tel point que tout ce que j'ai vu depuis à Paris de magnificence reelle n'a pu détruire cette première impression, et qu'il m'en est resté toujours un secret dégout pour l'habitation de cette capitale (O.C., i, p. 159).

It must be pointed out, however, that here as elsewhere Jean-Jacques is writing about his experiences in an "examen retrospectif" and, therefore, may well be exaggerating and even adjusting his first feelings to make them harmonize with his position in 1766.

Despite his absence from "le Corps helvétique," Jean-Jacques was not insensitive to the beauties of nature elsewhere. What was important to him was nature's poetic
harmony with his own emotional need. Outside Lyons, for example, finding himself somewhat embarrassed financially, he decided to spend the night "en plein air." The description which he relates of that experience is beautiful and, indeed, poetic. The setting is that of cultivated farmlands or terraced lots overlooking the Rhone or Saône Rivers (Rousseau was not sure, and they both meet at Lyons). The day has been hot, and the night now warm finds the sun, about to disappear behind the earth, bathing the land in a red glow. In fairy-like magic the dew restores the wilted grass as nightingales warble to one another. The splendor of the evening sends Jean-Jacques wandering aimlessly and blissfully until he drops from fatigue ready to slumber under nature's care and protection.

Je me souviens même d'avoir passé une nuit délicieuse hors de la ville dans un chemin qui cotoyait le Rhône ou la Saône, ... Des jardins élevés en terrasse bordaient le chemin du côté opposé. Il avait fait très chaud ce jour-là; la soirée était charmante; la rosée humectait l'herbe flétrie; point de vent, une nuit tranquille; l'air étoit frais sans être froid; le soleil après son coucher avait laissé dans le ciel des vapeurs rouges dont la réflexion rendoit l'eau couleur de rose; les arbres des terrasses étoient chargés de rossignols qui se répondoient de l'un à l'autre. Je me promenois dans une sorte d'extase livrant mes sens et mon coeur à la jouissance de tout cela, et soupirant seulement un peu du regret d'en jouir seul. Absorbé dans ma douce rêverie je prolongeai fort avant dans la nuit ma promenade sans m'apercevoir que j'étois las. ... Je me couchai voluptueusement sur la tablette d'une espèce de niche ou de fausse porte enfoncée dans un mur de terrasse: le ciel de mon lit étoit formé par les têtes des arbres, un rossignol étoit précisément au dessus de moi; je m'endormis à son chant: mon sommeil fut doux, mon réveil le fut davantage (O.C., i, pp. 168-69).
The scene is without a doubt one of the more poetic and truly beautiful descriptions in all of Rousseau's works. Obviously it is designed to create a certain desired image of himself. He seems to have portrayed himself and his life at eighteen the way he inwardly desired himself and life to be at forty-three. The scene is a very joyous and bucolic life (if it actually happened this way) and makes Jean-Jacques appear innocent and loved by nature. To be sure, the description is sincere and deserves the benefit of the doubt. However, the similarity with other settings of a like description strengthens the notion that Rousseau preferred those settings which conformed to the pastoral ideal, of which "le pays vaudois" was the prototype. This scene continues the same trend of pastoral themes: cultivated farmland bordered by water, dew covered grass, trees laden with nightingales, warm spring or summertime weather. It even goes so far as to create a myth of nature, idyllic and sympathetic with man (or at least Rousseau). This poetic view of life in nature was the same as Jean-Jacques had imagined and lived in Astrée, now a living ideal. Consequently, the picture we have of him and of nature is poetically distorted. Because of his own creative and sentimental nature, Rousseau preferred to live in the charms of past experiences and to fabricate a fantasy world in which to live them. He readily admits that "il est impossible aux hommes et difficile à la nature elle-même de passer en richesses
mon imagination" (O.C., i, p. 159). It was not, therefore, a question of accurately describing the physical world as he had seen it. He chose to create the environment. He used this imagery as a sympathetic wrap in which to envelop himself and his happiness.

One has the impression that the *Confessions* is really a novel with Rousseau as the main character. Certainly the above description, fantastic as it is, could only be part of a work of fiction, at least, a work, for the most part, exaggerated. As author and protagonist, Jean-Jacques fashions the milieu as he wants it. In this scene, he could almost be another Celadon in search of his beloved Astrée. Indeed, it is not very long after his return to Chambéry before he, like Celadon, lovelorn and distressed, is actually in search of his lost lover (Madame de Warens). Here then the picture of a young man, handsome, full of adventure, romantically imbibing the exhilarating freshness of an idyllic nature, is part of a myth which Rousseau creates around himself.

It would be unfair, however, to limit Rousseau's appreciation and description of nature to the idyllic country setting, for there are other instances where he admits to being inspired and even to preferring the wild and unsettled areas of nature. For example, prior to his arrival at Chambéry and his long awaited reunion with Madame de Warens, Jean-Jacques desires to convince his reader of his preference for the rugged, mountainous country surrounding Chambéry.
Il me faut des torrent, des rochers, des bois noirs, des sapins, des montagnes, des chemins raboteux à monter et à descendre, des précipices à mes côtés qui me fassent bien peur. J'eus ce plaisir et je le goutai dans tout son charme en approchant de Chambéry (O.C., i, p. 172).

There is reason nonetheless to be suspicious of his over-zealous generalization regarding his preference. Prior to this instance, he has been satisfied and indeed happy in far less extreme settings. What then might be the reason here for such strong sentiments? Rousseau himself has perhaps answered this question best in a letter which he sent to the Maréchal de Luxembourg, the 20th of January, 1773: "Nos relations se rapportent toujours plus à nous qu'aux choses ... comme nous décrivons bien plus ce que nous sentons que ce qui est ..."24 In other words, the excitement or emotional quality stimulated by a certain situation is often sufficient to dissuade an affected individual from accurately describing the event, the environment in which the event takes place, or the circumstances surrounding the event. More often than not, the individual describes what he feels or what he experiences inside himself. This is in essence what Jean-Jacques does. Most of what he says is a reflection of his own personal reaction to what is under scrutiny. Likewise, then, with the above mentioned description, the preference for such a natural setting probably reflects the emotional state in which Jean-Jacques found himself prior to his reunion with Mme de Warens. Though the setting might well have been simi-
lar in detail to the description he gives, it is characteristic of Jean-Jacques to create rather than describe. Thus given the distance in time separating him from the actual experience, he has probably exaggerated his preference for the rocky, torrential region because of the intensity of his emotions. The natural setting suits his feelings. He prefers the rugged and primitive at this instance because within himself he feels the same moving, frightening feelings which the setting conjures up in his imagination.

Elsewhere Rousseau writes that he adored the outdoors. Yet there is reason to wonder just how much of an outdoorsman he really was. In the modern day sense of the word, he was certainly not a sportsman. Roughing it in rugged country would not have appealed to him. His "caractère effeminé," as he referred to it, would ultimately orient him in the opposite direction—ironically enough, in the direction of society. Endlessly concerned about his health, which at times was poor, Jean-Jacques could not endure strenuous activity. Mountain climbing, for example, could not have been popular with him. Hiking, however, was. But even in the case of hiking, one does not have the impression that he penetrated very deeply into the remote parts of nature, nor that he remained out in nature for more than a day at the most. Overnight trips into the wilds, such as Thoreau frequently took, would not have appealed to him. When "herborisation" became a hobby, he spoke of making trips into remote areas, but
again, one is forced to question the degree of truth in the stories. Take, for example, the one which follows:

Je me rappellerai toute ma vie une herborisation que je fis un jour du coté de la Robaille montagne du justicier Clerc. J'étois seul, je m'enfonçai dans les anfractuosités de la montagne et de bois en bois, de roche en roche je parvins à un reduit si caché que je n'ai vu de ma vie un aspect plus sauvage. ... Je me comparais à ces grands voyageurs qui découvrent une île déserte, et je me disois avec complaisance: sans doute je suis le premier mortel qui ait pénétré jusqu'ici; ... Tandis que je me pavannois dans cette idée j'entendis peu loin de moi un certain cliquetis que je crus reconnoître; j'écouta: ... Surpris et curieux je me lève, je perces à travers un fourré de broussaille du coté d'où venoit le bruit, et dans une combe à vingt pas du lieu même où je croyois être parvenu le premier j'aperçois une manufacture de bas.

Je ne saurais exprimer l'agitation confuse et contradictoire que je sentis dans mon coeur à cette découverte. Mon premier mouvement fut un sentiment de joie de me retrouver parmi des humains où je m'étois cru totalement seul (O.C., i, pp. 1070-71).

How far must Jean-Jacques have penetrated into the mountains to have remained separated from society, especially to find a "réduit sauvage"? Surely this story is an exaggeration. The word "montagne" can also refer to a "ferme" or "métairie" situated on "des plateaux de Jura," which gives more credibility to the story. Yet even if the story is true, Rousseau's intention of describing it accurately is secondary. Here, as elsewhere, he is moralizing his own position. What is important to him is to show his love for man and society. He wants to underline, even to the point of pathos, his desire to be one with his fellowmen. In other words, he is interested in encouraging sympathy for himself. "persecuté" "n'ayant plus de frère, de prochain, d'ami de société
que moi-même," he illustrates how he is pathetically reunited with human beings and is filled with joy at the reunion. Rather than an accurate picture of an actual event, we have a description used to defend our author's character. Rousseau, not nature, is of prime importance. The same thing happens when he speaks of animals or wildlife.

Though he loved animals, he rarely took an interest in wildlife. In a most idealized portrait of himself at Les Charmettes where he and Madame de Warens were established in 1735, we find him in a rare moment speaking of taming wildlife.

J'ai toujours pris un singulier plaisir à apprivoiser les animaux, surtout ceux qui sont craintifs et sauvages. Il me paroissoit charmant de leur inspirer une confiance que je n'ai jamais trompée. Je voulois qu'ils m'aimassent en liberté (O.C., i, p. 233).

These few lines and those preceding them (where he talks of taming pigeons) give a very vague picture of his involvement with wildlife. The emphasis is on himself! These few lines portray a saintly and god-like man. Like St. Francis of Assisi, he appears as a saint in the woods. His primary interest, he would have us believe, was to give affection and security to the "crantifs et sauvages." What the description actually reveals, however, is a moralizing statement as to the kindness and goodness of his own character.

Writing forty years after the experiences at Les Charmettes, he tends to fuse those qualities or attributes which he felt the world did not accept as his, and which he felt were fun-
damentally a part of himself, with the events of this earlier period. This is not to say that he did not tame pigeons or domesticate wildlife. But it does reveal the fusion of art and truth in the factual portrayal of his life.

Despite his avowed preference for the rugged and the wild, pastoral scenes of the Swiss countryside seem to awaken a greater response in him. The society of friends with which he surrounded himself, in the years prior to his reform, and just preceding the "épanouissement" of his literary career, reflects his interest in things social and things cultivated. Though he was not of the "noblesse" his early social and literary ambitions attracted him to the "fine fleur" of French society. He was never to forget that he was not socially and certainly not intellectually one of the common-herd. His parents, after all, were both "citoyens" of Geneva, a city where social status often reflected one's spiritual worthiness. Madame de Warens had purposefully encouraged him in social sophistication and was responsible for his formal introduction into society.

The comforts and refinements of society, (particularly among "la noblesse" and in the literary world), though reflecting man's depraved condition, were ever to remain attractive to him. Even when he announced his "réforme" following the publication of the "Deuxième Discours," he did not completely divorce himself from comfortable living accommodations, but continued to receive very satisfactory
housing from his rich patrons. Even Thérèse, his mistress, reputed mother of his children and eventually his wife, satisfied an indispensible need. He sought in her "un successeur" to Madame de Warens and found in her "le supplement dont j'avais besoin," meaning both as a companion and a servant. Rousseau loved the "vie ciseuse" too much to prefer the rugged outdoor life. "La douce vie" was part of his personality just as was "la retraite et la campagne."

The idyllic "riante" country with its wholesome, civilized and domestic comforts was Rousseau's ideal of life in nature and it is suggestive of the sophisticated charm and simple elegance known best to the cultivated social class of which he was a de facto member. It also suggests the idyllic world in Astrée familiar to probably all the members de jure or de facto of the 17th and 18th century French nobility.

Comfortable, cultivated pastoral living is even part of Emile, Rousseau's pedagogical treatise, often misunderstood as a treatise on primitivism. The savage or uncivilized are not part of Emile! Rousseau had no intention of turning his "natural man," of whom Emile is the ideal, into a savage or of forcing him back into a primitive form of existence. On the contrary, he is to be groomed for social living, capable of associating and identifying with the most cultivated classes. 28 Sophie, Emile's future mate, though born of wealthy parents, is also an ideal woman who will bring the essential qualities of domesticity into rural living.
Rousseau by no means intended to isolate his ideal people in solitude, despite his truculent anti-social position. The country setting is thus more advantageous since there is greater freedom there and the possibility of corruption is less. "L'homme est de tous les animaux celui qui peut le moins vivre en troupeaux. Des hommes entassés comme des moutons périraient tous en très peu de temps" (Emile, p. 37). It is difficult to picture Rousseau's ideal family in the depths of rugged, harsh nature, surviving by chance. And such is certainly not the picture which he presents. The mode of living to which he accustoms the de Wolmar family in La Nouvelle Héloïse underscores his preference for a placid and moderate life in an equally placid, civilized, pastoral setting.

"Il n'y a point de tableau plus charmant que celui de la famille," writes Rousseau in Emile, and family life at Clarens was the realization of this sentiment. In a letter to his friend and confidant Milord Edouard, Saint-Preux, often identified with Rousseau, describes the country setting in which the story of La Nouvelle Héloïse takes place. His love affair with Julie is the essence of the novel. He points to the country life at Clarens as the proper environment for all men. The portrait of a meadow with happy, singing country people, flocks scattered here and there in the distance, is indeed idyllic and reminiscent of the pastoral or bucolic themes evident in Astrée. The setting, he feels, is
conducive to happy, moderate living. Such a life is part of the ideal which Rousseau calls living according to nature. In other words, the natural life is a simple life of moderation usually found in a pastoral setting.

La simplicité de la vie pastorale et champêtre a toujours quelque chose qui touche. Qu'on regarde les prés couverts de gens qui fanent et chantent, et des troupeaux épars dans l'éloignement: insensiblement on se sent attendrir sans savoir pour quoi. Ainsi quelquefois encore la voix de la nature amolit nos coeurs farouches; et, quoiqu'on l'entende avec un regret inutile, elle est si douce qu'on ne l'entend jamais sans plaisir (O.C., ii, p. 603).

Rousseau's partiality for the bucolic is even more evident in the novel when consideration is given to the amorous temperament of Saint-Preuse. Rousseau's fictional counterpart limits his choice of natural backgrounds, depending on his emotional state and the conditions of his love affair with Julie. For example, he secludes himself in the summits of the Alps, in order to find a needed calm, when he has encountered major obstacles blocking the fruition of his affections. A source of solace, the Alps are a sort of wailing wall for the unhappy lover. Their restorative value evokes greater appreciation than their allurement.

J'attribuai, durant la première journée, aux agréments de cette variété le calme que je sentois renaître en moi. J'admirais l'empire qu'ont sur nos passions les plus vives les êtres les plus insensibles, et je méprisais la philosophie de ne pouvoir pas même autant sur l'ame qu'une suite d'objets inanimés. ... J'arrivai ce jour-là sur des montagnes les moins élevées, et parcourant ensuite leurs inégalités, sur celles des plus hautes qui étoient à ma portée. Après m'être promené dans les nuages, j'atteignois un séjour plus serain, d'où l'on voit, dans la saison le tonnerre et
l'orage se former au dessous de soi; ...  
Ce fut là que je démala sensiblement dans la pureté 
de l'air où je me trouvais la véritable cause du change-
ment de mon humeur, et du retour de cette paix intérieure 
que j'avais perdue depuis si longtemps. ... Je doute 
qu'aucune agitation violente, aucune maladie de vapeurs 
put tenir contre un pareil séjour prolongé, et je suis 
surpris que des bains de l'air salutaire et bienfaisant 
des montagnes ne soient pas un des grands rémedes de la 
médecine et de la morale (O.C., ii, p. 78).

The emotional experience is not without a description of the  
surroundings:

Tantôt d'immenses roches pendoient en ruines au  
dessus de ma tête. Tantôt de hautes et bruyantes cas-
cades m'inondoient de leur épais brouillard. Tantôt 
un torrent éternel ouvroyt à mes côtés un abîme dont 
les yeux n'osoiyent sonder la profondeur. Quelquefois 
je me perdis dans l'obscurité d'un bois touffu. Quel-
quefois en sortant d'un gouffre une agréable prairie 
réjouissoit tout à coup mes regards. Un mélange 
étonnant de la nature sauvage et de la nature cultivée, 
montroit par tout la main des hommes, où l'on eut cru 
qu'ils n'avoient jamais pénétré: à côté d'une caverne 
on trouvoit des maisons; on voyoit des pampres secs où 
l'on eut cherché que des ronces, des vignes dans des 
terres éboulées, d'excellens fruits sur des rochers, et 
des champs dans des précipices (O.C., ii, p. 77).

At this moment in his emotional crisis, Saint-Preux 
does not tarry over which of the two kinds of nature—"la 
nature sauvage" or "la nature cultivée"—appeals to him. His 
foremost thought is to reach the tops of the tallest summits 
and there mull over the problems facing him. In other words, 
the therapeutic value of the mountains is of greater im-
portance at this moment than appreciation of their esthetic 
wonder.

In the course of the novel, the above incident also 
allows the author an opportunity to break the monotonous
momentum of the emotional bantering between lovers and confidants. Rousseau is also recalling the feeling which he too experienced in a similar locale; hence, he is vicariously reliving that experience. He relies solely upon his imagination for the details; no matter, for it is apparent that he is more concerned with the over-all esthetic appearance than he is with the actual detailed picture before him. At the same time, his feeling for nature is real and the experience is valid. But is there anything in the description which distinguishes it in some way so as to suggest a true description of nature per se? Is it one which anyone with a little appreciation of nature could have produced? He speaks of "immenses roches," yet fails to give their color, texture or a more accurate understanding of their proportions. "Cascades" fall, but also without any detail. A "torrent" reveals a bottomless gorge, but we know nothing of its size, color or the speed of its flow. All we do know is that it is "éternel," which is a very subjective qualification. There is a "bois touffu," yet, again, no details are given relative to the kind of trees, their color, or their proximity to the waterfall. The insertion of such phenomenon as a prairie alongside gorges and waterfalls causes wonderment as to verisimilitude. What results from this verbal painting is a poetic interpretation. Highly subjective and fantastically developed, it can only be a product of the imagination. Feeling and emotion are of greater sig-
nificance to Rousseau than detailed accuracy, and, for this reason, the reader should be as sensitive to the descriptions as the author was in relating them. Rousseau's esthetic consideration of nature is unquestionably related to the over-all emotional environment.

An incident later in the novel gives even further evidence of this tendency. Saint-Preux has an occasion to return with Julie to the aforementioned site. The conditions of their relationship have changed and are considerably more favorable. The wild and rugged setting, though dramatic and offering a particular interest "aux âmes sensibles," is much less attractive to him now that he has romance in mind. The preference for a contrasting environment becomes apparent.

"J'avais toujours désiré de revoir la retraite isolée qui me servit d'azile au milieu des glaces, et où mon coeur se plaisait à converser en lui-même avec ce qu'il eut de plus cher au monde. ... Je me faisois un plaisir de lui (à Julie) montrer d'ancien monumens d'une passion si constante et si malheureuse" (O.C., ii, p. 517).

In the above paragraph Saint-Preux suggests that the "retraite isolée" was purposefully selected for reasons of personal meditation. It should be noted that he emphasizes isolation and refers to the setting as an "azile au milieu des glaces." This is important since he will later contrast this setting with a more colorful and attractive one. The fact that his first description emphasized the height of the Alps rather than their icy characteristics underlines his
emphasis on art rather than on verisimilitude.

Saint-Freux continues with the following description:

Ce lieu solitaire formoit un reduit sauvage et desert, mais plein de ces sortes de beautes qui ne plaisent qu'aux ames sensibles, et paroissent Horribles aux autres. Un torrent formé par la fonte des neiges rouloit à vingt pas de nous une eau bourbeuse, char- rioit avec bruit du limon, du sable et des pierres. Derriere nous une chaine de roches inaccessible sépareoit l'esplanade où nous étions de cette partie des Alpes qu'on nomme les glacières, ... Des forêts de noirs sapins nous ombrageoient tristement à droite. Un grand bois de chêne étroit à gauche au delà du torrent, ...
(O.C., ii, p. 518)

Then he contrasts the above with a description more in keeping with Rousseau's own former interest in such things as flowers, grass, streams--things bucolic. He refers to this scene as a "séjour riant et champêtre," accentuating the difference in the two settings--"réduit sauvage et désert" versus "séjour riant et champêtre."

Au milieu de ces grands et superbes objets, le petit terrain ou nous étions étaitoit les charmes d'un séjour riant et champêtre; quelques ruisseaux fil- troient à travers les rochers, et rouloit sur la verdure en filets de cristal. Quelques arbres fruitiers sauvages penchoient leurs têtes sur les notres; la terre humide et fraîche etoit couverte d'herbe et de fleurs (O.C., ii, p. 518).

The use of contrast in describing water, soil and plants points out the significant difference between the two localities. In the first, one can almost hear the thunder of rushing waters whipping tons of rocks and sand violently down the rocky gorge. In the second, however, a few placid streams wind slowly through the rocks breaking into even
smaller crystal streamlets. The harsh, craggy terrain of the first is much less inviting than the small "séjour riant," sensuously rich with moisture-laden flowers and grass. The black pines and tall oaks with their gloomy shade are strong contrast to the few wild fruit trees which affectionately lean their tops over the heads of the lovers. Even the suggestion of color is noticeable; only black and white are dominant in the first while green, crystal white, complemented by the suggestion of colorful flowers, and blue streams prevail in the second. In the first setting what is important is not the wild, rugged character of the setting, but the isolation and solitude which it affords. The attraction is primarily to the paradisiacal "séjour" with its garden of Eden type atmosphere. Saint-Preux, who is writing to his friend and confidant Milord Edouard, concludes by telling him that the bucolic background is more in harmony with the beatings of his heart. "En comparant un si doux séjour aux objets qui l'environnoient, il sembloit que ce lieu désert dut être l'asile de deux amans échappés seuls au bouleversement de la nature" (O.C., ii, p. 518).

In this instance, at least, Rousseau—in the person of Saint-Preux—reacts to and appreciates the physical environment owing to the circumstances of the moment. His amourous inclinations, for example, determine his choice of the bucolic while his periods of frustration and melancholy direct him toward the primitive.
His Réveries contain an additional note of interest relative to this personal preference. Here, he explains his attachment to nature. He says that he looks at nature as an embellishment to the otherwise perfectly spherical, but unattractive and naked earth. In one of his more poetic moments, he personifies the earth, dressing her in a spring-time wedding gown of flowers and greenery, and refers to her as the most beautiful sight that man could want to behold. A balm to a sad and lonely heart, nature in the spring rewards the "solitaire" for his life on earth.

Les arbres, les arbrisseaux, les plantes sont la parure et le vêtement de la terre. Rien n'est si triste que l'aspect d'une campagne nue et pelée qui n'étale aux yeux que des pierres, du limon et des sables. Mais vivifiée par la nature et revêtue de sa robe de noces au milieu du cours des eaux et du chant des oiseaux, la terre offre à l'homme dans l'harmonie des trois règnes un spectacle plein de vie, d'intérêt et de charme, le seul spectacle au monde dont ses yeux et son coeur ne se lassent jamais (O.C., i, p. 1062).

Yet, this sight, in order to give meaning to his life, must be pleasant, colorful and attractive. The absence of colorful flowers, trees, crystal streams and singing birds is depressing and tiring. "Rien n'est si triste que l'aspect d'une campagne nue et pelée. ..." Nature, then, is an attraction only insofar as its beauty harmonizes with the flutterings of Rousseau's own heart. The primitive and rugged setting "qui n'étale aux yeux que des pierres, du limon et des sables," and which sometimes appeals to the "âme sensible," is definitely not his choice, that is, his
conception of ideal nature. His "caractère effeminé,"
limiting his desire for outward involvement in life, both
physical and social, caused him to view life through rose-
colored glasses. His penchant is to the serene, to the
idyllic, to all that is conducive to reverie, romance and
happiness. For this reason his presentation of nature is
extremely narrow.

Claire-Eliane Engel, author of a study of "la
littérature alpêstre" in France and England during the 18th
century, would agree with our conclusions. She finds that
the rugged, represented by the presence of mountains, was
neither an honest interest nor a true affinity in Rousseau's
life. The mountains, she feels, "n'est qu'un obstacle dressé
entre les vallées--un obstacle dépourvu d'attraits." She
points out that Rousseau's preoccupation with himself rather
than with nature per se prohibited any rapport between the
two:

La haute montagne, âpre, rude, inhumaine, ne pouvait
plaire à Rousseau. Elle n'accueille pas le voyageur.
Indifférente à l'homme, elle ne peut charmer celui qui
ne cherche pas à la comprendre, à l'aimer pour elle-
même, et non pour soi. La sociologie de Rousseau et
son égoïsme tout-puissant étaient autant d'infran-
chissables obstacles qui le séparaient de l'âme du
paysage alpêstre (Engel, p. 24).

In retrospect, we can see that Rousseau's conception
of nature remained pretty much the same during his literary
career. Generally, it was a simple conception based on a
very idealized view of life, reminiscent of his early years
in the Vaud country. He definitely preferred a pastoral setting to an urban one. His affinity for the rugged is very slight and most often associated with the emotional context in which he finds himself at the time. Rousseau is not intent upon becoming a natural historian. He is the historian of his soul.
CHAPTER IV.

THOREAU'S ENLARGED VIEW OF NATURE

Thoreau's familiarity with nature while in his childhood was far more complete and abundant than was Rousseau's. It taught him many things and was the source of much happiness. Even when he left Concord for Harvard, this familiarity remained the same. Higher education among the Brahmins of Boston was, of course, a change, but the immediate displacement presented no real difficulties. If anything, it brought a broader spectrum of experience which appealed to him. As for nature, his studies did not deprive him of his former intimacy with it. Whenever the opportunity was available, he would withdraw from the college campus and head for the fields around Harvard, and the banks of the Charles River. The geography, different from Concord, was probably a refreshing sight and certainly a source of enlightenment for him. After all, his life in nature, though varied, free and happy, had nonetheless been limited to the Concord area. Harvard was a symbol of books and classical learning and a major influence in the direction of Thoreau's life. His stay there was also his first opportunity to become acquainted with a physical milieu different from the one around Concord. The difference was not dramatic; however,
as Harding points out, the area was new and different for Henry and came as somewhat of a surprise.

To his surprise he found more wildlife than he had seen in Concord. It seemed to flourish despite the presence of man. Birds were a plenty and small mammals too (The Days, p. 38).

Contrasted with farming country, like that of Concord, Boston and Cambridge must have given Henry the impression that nature's world was near extinction. Yet, "wildlife was everywhere, he learned, if one but bothered to observe it. And the observations offered a welcome alternative to study" (The Days, p. 39).

The years at Harvard were of immeasurable influence in his life. Every avenue of learning led him into a new world of discovery. His college essays, as Sherman Paul has noted, reflect much of the change or the maturation taking place in the boy Thoreau. They, more than anything else available today, Paul points out, show the impact of the Harvard years. Already, evidenced by the themes in the essays, Thoreau was making known his sentiments on individualism, freedom and character. The question of self-reliance, so important and fundamental to him, especially during the years at Walden Pond, was unquestionably under scrutiny at Harvard. But what about nature?

Prior to the Harvard years, nature was an integral part of his life, and during those years it was not forgotten. Nevertheless it was not a subject of primary interest
at college. Fields, streams, birds and animals were not thrust aside, but like a practical object, such as his boat, nature remained pleasurable, but not intellectually challenging. It was there to be enjoyed, but not studied.

The Harvard years were the years of "intellectualizing." Thoreau met the Ancients and discovered the Moderns. He learned to know the Orientals and became an admirer of Emerson. Nature, as matter, was forced to take a back seat to nature as symbol—symbol of the world and man within it. Yet much that he read spoke of physical nature. Even so, Henry's ken for nature, the physical kind, led him to reminisce and to recall the verdant woods of Concord and the seclusion which they provided. Eventually, it was the thought of seclusion within those woods, and the tranquility which seclusion could afford one now pre-occupied with things intellectual, which later encouraged him to ponder even more the subject of nature. More than before he began to look to nature for seclusion and solitude to further his intellectual pursuits and to come to know himself better. It was soon to become a means to an end. His life in nature was thus not arrested by his intellectual interests. He discovered that nature could be useful as well as pleasurable.

Henry was often homesick for the country, though he had not yet renounced city life in favor of living in his native rural village. Boston's culture was, however, not tempting. Cultural sophistication, sometimes associated with
the intellectual life, was not for him. He would never renounce the wholesome independence both physical and social of simple country living. Satisfied with what nature had given him in the form of contentment and serenity, he continued to indulge in its rewards the moment he left Harvard.

Prior to graduation, he found solitude and intellectual companionship during a six week respite with his good friend Charles Stearn Wheeler in a hut on Flint Pond. The hut, about four miles from Concord and built by Wheeler for himself, provided no conveniences; yet, for the two young men, the discomfort and relatively rugged living were a real paradise. Thoreau easily preferred the absence of luxury and comfort to the inconveniences which they brought in society. The solitude which he now desired as a young college intellectual could be best found in the nature he had known as a child. The experience of the six weeks was an adequate blueprint from which to build his life at Walden Pond. Harding writes that "it undoubtedly served as an inspiration for his later experiment . . ." (The Days, p. 49).

The values which he had unconsciously ferreted out in his youthful years near the earth were now taking new forms and gaining greater substance. Nature per se was not yet in focus as a subject of study, but the pleasures of having known nature intimately were reawakened and were encouraging him to return to the earth. However, it was not yet nature per se which prompted him to go to Walden Pond; it was such
things as solitude, quiet and repose which he had previously found in a natural environment.

On the intellectual side, Emerson had a great influence on him. He served to stimulate his growing interest in things intellectual, particularly in writing. 31

Writing posed many problems, one of which was finding a vocation which would allow one to magnify his literary calling. Sherman Paul discusses this problem as it relates to Thoreau, pointing out that the end of intercourse with nature, as far as Emerson was concerned, was character. Thus in order to achieve that end, nature had to become the dominant feature in one's life. In other words, accepting a vocation other than nature itself presented considerable problems, since nature, according to Emerson, was the ideal vocation. He felt that the truths of life are found in nature and can be of service to man, (they exploit his inner spiritual potential), but they must be discovered and proclaimed to the world and this task is the writer's challenge. To transcend the material world in search of the verities of the spiritual world is one goal of the disciples of Emerson's doctrine. The other goal is to cause a general social reformation as an outgrowth of the spiritual transformation. As reformers, the "Transcendentalists," as the disciples were called, sought to improve the social condition by exploiting the latent divine potential of man. Thoreau was attracted to the Transcendentalist movement and, after he graduated from
Harvard, was a "regular attendant" at the Hedge Club, the movement's informal organization. He was primarily interested in the movement as a method for personal spiritual reform and less for social reformation. His own personal challenge, he felt, was first to apply Transcendentalism in his own life and second to bring it to others for their own betterment.

Thus, nature as a reflection of all truth and beauty was now to be discovered and experienced in a way other than he had previously known it. He wanted to come in contact with truth, beauty and morality, which were embodied in the tangible realities of the natural world. Here then he reached a new plateau in his relationship with his natural milieu. Previously known as a medium of personal enjoyment, nature was now symbolic of a greater spiritual world which he could know and which would give consummate meaning to the human condition and, as a result, greater direction in his own life. The symbolic significance of nature thus assumed as much significance as physical nature. Nature as symbol will be discussed in Chapter VI.

Yet, his goal of intellectual communion and spiritual change was based on an ideal of total physical immersion. To know Nature with a capital "n" one must live and experience nature with a small "n." As a consequence, by the rigidity of his own standard and ideal, Thoreau alienated himself literally from other Transcendentalists such as Margaret
Fuller, George Ripley and even Emerson. They, unlike Thoreau, were unwilling or unable to envelope themselves in nature in the same way. Their's was an intellectual ideal, his was both intellectually ideal and physically real. "The life and the insight were ultimately one;" writes Paul, "the organic life was achieved by living it" (Shores, p. 22).

This attempt at the "organic life" is evident when Thoreau decided after graduation to try his hand at school teaching. What is important to note from this period of pedagogical adventure is the ever present attention which he devotes to his observations of the plant and animal world. Not yet successful in his search for "higher laws" (laws which transcend our everyday experience and reach toward the infinite and our relationship with it), Thoreau continued his ardent interest in nature as a keen observer of all natural phenomena. Harding writes that

The children were impressed that he seemed to know the birds, the beasts, and the flowers not as a surgeon who dissected them, but as 'one boy knows another with all their delightful little habits and fashions.' The pupils used to declare to each other, 'If anything happened in the deep woods which only came about once in a hundred years, Henry Thoreau would be sure to be on the spot at the time and know the whole story.'

On their excursions together, he also took the opportunity to acquaint the children with the history of the area, particularly that of the Indians. He showed them where to find the arrowheads, spearheads, pestles, and other stone implements so common then on the Concord fields and meadows—if one knew where and how to look for them (The Days, pp. 82-83).

The reason Thoreau guarded his valuable association with nature was his growing awareness that the end of life
was education, but not the kind gained from books. Nature was a world of unexplored symbols waiting to be discovered. It was his key to life and to the universe. He realized, of course, that his own life became more meaningful and better defined as he became more and more aware of the exterior world—both civilized and primitive. Somewhat familiar with civilization's doings, he, therefore, directed himself toward the primitive and hoped that a familiarity with the Indian and his customs would help him in his desire to better understand nature and man in nature.

The Indian thus reflects Thoreau's newly acquired transcendental values. His interest in primitive values reflects his adoption of the transcendental point of view; that is, that the whole view is superior to a limited, scientific, "atomistic view." The Indian is the personification of nature accommodating herself to the soul of man. In spite of the spiritual value of the Indian's primitive simplicity, Thoreau was not blind to the cultural disadvantages which plague the savages. What he recognized was that their proximity to nature left their life unpretentious and simple, had given them inspiration and guidance with respect to temporal existence, and had taught them to be self-reliant and independent. By necessity and by choice, the Indian had used nature as the foundation on which to build his life. It is apparent, even as late as his writing of *Walden*, that Thoreau's inspiration from the savage and his way of life
was great. 34

The Indian as inspiration and Thoreau's own affinity for the outdoors encouraged the young author to discover the harsher, more rugged aspects of nature. All her faces, he felt, should be familiar to him. But before he penetrated into the primitive regions of Maine's wilderness country and Canada, Thoreau had much actual exploring to do right within the confines of the unsettled but less primitive regions of the Concord and Merrimack Rivers.

At the time of the river journey up the Concord River, says William Drake, Thoreau had transcendental ideals, but had not yet admitted "that another world lies beyond the senses." 35 Drake is referring to Thoreau's dependence on sense experience rather than on pure intellect. He was not yet ready to enjoy the fruits of transcending the sensual experience, arriving at a new medium of adventure divorced from the senses. As a consequence, he continued to enjoy the rewards of being in contact with the exterior world and basking in its tangible associations. The intellectual correspondence between man and nature, the symbol latent with meaning, had yet to be accepted and experienced.

In addition to its literary value, the trip with his brother John was an opportunity to explore more of the natural world. Though he did not sit down and write the events of this historic week until six years later, one can imagine that like the stay at Harvard, exposure to different plants
and animals, and all wildlife in general, was agreeable to him. Yet, if one peruses the Week in hopes of discovering a heavily detailed account of the flora and fauna of the voyage, one will find that nature is of secondary importance and quite superficially but poetically treated. Nature was a means and not an end in itself.

It is interesting, however, to note the depth of interest and knowledge of nature which is contained in the Week's pages. Though here Thoreau is more creator than observer, the Week reveals a high degree of familiarity with the natural world and is illustrative of the different role nature enjoys in his works, and the role which it plays in those of Rousseau. One has only to read the introductory pages where he speaks of the Concord River to recognize his perception and experience.

I had often stood on the banks of the Concord watching the lapse of the current, an emblem of all progress, following the same law with the system, with time, and all that is made; the weeds at the bottom gently bending down the stream, shaken by the watery wind, still planted where their seeds had sunk, but ere long to die and go down likewise; the shining pebbles, not yet anxious to better their condition, the chips and weeds, and occasional logs and stems of trees that floated past, fulfilling their fate, were objects of singular interest to me, and at last I resolved to launch myself on its bosom and float whither it would bear me (Writings, I, p. 11).

Now obviously, the river is a metaphor to carry Thoreau's thought. Yet it is also a natural fact. Thoreau is not satisfied to operate on pure symbol and thus the conspicuous accent on natural fact. The paragraph is not extraordinarily
rich in natural detail, yet it is more imaginable than a passage on nature by Rousseau. Why? The answer lies in its accuracy and verisimilitude. Thoreau's close association with the river and the many long hours he spent on its shores, his keenly observant eye, attracted to its every detail, provided him with enough supplementary information so as to relate a credible picture. Take his mention of the "lapse" of the current and the growth of weeds on the water's bed. When he uses "lapse" he calls to mind the perfect slipping back and forth of water in rapid motion. One familiar with water moving with a current knows that it does not have what could be called gentle waves, nor is it smooth and placid. A current does lap at the banks and folds up and down rapidly in a very swift movement. Thoreau's choice of words is exact and effective. If one were to approach the question of growth on the river's bed objectively, it would probably be agreed that such a phenomenon is possible. Yet, Thoreau leaves no room to question the probability! Having seen such growth many times in his excursions and close observations, he does not suggest that it might be there; he speaks directly, leaving no room for doubt. Weeds do grow on the bottom of the river's floor and once more, he notes, they flow gently with the current, bending and submitting to the "watery wind." He even goes one step further and traces their origin and their final destiny, pointing out that they were once seeds which had sunk to the floor, but which will
follow the current, "ere long to die and go down likewise."
Rousseau would never engage in such botanical realism! However, Thoreau does not stop here. He pours out as much de-
tail as necessary to make the picture even more realistic.
He speaks of pebbles, chips, weeds, logs, and tree stems.
And even though they are objects probably indigenous to most
parts of America, they are evidence enough of the use which
he makes of his rich experience in nature when creating art.
This is perhaps the most glaring difference between Thoreau
and Jean-Jacques. Although the latter claimed intimate as-
sociation with nature (and this we can not doubt), never
does he bring forth the minutiae of this intimacy. It is true
that he later became interested in botany, but prior to that
time, and even after, his descriptions are for the most part
very much void of details. This would lead us to believe,
as we have suggested earlier, that nature per se did not
really capture his interest.

Thoreau's myriad adventures, complemented by his
ever observant eye, provided him with information and a
vocabulary as rich as the opulence of the natural world. In
other descriptions in the Week, he speaks of numerous other
natural sights; of pickerel and bream being driven from the
protective coverts of lily pads, of a tortoise dropping
quickly into the water, frightened by the passing of the boat,
of the boat's gentle ruffling of the water under willow trees,
breaking the reflection of the trees in the water. He speaks
of bulrushes, flags, salmon brooks, toadstools, frogs, moss, thrushes, spruce trees, pine trees, honeysuckles, goats, mosquitoes, etc. This list alone is a line of demarcation between the two authors. Unless such things touched and had a profound effect upon Rousseau, he would have no reason to mention them. Thus the apparent lack of the particular in his work. He was primarily a man of generalities.

Part of a mythical nature which he is creating, but patterned after one which he knows well, the natural facts serve to distinguish Thoreau's work. It would be presumptuous and even wrong to imply that this is where his greatness lies. It is partly here, but more so in his thought, and in the originality of his personality. To give form to his thought was the challenge he faced at the time of the Week's writing. By talking about something he knew well and enjoyed, he gave substance to his more personal ideas. As a result, we have the beginnings of the organic life—the integration of mind with matter.

Thoreau was literally physically prepared for the organic life. In fact, his physical prowess often separated him from many of his friends and associates. Ellery Channing, with whom he maintained the most lasting friendship, was never able to keep up with him and often irritated Thoreau because he tired easily during their many walks together. Channing liked to walk slowly and imbibe nature. Thoreau liked to move fast, looking for new phenomena, often stopping
and writing his thoughts and observations on scraps of paper, later to be incorporated into his journal. Rousseau, like Channing, strolled in nature, willing to walk for miles to hear the song of a certain bird, but was unable to transfer his reflections and observation to paper. Again it was the sensation of being in nature rather than nature per se which attracted him to the outdoors.

Emerson invited Thoreau to live with him and his family mainly because he was a good practical man to have around. Unlike Jean-Jacques, he was handy with tools, able to repair most anything. He knew a lot about gardening and the habits of most plants. Harding writes:

Emerson marveled at his dexterity, thinking it a miracle that he could select exactly a dozen pencils at every grasp when he was helping his father with packaging, that he could outwalk, outswim, outrun, outskate, and outboat most of his contemporaries (The Days, p. 127). Yet, for all his prowess and his intimate involvement with nature, Thoreau was just beginning to discover nature. Even after the Concord-Merrimack trip, his interest was still not as "objective" as it would become.

He started keeping a journal soon after graduating from Harvard, something Rousseau wished he had always done. His journal was a depository of his thoughts and observations, not an intimate or confessional history such as Jean-Jacques' Confessions. He used it over and over again when writing articles and major works, such as the Week and Walden. He often included in it his own poetry and favorite
quotations and poetry from many different sources.

In 1842, he published "The Natural History of Massachusetts" in The Dial, the short-lived organ of transcendental thought. Like his many other works, it contains many entries from the Journal. Written prior to the publication of the Week, this article has material in it spanning the years 1837-42. Contrary to the title, it is a "treatise on the personal use of nature"³⁶ and not a true history of nature in Massachusetts. To the casual reader, however, this may not be apparent. On close inspection, though, the reader recognizes the absence of great numbers of natural facts and the personal quality, abundantly lyrical quality, of the writing. Of fishes, for example, he writes:

Only their names and residence make one love fishes. I would know even the number of their fin-rays, and how many scales compose the lateral line. I am the wiser in respect to all knowledges, and the better qualified for all fortunes, for knowing that there is a minnow in the brook. Me thinks I have need even of his sympathy, and to be his fellow in a degree (Writings, V, p. 118).

Here as elsewhere, one realizes that though Thoreau is writing about the natural world, he is talking more about himself, his feelings and his reaction to his environment, than about the environment itself. Yet unlike Rousseau, nature for him served a practical end. It was the mirror of life and the light by which he was led into a better understanding of himself. And he is all the wiser from his association with it. As Paul points out, "The Natural History" "expressed the primary transcendental need, the leisure 'to
improve his soul's estate.' Nature was the source of inspiration and faith, but society was the field of action'' (Shores, p. 126).

The close inspection of his natural facts shows that Thoreau is nonetheless often creating a natural world of his own. In this respect he follows a pattern used by Rousseau. The power to recreate what he had seen but later lost to time is perhaps the beauty of Thoreau's art. As with Jean-Jacques, his artistic strength certainly resides in his ability to tell a story. It is unfair to call him a natural historian at this time in his life. Above all, he is an artist—a sensitive poet. The following is an example of his ability to combine art and natural fact.

Frequently, in the morning or evening, a long ripple is seen in the still water, where a muskrat is crossing the stream, with only its nose above the surface, and sometimes a green bough in its mouth to build its house with. When it finds itself observed, it will dive and swim five or six rods under water, and at length conceal itself in its hole, or the weeds. It will remain under water for ten minutes at a time, and on one occasion has been seen, when undisturbed, to form an air bubble under the ice, which contracted and expanded as it breathed at leisure. When it suspects danger on shore, it will stand erect like a squirrel, and survey its neighborhood for several minutes, without moving (Writings, I, p. 116).

It is apparent that he enjoys the challenge of descriptive writing, something Rousseau did not like. Water, plants and wildlife are everywhere seen through the eye of Thoreau the artist, and as mentioned above, the natural world leads the author to a closer awareness of his own being. Certainly
Rousseau learned much from the exterior world, but when we speak of his learning from Nature, it should be with a capital "n" for it was the all-pervading influence of Nature which was his teacher, and not the minutiae which composed it. If anything, he sought solace from the particular and instruction from the general in nature.

In May 1843, Thoreau left Concord for Staten Island, New York. Curiously enough, his literary ambition, tying him closely to nature, also drew him to the city. It was hoped that while he was in New York he would have an opportunity to meet some publishers, to improve, strengthen and further his literary career. Big city life proved to be a great disappointment to him. Like Rousseau, he detested urban life and renounced it openly.

I don't like the city better, the more I see it, but worse. I am ashamed of my eyes that behold it. It is a thousand times meaner than I could have imagined. It will be something to hate, --that's the advantage it will be to me; and even the best people in it are a part of it and talk cooly about it. The pigs in the street are the most respectable part of the population. When will the world learn that a million men are of no importance compared with one man (The Days, p. 149)?

Still, the trip to New York was worthwhile. (He didn't feel so, however, because his health progressively declined while he was there.) He met Horace Greeley, who did much to popularize his works and his name, and while he was there he discovered a natural wonder, the ocean.

He had never known the ocean in his youth and was enthralled by it. He spent many hours just watching it,
leading Sherman Paul to wonder "how much this experience coming earlier in Thoreau's development would have altered his conception of nature" (Shores, p. 361). Rousseau's works are void of any mention of the ocean and leads one to wonder how it, rather than the Alps, might have affected him. Again, for him, it would have depended more on the circumstances and events leading him to the awareness of the sea, than the sea itself, which would have been important. If the ocean had no marked influence on Henry Thoreau, it at least further complemented his already extraordinary contact with nature. Here as in Cambridge, a new world of plant and animal life awaited him.

The flora and fauna of the area fascinated him, it was so surprisingly different from that of his native Concord. He had never seen tulip trees before and thought them particularly beautiful. Painted cups he noted were common in the meadows and fruit trees abounded in every direction (The Days, p. 148).

Nevertheless, he soon returned to Concord and made preparations for his experiment at Walden Pond. His return is an indication of his preference for a pastoral setting away from the "mean" city. Though the sea may have offered a new field of exploration, his strong attachment to Concord drew him back home. Perhaps the sea's ominous size and its incessant, portentous sound made him uncomfortable. It certainly did not represent the tranquility and seclusion of Concord's neighboring hills and woods. His yearning for solitude had grown stronger each year, and two years after
his return home, his hut at Walden was built and he was well on his way to making solitude a reality. The couple of years he spent there were the most fruitful of his life.

He had come to Walden to write the _Week_. These years, like the preceding ones, were not to be spent in studying nature _per se_, but were to be devoted to his personal, private "business." Yet Emerson had emphasized the utility of nature's wonders as far as unveiling the correspondences of natural phenomena with the human condition and experience and Thoreau had quickly understood this and had written of it as early as 1837.

Every part of nature teaches that the passing away of one life is the making room for another. The oak dies down to the ground, leaving within its rind a rich virgin mould, which will impart a vigorous life to an infant forest. The pine leaves a sandy and sterile soil, the harder woods a strong and fruitful mould.

So this constant abrasion and decay makes the soil of my future growth. As I live now so shall I reap. If I grow pines and birches, my virgin mould will not sustain the oak; but pines and birches, or, perchance, weeds and brambles, will constitute my second growth (_Writings_, VII, p. 3).

It is not surprising then that nature was to become a fountain for self-understanding. "My purpose in going to Walden Pond," he confides in _Walden_, "was not to live cheaply nor to live dearly there, but to transact some private business with the fewest obstacles" (_Writings_, II, p. 21).

Seclusion at Walden Pond reflects Thoreau's preference for a pastoral setting. The pond was too close to
town to be considered isolated and in a wilderness. The center of town was but two miles away and the railroad tracks were even closer. The area presented no particular challenge to him since he was very familiar with it. He had frequent visitors and walked into town several times a week; yet he would have us believe that he was in the depths of the wilderness. Leo Marx, in *The Machine in the Garden*, feels that by his exaggeration of the "primitiveness" Thoreau creates a myth in *Walden*. As has been noted earlier, there is a tendency, with respect to nature, for Thoreau to fuse reality and fiction into an imaginable illusion. Note the ingenious gift of harmonization of myth and fact in the quotation which follows.

Sometimes I heard the foxes as they ranged over the snowcrust, in moonlight nights, in search of a partridge or other game, barking raggedly and demonically like forest dogs, as if laboring with some anxiety, or seeking expression, struggling for light and to be dogs outright and run freely in the streets; for if we take the ages into our account may there not be a civilization going on among brutes as well as me? They seemed to me to be rudimental, burrowing men, still standing on their defence, awaiting their transformation. Sometimes one came near to my window, attracted by my light, barked a vulpine curse at me, and then retreated (*Writings*, II, p. 301).

However, one has the impression that Thoreau unlike Rousseau is conscious of his use of exaggeration. For our French author, on the other hand, the question of sincerity is harder to evaluate. The pictures which he presents are illusory to be sure, but, if challenged, Rousseau would probably counter that he actually felt that this was the way
it all was; and, therefore, it was real for him. Whether
or not what he wrote was factually true was unimportant to
him. He had felt it and this was reason enough to present
it as truth.

Thoreau's use of and interest in nature still ex-
ceeds that of Jean-Jacques. What he wrote, he most probably
experienced literally. He was a sportsman, an outdoorsman
who observed and studied nature because of its deep interest
to him. His feeling for nature was not forcibly related to
sentimental memories. Personal acquaintance with his inner
self and a strong desire to reaffirm his true self were pre-
eminent. Nature was the means to this end.

After Walden Pond, however, Thoreau's understanding
and appreciation of nature changed greatly. His desire to
know the primitive world of man's first existence took him
to the wild, craggy, wilderness of Maine. There he dis-
covered Mount Ktaadn. Concord's unsettled hills and fields
were indeed a pastoral setting compared to what he saw in
Maine. Nature soon lost its friendly, hospitable aura of
compatibility with man. This was impenetrable country,
even hostile; and Thoreau was uncertain as to whether this
was a face of nature which he enjoyed. Nature was pitiless
in this "the unfinished parts of the globe."

It was vast, Titanic, and such as man never in-
habits. Some part of the beholder, even some vital part,
seems to escape through the loose grating of his ribs as
he ascends. He is more lone than you can imagine.
There is less of substantial thought and fair under-
standing in him than in the plains where men in-
habit. His reason is dispersed and shadowy, more thin
and subtle, like the air. Vast, Titanic, inhuman
Nature has got him at disadvantage, caught him alone,
and pilfers him of some of his divine faculty. She
does not smile on him as in the plains. She seems to
say sternly, Why came ye here before your time. This
ground is not prepared for you. Is it not enough
that I smile in the valleys? I have never made this
soil for thy feet, this air for thy breathing, these
rocks for thy neighbors. I cannot pity nor fondle
thee here, but forever relentlessly drive thee hence
to where I am kind (Writings, III, pp. 70-71).

The last statement is perhaps the most significant
for it underscores Thoreau's preference for the more civ-
ilized "wilderness" of Concord. Nature tells him that the
primitiveness of Mount Ktaadn is not contributive to the
tranquil solitude required for meditation and spiritual
development. "But forever relentlessly [I] drive thee
hence," Nature tells him, "to where I am kind."

Thoreau continued to take excursions to primitive
areas, never ceasing to be fascinated by them. Like
Rousseau, he was awed by the untamed but found peace and
tranquility in more idyllic surroundings. It is interesting
to compare the reactions of each man to the mountains.
Thoreau, who actually climbed and fought the craggy terrain,
was struck by its unfriendliness. Its milieu was not sym-
pathetic with one who sought inspiration and solitude in its
depths. Rousseau, who found inspiration in the shadows of
the Alps, never conquered their summits. Yet he claimed to
have preferred their ominous presence. Each man, searching
for privacy, welcomed nature's understanding; however,
Thoreau, through experience, realized that the exterior also presented an inimical side at variance with man. Rousseau, on the contrary, his emotions maneuvering his affections, did not permit nature to maintain an intimate relationship with him so as to foster a definite like or dislike of the mountains or the country plains. His feelings started and emanated from him, interpreting nature according to his own moods. Thoreau imbibed nature's offering, allowing it to affect his own deportment. This will be more evident in our next chapter which centers around the effect of nature as a stimulus.

Eventually, Thoreau began to lose his sensitivity to nature's influence and because of age found himself growing more and more attentive to an "atomistic" comprehension of its various parts. His journal, after 1847, becomes progressively more copious in minute details of his observations of flora and fauna. Age seems to inhibit his former intimacy with nature both as a symbol of the human condition and as matter, the source of refreshment and pleasure. Sherman Paul feels that, irrespective of his preoccupation with minutiae, Thoreau was a poor scientist.

Like Thoreau, in this regard, Rousseau studied nature as a hobby, never allowing it to become a vocational preoccupation; yet, his last years were spent in collecting herbs, not because of their actual medicinal value, but because of the therapeutic value which the exercise had
upon him. Thoreau began collecting natural history speci-
mens for Louis Agassiz at Harvard and actually made
scientific contributions to the classification and study of
wildlife around Concord. Nonetheless, understanding and
savoring life, not nature, was his vocation. To substitute
anything else in its place was unacceptable. If nature was
to dominate his life, it would be out of choice. He would
easily have left it had he felt that it controlled him.

Thus we can see that Thoreau's conception of nature
became more inclusive as he gained in experience and age.
Only after 1847 did natural phenomenon become a concentrated
study. Prior to that date, it represented the milieu for
solitude, quiet and restoration so necessary for personal
meditation and literary and intellectual pursuits. It was
really the bucolic Concord that he loved and not the prim-
itive wilds. Despite his later emphasis on scientific fact,
his interest in nature was not scientific, but artistic and
philosophic. Nature supplied many of the answers to life's
questions and rendered itself as a vehicle for the commu-
ication of his thought. What often appears on the surface to
be an objective description of nature is often the subtle
harmonization of art and reality. He used nature to his own
best advantage and as a result it remained, for the most
part, a means to an end.
CHAPTER V.

STIMULATION AND RESPONSE IN NATURE

Like Thoreau, Jean-Jacques was attracted to botany. "Le docteur Ivernois"\textsuperscript{43} inspired his interest in plants as early as 1764, and it was not long thereafter before he became completely involved in their study.\textsuperscript{44} He was not interested in a scientific approach and openly admitted it: "La science nous ôte le plaisir."\textsuperscript{45} His attraction to botany was the fulfillment of a need, an outgrowth of the necessity for diversion: "C'est le véritable amusement d'un solitaire qui se promène et qui ne veut penser à rien" (C. G., XII, p. 54). He had no intention of allowing it to monopolize his life, but like so many things, it became an obsession, eventually losing its pleasurableness and consequently its attraction. By 1773, its appeal was gone and he later gave it up, complaining that it took too much time and was too costly.\textsuperscript{46}

His original interest in botany reflects, in part, a certain longing for tranquility and diversion. Jean-Jacques was looking for a way out, an escape from the formidable opposition which his friends and society presented to his own happiness. It was about this time that \textit{Emile} and the \textit{Contrat Social} were being burned by the authorities of Geneva, and
that he renounced his citizenship of his beloved "ville natale." Mounting persecution brought him closer and closer to questioning the purpose of his existence and the goodness of human behavior. Instead, he learned to identify the opposition as the evil forces opposed to goodness and virtue. Society and "les autres" were misunderstanding him and his earnestness. His poor health only compounded the problems. When he met "le docteur Ivernois," it was undoubtedly the example which the man presented to Rousseau which swayed him toward botany. "Le docteur's" early death touched Jean-Jacques: "J'y perds en mon particulier un exemple de patience et de vertu dans les souffrances" (C.G., XII, p. 244). Empathy, it seems, had drawn him toward a fellow "souffrant."

Even so, Jean-Jacques was not without practical interest in botany. It provided a meagre, but welcome bit of income, partially allowing him to maintain his independence and freedom and to remain away from city life, which he said he abhorred. His concern with persecution and the possibility of imminent death provoked some thought of self-defense and protection; and thus it was not in complete jest when he suggested to Malesherbes that no one should want to hang a humble botanist: "...avec un Linnaeus dans la poche et du foin dans la tête, j'espère qu'on ne me pendra pas" (C.G., XII, p. 54).

Different from Thoreau, he was not interested in analyzing, classifying and preserving what he saw. Very
much an amateur, in this respect, he preferred to know nature with the assistance of books. In fact, he felt there was delight in verifying what others had seen and recorded. Thoreau, in contrast, kept copious personal records, searching, drawing and collecting in a scientific manner; yet, for all his attention and statistics, even he was not a true scientist. Only when contrasted with a man whose interest focused on personal familiarity with nature does Jean-Jacques’ own botanical interest appear superficial and even insignificant. What he said to Malheserbes he really meant; his interest in botany was intended to be half-hearted, similar to Madame de Warens’, whose "herboriste" he had been in his youth.47

Je suis tenté d’essayer de la botanique, non comme vous, Monsieur, en grand et comme une branche de l’histoire naturelle, mais tout au plus en garçon apothicaire, pour savoir faire ma tisane et mes bouillons (C.G., XII, p. 54).

If it got out of hand and became more than a simple hobby, it was due to his own compulsive nature and nothing more. Certainly this is why he gave the whole thing up after eleven years. Yet, so much attention is given to his botanical penchant as a reflection of his incessant passion for nature! Jean-Jacques was not a naturalist in any scientific sense of the word. Collecting specimens for "des herbiers" was merely an attempt to "me rendre agréable la vie solitaire à laquelle je me suis consacré." It was not, therefore, a product of his love for the outdoors, but rather of
his decision to abandon an active social life. Retiring from urban surroundings, he found solitude in rural settings conducive to plant study.

Thus, just as it was not Thoreau's only purpose to study the flora of the Concord area, though it was definitely one of his purposes, Rousseau's interest in nature was not uniquely confined to the satisfaction which he received from botany; nor was it just the solitude and alienation which it provided from people and society, though this was clearly one of his aims. What triggered his sympathy for the exterior world was the physical effect which it had on him, the sensual response which it excited in him. "La vue de la compagnie, la succession des aspects agréables, le grand air, ..., tout cela dégage mon âme, ... (O.C., i, p. 162).

Rousseau had always accepted the role of the senses as revealing the material world. For him, Descartes' "Je pense donc je suis" had become "Je sens donc je suis." He disagreed, however, with the materialists who said that everything in the human mind derived from physical sensibility, his objection being that judgment and sensation were different. "Appercevoir les objets, c'est sentir. Appercevoir les rapports, c'est juger."48 He acknowledged the profound influence which all aspects of the physical environment have upon our conscious state, noting both a physical and a spiritual response.
Les climats, les saisons, les sons, les couleurs, l'obscurité, la lumière, les éléments, les aliments, le bruit, le silence, le mouvement, le repos tout agit sur notre machine et sur notre ame ... (O.C., i, p. 409).

Not until the second Dialogue did he explicitly establish what he meant by the dual state of sensibility. Here, however, he defines it and explains its role in man's life and particularly his own. "Sensibilité" is the principle of all action; without it there would be no cause to act, therefore, anything which acts is "sensible." God, for example, since he acts, is, of necessity, "sensible." "Un être, quoiqu'animé, qui ne sentiroit rien, n'agiroit point: car où seroit pour lui le motif d'agir" (O.C., i, p. 805). There are two kinds of "sensibilité"; a "sensibilité physique" which is passive and exists primarily for the conservation of the body. That is, it is responsive to pleasure and pain, thus capable of directing the body in a course of protective interest. In other words, whatever the stimulus may be, it evaluates it according to its effect—pleasant or unpleasant—on the body. The other is "sensibilité morale" which is active and is "la faculté d'attacher nos affections à des êtres qui nous sont étrangers." It is the ability to experience and express sentiment—positive or negative—for others. In effect, "sensibilité physique" is the equivalent of sensation and "sensibilité morale" of feeling. Rousseau admits to being extremely sensitive to both kinds. In fact, he blamed both the singularity of his
personality and the numbers of his uncommon problems on an overdeveloped sensitivity. As a result, he explains, "je sens tout et je ne vois rien" (O.C., i, p. 113).

Thoreau too was affected by the influence of his senses. He recognized especially in the autumn of his youth the vitalizing effects which nature could have upon the senses. He warned that age tends to absorb one's youthful sensuality.

Sing while you may, before the evil days come. He that hath ears, let him hear. See, hear, smell, taste, etc., while these senses are fresh and pure (J., II, p. 330).

What particularly brought him out into nature, willing to brave even adverse weather, was his awareness of what awaited him in the form of sensual feasts. Nature was the fountain of ecstasy; however its flow was not always even, often reduced to a mere trickle; and, as time passed, it became increasingly more difficult to savor its purity. As early as age thirty-five, he recognized the obvious signs of drought. "Once I was part and parcel of Nature; now I am observant of her" (J., III, p. 378).

Prior to his recognition that the sensual rewards derived from nature could not always be enjoyed by him, Thoreau spent himself freely assimilating all it had to offer. He passed his time in continuous pursuit of the new and different, easily satiated by the ordinary and commonplace. He was curious and adventuresome, reluctant to let
others or ambition barricade the path to full enjoyment of his senses. Nature brought him pleasures which he could find nowhere else, and he was determined to enjoy them to the end. "A man should feed his senses with the best that the land affords" (J., II, p. 496), he advised, thereby explaining his unending thirst for excursions and discovery. Such a spirit of exploration, such a desire to uncover nature's hidden bounty, was prompted by his own sensual appetites, possibly latent in many of us.

Joel Porte in *Emerson and Thoreau* emphasizes Thoreau's concern for fact over symbol in nature. He regards him as a sensationalist in the true Lockean fashion, searching for truth and finding it through the senses, disregarding any other modes of understanding outside mundane experience. "Locke," he writes, "was Thoreau's philosophical father" (Porte, p. 140). Walter Harding is more conservative in his assessment. He feels that Thoreau's affinity for sense stimulation is contingent upon his ultimate goal of finding his place in the universe. Any development or exploitation of the senses is in relation to the achievement of that goal. He would agree that there is no denying a sensual side in Thoreau, but that it is a means to an end and not the end in itself. We agree with Harding, but also feel that Porte is right in underlining the very sensual side of Thoreau. Thoreau was not a man of great faith; he understood best what he could see, smell, taste, hear and feel. Yet this
did not deter him from transcending the tangible and penetrating into the ethereal. In fact, it was his empirical nature which helped him understand the Ideal world of which the real world was but a material manifestation. Rather than a platonic understanding, Thoreau applied the Mayan concept which accepted the actual as material, but not a physical manifestation of the Real. It was easier to comprehend than Emerson's denial of the existence of the physical world. And, once more, he was sensually tied to the natural world and had no desire to forfeit the pleasure which it offered him.

His sensuality is sometimes evident by the occasional impatience which he showed for nature. In May 1854, the same year of Walden's publication, he criticized nature's inability to sustain its brilliant reputation. "We soon get through with Nature. She excites an expectation which she cannot satisfy" (J., VI, p. 293). Obviously this attitude reflects his insatiable urge for the new and different. On the other hand, he could easily have been projecting his actual inner frustrations on nature, since his personal inadequacy in obtaining inspiration and satisfaction in life was now a pre-occupation.

With Rousseau, sensation and sentiment intimately bound him to life. As to nature, he based the sincerity and validity of his Confessions on this very issue. What I feel is the truth, he said, whether or not it actually happened
the way I interpret it. My impressions guide me and I have full confidence in what they reveal to me. "Je ne puis me tromper sur ce que j'ai senti, ni sur ce que mes sentiments m'ont fait faire" (O.C., i, p. 278). He believed that there was no greater truth than what was felt, irrespective of what was said or done. Obviously this trust poses many problems. How can one judge the sincerity of a man whose convictions are based on feeling? And how can the man make his feelings understood when his actions or words confuse and beleaguer his real sentiments? Rousseau was tormented not only by his own inability to have others see his true self, but also by the naive certainty that he could interpret the real feelings of others.

His early ambitious desires only added wood to the small fires kindled by the conflict between sincerity and misunderstanding. The more he became involved in the fierce competition and artificiality of 18th century French society, the larger and more intense the fires became and ultimately he was to be consumed by the flames. Henry Thoreau was not plagued by a love of glory similar in degree to the one which ruled Jean-Jacques' life. In this respect, he saved himself from the effects of what Rousseau called "vaines idées." His primary concern was self-knowledge, a pursuit which is not evident in our French author. Jean-Jacques, we feel, was never engaged in a course of self-discovery. Better than many people, he knew who he was and what he wanted. His chal-
lenge, therefore, was the conversion of others to see him as he saw himself. The more he allowed himself to be a part of the social circles, the more he was separated from his so called "naturel." Consequently the yearnings for fame and glory perverted his natural "sensibilité" and led him away from himself and to submit to public opinion. Accordingly, imagination, a tool with useful as well as destructive potential, then displaced his awareness to sense stimulation and rendered him "insensible à la nature," and "sensible à l'opinion des hommes." He discussed this problem in *Emile*, concluding that "la source de toutes les passions est la sensibilité," and that "l'imagination détermine leur pente" (*Emile*, p. 256).

It was not, therefore, until he divorced himself from "le salon" and "le souvenir de la compagnie" that his "sensibilité" regained its natural and rightful control over him. And thus nature did not again influentially manifest itself in his life until after he renounced society and gave up his worldly ways.

*Je me souviens parfaitement que durant mes courtes prospérités ces mêmes promenades solitaires qui me sont aujourd'hui si délicieuses, m'étoient insipides et ennuyeuses. Quand j'étois chez quelqu'un à la campagne, le besoin de faire de l'exercice et de respirer le grand air me faisoit souvent sortir seul et m'échapper comme un voleur je m'alloys promener dans le parc ou dans la campagne; mais loin d'y trouver le calme heureux que j'y goute aujourd'hui j'y portois l'agitation des vaines idées qui m'avoient occupé dans le salon; le souvenir de la compagnie que j'y avois laissée m'y suivoit dans la solitude, les vapeurs de l'amour-propre et le tumulte du monde ternissoient à mes yeux la fraîcheur des bosquets et troubloient la paix de la retraite. J'avois beau fuir au fond des bois, une foule importune me*
suivait par tout et voilait pour moi toute la nature. Ce n'est qu'après m'être détaché des passions sociales et de leur triste cortège que je l'ai retrouvée avec tous ses charmes (O.C., i, p. 1083).

After the "réforme," however, "son naturel" was restored to him; his quasi-permanent isolation being a manifestation of this restoration. For solitude was the condition to which he felt he was born, irrespective of the blame he placed on society's depraved condition. "J. J. n'a pas toujours fuï les hommes, mais il a toujours aimé la solitude" (O.C., i, 812), writes Rousseau of himself in the Dialogues.

Even prior to his retirement, Jean-Jacques was not insensitive to exterior, natural stimuli, as we have already mentioned; in fact, from childhood, he was very conscious of the influence of exterior objects on him. Still, until this time, while focusing his eye on the general, he delightfully imbibed universal impressions in nature. Like Thoreau, who was not afraid to scorn the work of scientists, accepting their contribution as useful, but not as a way to "know" nature, he experienced nature in its comprehensive form, ignoring, for the most part, specific characteristics and properties.

For Thoreau, the best way to derive pleasure from nature was to "saunter" through it, allowing all of his senses to absorb all of nature's attributes, submitting to their persuasion, restricting his attention to no one object. "I must let my sense wander as my thoughts, my eyes see
without looking. . . . Be not preoccupied with looking.
Go not to the object; let it come to you" (J., IV, p. 351).
Above all, he thought, nature should be permitted to make
whatever impression it wants or can on us. The individual
should refuse vicarious experiences in favor of direct and
personal ones, taking "an original and unprejudiced view of
nature" (J., XIII, p. 169).

However, one very big difference, at least until the
time of the Rêveries, distinguishes Jean-Jacques' suscepti-
bility to nature from Thoreau's. That difference is found
in the moral aspect which should accompany the physical man-
ifestation, in order for the latter to have full value. In
other words, Rousseau must be touched emotionally, he must
experience inwardly a tender feeling, a sense of virtue and
goodness, at the same time as he responds to the physical
sensations.

J. J. m'a paru doué de la sensibilité physique à
un assez haut degré. Il dépend beaucoup de ses sens et
il en dépendrait bien davantage si la sensibilité
morale n'y faisoit souvent diversion; et c'est même
encor souvent par celle-ci que l'autre l'affecte si
vivement. De beaux sons, un beau ciel, un beau paysage,
un beau lac, des fleurs, des parfums, de beaux yeux, un
doux regard; tout cela ne réagit si fort sur ses sens
qu'après avoir perçu par quelque côté jusqu'à son
coeur (O.C., i, p. 807).

What Rousseau is pointing out here is that there should be a
harmonization between the "sensibilité physique" and the
"sensibilité morale." He fears that without the moral ele-
ment there would be too much sensual satisfaction. The
body would control the spirit and thus create an imbalance in favor of the physical rather than the spiritual in man. That man is both body and spirit was a painful reality to him. He suffered from the intense struggle between bodily needs and saintly aspirations. "Mes passions m'ont fait vivre, et mes passions m'ont tué" (O.C., i, p. 219), he confessed. The "sensibilité morale" was, therefore, an intuitive part of man in order to alleviate the possibility of irresistible sensuality. It perhaps reflects Rousseau's personal anguish and is an explanation of his delicate conscience.

This duality was part of Nature's endowment to man and an indication of his potential for goodness. To follow Nature's way would be to listen to the promptings of the "sensibilité morale," and thus enjoyment of any aspect of life, be it the physical environment or human actions, would be with an understanding of its moral or "natural" worth. Therefore, the chirping of a bird, the flow of a stream, the odor of a flowering plant, any aspect of nature, remains commonplace and truly unsavored until it inspires the soul, lifting it up to noble thoughts. Then, and only then, when the soul is morally activated, can nature's charm affect Jean-Jacques physically. He perceives only very superficially until that time. "La campagne elle-même aurait moins de charme à ses yeux s'il n'y voyait les soins de la mère commune qui se plait à parer le séjour de ses enfans"
(O.C., i, p. 807). His sensitivity to sounds, odors, colors and forms was consequently less immediate and absolute. His consciousness of their existence, though perhaps no less complete, was, on the other hand, not as deliberate and necessary as our American author's. Whereas Thoreau's relationship with nature was often active and frequently directed toward the end of sensuous discovery, Jean-Jacques' was regularly passive and circumstantial. As Ronald Grimsley writes, "he was apt to let his enjoyment of nature become mingled with his emotions. . ." (Grimsley, p. 62).

The fusion is nowhere more apparent than in his relations with Madame de Warens. Just as Julie's presence affected Saint-Preux's response to the physical setting, Madame de Warens' appearance marked Jean-Jacques' impressions.

Je faisais de ce charmant paysage encore un des bienfaits de ma patronne: il me semblait qu'elle l'avait mis là tout exprès pour moi; je n'y plaçais paisiblement auprès d'elle; je la voyois par tout entre les fleurs et la verdure; ses charmes et ceux du printemps se confondaient à mes yeux (O.C., i, p. 105).

Such influence being the case, one begins to realize how secondary, or at least, how ordinary nature's persuasion was on Rousseau. In fact, given the full context of a passage cited earlier, it is apparent that everything exterior to himself, and particularly the sensations derived from freedom and independence, have an effect upon him equal to, and, perhaps in some cases, more than nature's capabilities.
La vue de la campagne, la succession des aspects agréables, le grand air, le grand appetit; la bonne santé que je gagne en marchant, la liberté du cabaret, l’éloignement de tout ce qui me fait sentir ma dépendance, de tout ce qui me rappelle à ma situation, tout cela dégage mon âme, me donne une plus grande audace de penser, me jette en quelque sorte dans l’immensité des êtres pour les combiner, les choisir, me les apprêter à mon gré sans gêne et sans crainte. Je dispose en maître de la nature entière; ... (O.C., i, p. 162).

Now Thoreau would have agreed with Rousseau that one's affections for others renders the natural world more inviting. "Nature," he wrote, "must be viewed humanly to be viewed at all ..." (J., IV, p. 163). However, he wanted to underline the importance of noble values and their rapport with nature. The individual whose soul is high-minded and responsive, whose interest and concern is for mankind, and whose principles are those of right and justice, is inevitably in unity with the force which animates the universe, and, accordingly, he is likewise more appreciative and certainly more sensitive to the natural milieu. On the other hand, unlike Rousseau, an intimate and personal affection prompted by physical desires for the opposite sex would not add to nature's worth.

If Rousseau felt that his own sensitivity was harassed by society (it being the corrupter of "le naturel"), Thoreau was more troubled by the barrier which he himself erected between his "self" and the exterior world of nature. Proper intellectual and physical preparation was essential for full enjoyment of nature's offerings; it was imperative that he
nurture the appropriate habits favorable to that end. His body, which was more a hindrance than a temptation, was the receiver into which the natural world fed the essence of its properties. It was nature, not the body, which was the source of delight, the key to sensual pleasure. "I must confess there is nothing so strange to me as my own body," he writes in the Journal. "I love any other piece of nature almost better" (J., I, p. 321). The frailty of his health was a constant threat and a deep source of irritation. Keeping his senses attuned to the finer, more unusual, and more delectable rewards available in the fields and ponds was a worthy challenge. Yet, he knew that beyond the real lay another world. To transcend the real and reach into the ideal was his ultimate goal. He could feel the presence of other sounds and other movements, but he could not perceive them with the clarity and distinction which they demanded and which he desired. The first pages of his Journal witness his growth toward the intellectual communion which eventually, but sporadically, unveiled the truths of the universe to him.

Will not this faith and expectation make itself ears at length? I never saw to the end, nor heard to the end; but the best part was unseen and unheard (J., I, p. 321).

To know the truth which nature patiently guards from the "unworthies" took faith, courage, and a lot of effort on Thoreau's part. He, therefore, criticized those
who were not tough enough and close enough to the physical environment to brave the challenge. His sensitivity to nature was not based on romantic and melancholic sentiments. He would have tolerated, but not sympathized with, Jean-Jacques' emotional temperament. Similar to Rousseau, though, he blamed society for creating weak and "sensitively bred" men incapable of discerning and cherishing nature.

Sometimes the swampy vigor in such doses proves rank poison to the sensitively bred man! ... How far he has departed from the rude vigor of Nature, that he cannot assimilate and transmute her elements (J., IV, p. 195).

On the other hand, society was not all to blame. After all, man fosters his own social environment. For this reason, Thoreau placed much of the blame on man because of his willingness to be seduced by urban comforts. Contrary to Rousseau, who tried to impose his own ineptitudes for social involvement on society's dissipated condition, Thoreau accused man of vulnerability and impotence. Though he too believed in man's basic goodness, he was unwilling to project his own and others' inadequacies on society. He felt that there is a latent ability in every man to be cognizant of nature's secrets and to bask in the sensuous pleasures which she can excite. Rousseau, though openly agreeing with Thoreau on this subject, might secretly have denied it for he was obsessed with the singularity of his own "sensibilité." "Je ne suis fait comme aucun de ceux que j'ai vus;" he wrote, "j'ose croire n'être fait comme aucun de
ceux qui existent" (O.C., i, p. 5).

Paradoxically his "sensibilité" was at the root of his singularity and the true cause of his flight from society.

Toujours trop affecté des objets sensibles et surtout de ceux qui portent signe de plaisir ou de peine, de bienveillance ou d'aversion, je me laisse entraîner par ces impressions extérieures sans pouvoir souvent m'y derrober autrement que par la fuite (O.C., i, p. 1094).

It was as Marcel Raymond notes,54 "l'action de [ses] sens sur [son] coeur!" which caused "le tourment de[ sa] vie!" (O.C., i, p. 1828, note #3). Thoreau, too, left the social order owing to a conflict of values, but certainly not because of his inability to adapt himself to it. His extraordinary attention to sensation was generally deliberate and an offshoot of his search for total self-fulfillment. His sensitivity or susceptibility to sensations was often, therefore, a cultivated effort. Yet, Jean-Jacques was involuntarily an "être sensible," easily and helplessly swayed by his senses.

As a consequence, nature played an essentially passive role in Rousseau's life. The mountains, rivers, lakes, and fields were a framework for his freedom and his "dolce far niente" life. Jean-Jacques sought refuge in nature, not for novelty's sake, not for discovery, not for sensuous experiences, but primarily for the feeling of security, of isolation, and for dispassion. It was an escape, not an experience. Having no resemblance to Thoreau, in this res-
pect, he did not demand anything of nature.

Thoreau, on the other hand, searched for sights and sounds which were new and extraordinary. He would not infrequently go to Flint's point expressly for the mountain view because it had the power to "etherealize" his thoughts, sending him planing into heavenly spheres. Mountains, he wrote, "are the natural temples, elevated brows, of the earth, looking at which, the thoughts of the beholder are naturally elevated and sublimed--etherealized" (J., II, p. 496). Often, he sensitively traced the arrival of spring, its warmth and growth also being symbolic of his own spiritual and physical rejuvenation: "The sight of these budding woods intoxicates me..." (J., II, p. 10). Yet, he was as easily moved by a branch's winter nudity as he was by a burgeoning twig. He also found spiritual refreshment in the vibration of telegraph wires (his seolian harp) and the strains of the wood thrush. Such pure sounds inflamed his soul.

He that hath ears, let him hear. The contact of sound with a human ear whose hearing is pure and unimpaired is coincident with an ecstasy. Sugar is not so sweet to the palate, as sound to the healthy ear; the hearing of it makes men brave" (J., VI, p. 39).

Sounds from many sources brought inspiration and reflection. The "hum of insects, the booming of ice, the crowing of cocks in the morning and the barking of dogs in the night," so often ignored by the common herd, measured his own "soundness." If nature's "sound state" was not
ascertained with ease, he felt that his own life was not in
tune and required redirection. Heard and enjoyed, sounds
"cheaply enriched" his life. In our modern day vernacular,
one might say that nature afforded him inexpensive and harm-
less "trips." Sound, he says, "always mounts, and makes me
mount." The odor of sweet and yellow birch, sassafras and
fever bush brought exhilaration, and "the strong, rank scent
of ferns in the spring" brought "vigor" (J., IV, p. 154).

Rousseau, too, experienced "trips," but not from
the same stimulants. Mountains offered fascination, yet
their value resided in "l'air salutaire et bienfaisant"
obtained on their summits. Medicinal and moral aid, rather
than sensuous promotion, was their offering: "un des grands
remèdes de la medecine et de la morale" (O.C., ii, p. 79).
Budding flowers, chirping birds, warm spring sun did not
intoxicate him, nor summon ecstasy. More properly, the ad-
vent of a new life and unlimited freedom in the outdoors
excited him. Even sounds did not edify, but frequently
causd melancholy, undermining the stability of his hap-
piness and turning him toward the past. Natural sensations,
catalytic in unearthing old memories, more often than not,
reduced the impressions made by natural objects to minor
and inopportune roles. Their incantation drew him backward
rather than forward. The remembrance of former sensations
had greater power than the actual effect produced by the
sensations themselves. Greater stress was placed on primacy
than on frequency or singularity. What he had experienced first he remembered best and recalled easily. Because the present was the web of suffering, he lived in the past, thus submitting sensation to memory and favoring memory to sensation. "Etonnante propriété de la mémoire," writes François Jost of this phenomenon in Rousseau, "le souvenir devient plus réel que la sensation même" (Jost, II, p. 37). In this respect, Rousseau did not allow nature the privilege of promoting new experiences, only of evoking old ones. The same is true for Saint-Freux.

Le bruit égal et mesuré des rames m'excitoit à rêver. Le chant assis gai des bécassines, me retraçant les plaisirs d'un autre âge, au lieu de m'égayer m'attiristoit. Peu à peu je sentis augmenter la mélancholie dont j'étois accablé. Un ciel serain, les doux rayons de la lune, le frémissement argenté dont l'eau brilloit autour de nous, le concours des plus agréables sensations, la présence même de cet objet chéri, rien ne put détourner de mon coeur mille réflexions douloureuses.

Je commençai par me rappeller une promenade semblable faite autrefois avec elle durant le charme de nos premières amours. Tous les sentiments délicieux qui remplissioient alors mon âme s'y retracent pour l'affliger; tous les événements de notre jeunesse, nos études, nos entretiens, nos lettres, nos rendezvous, nos plaisirs,

E tanta fede, e si dolci memorie.
E si lungo costume!

ces foules de petits objets qui m'offroient l'image de mon bonheur passé, tout revenoit, pour augmenter ma misère présente, prendre place en mon souvenir (O.C., ii, p. 520).

What is more, Rousseau's imagination prevailed over nature. The sensation of openness and vigor nourished among trees, flowers, fields and lakes activated his imagination, and it satisfied his personal needs better than nature. His
imaginative faculties empowered the self to reach celestial regions, to soar and waft in sublime contemplation. Such activity gave him the strength to face and defy the insane judgments of men.

Mais celui qui, ..., s'élève sur les ailes de l'imagination au dessus des vapeurs de notre atmosphère, celui qui sans épuiser sa force et ses facultés à lutter contre la fortune et la destinée sait s'élancer dans les régions étherées, y planer et s'y soutenir par de sublimes contemplations, peut de là braver les coups du sort et les insensés jugemens des hommes (O.C., i, p. 815).

Yet nature's presence, by itself, was incapable of procuring such deliverance and ecstasy; hence the significance of imagination. Though it functioned equally well outside of a natural framework, imagination thrived in nature; consequently, it flourished when in such an environment.

... j'ai souvent pensé qu'à la Bastille, et même dans un cachot où nul objet n'eut frappé ma vue, j'aurais encore pu rêver agréablement. Mais il faut avouer que cela se faisoit bien mieux et plus agréablement dans une Isle fertile et solitaire, naturellement circonscrite et séparée du reste du monde, où rien ne m’offroit que des images riantes, où rien ne me rappelloit des souvenirs attristans, ... (O. C., i, p. 1048).

The reason for the pre-eminence of imagination is found in its ancillary role of fomenting Rousseau's renowned vocation—"rêverie." For him, as with most sensitive individuals, "rêverie" "devient une passion très vive, pour peu qu'[elle] soit secondé(e) par l'imagination" (O. C., i, p. 816). Nature by itself, he found, is not conducive to "rêverie," unless the natural environment is in constant
harmony with the inner needs of the self. That is, "il n'y faut ni un repos absolu, ni trop d'agitation, mais un mouvement uniforme et modéré qui n'ait ni secousses ni intervalles" (O. C., i, p. 1047). Irregular or unequal motion has a disturbing effect; it draws attention to the surrounding objects, thus jeopardizing the full charm of "rêverie" of which the sole design is alienation from reality. Consequently, imagination compensated for any irregularities, disharmony or disorder present at that given moment in nature. It, therefore, intervened and displaced autonomous nature for the sake of achieving the desired goal--meditation. Imagination, or the capacity to indulge in fantasy was obviously invaluable. It bridged the loneliness of actuality and the felicity of "rêverie." It stabilized the autonomy of sovereign nature. It reduced all of the natural world to a subordinate position of service, i.e., of accommodation to his fantastic other world. It took him from unpleasant reality, and afforded him "la vie heureuse et douce pour laquelle j'étais né" (O. C., i, p. 1081).

As Rousseau's most complete method of escape, "rêverie" does not disregard the natural world, nor its beauty, but simply enlarges upon it. It selects and assimilates its "better," more attractive parts, even embellishing them so as to render them more acceptable and harmonious to fantasy.

A l'attrait d'une rêverie abstraite et monotone je joins des images charmantes qui la vivifient. Leurs objets échappoient souvent â mes sens dans mes extases,
et maintenant plus ma rêverie est profonde plus elle me les peint vivement. Je suis souvent plus au milieu d'eux et plus agréablement encore que quand j'y étois reellement (O. C., i, p. 1049).

Consequently nature loses its natural beauty and simplicity, being made to appear more attractive and unique than it is in actuality. Its forms are transformed into "les plus charmantes," its colors "les plus vives," and its presence is ultimately crowned with the presence of "des sociétés de créatures parfaites aussi celestes par leurs vertus que par leurs beautés, d'amis aûrs, tendres, fidelles, tels que je n'en trouvai jamais ici bas" (O. C., i, p. 427).

Rousseau regarded his method of revery as being similar to that of the Orientals; that is, that imagination is fundamental. By his definition, he indicates the passive role which nature plays in stirring him into this type of detached workings of the mind. "Chez nous," he writes, contrasting those in Europe with the Orientals, "c'est le corps qui marche, chez les orientaux c'est l'imagination; ..."

He scorns the first method because of its need of distraction and agitation. "Nos promenades viennent du besoin d'agiter nos fibres trop roides," he writes disparagingly, "et d'aller chercher de nouveau objets" (O. C., i, p. 1678, note #816-1). By accentuating the fact that the Orientals do not search for the new and different, but are satisfied with any and all objects as long as the imagination is active, Rousseau not only separates himself dramatically from Thoreau,
but he underscores his own indifference to nature. As long as his own imaginative faculties are operative, Jean-Jacques feels that nature need play only a very inconspicuous and unpretentious role.

Thoreau admired Oriental literature, but his own contemplative manner does not emulate Eastern forms of revery. He was active, less resigned and deeply sensuously involved with the natural world. He was endlessly searching for the new and different, the perfect and the eternal; consequently he could not afford to wait for nature to act upon him, but sought her out and struggled to imbibe her charms so as to penetrate her secrets. He depended on the natural world to manifest truth. As a result, he was an explorer, engaged and wakeful, a man after himself. Sherman Paul writes that:

Thoreau's interest . . . was practical: the problem of contemplation vs. action was his own. . . . The Bhagavad-Gita was the most highly praised book in the Week, especially because it did complete justice to contemplation; but Thoreau, with his desire for heroic action, could not accept its counsels of passivity and fate (Shores, p. 217, note #143).

Thus, it is this very difference between Thoreau and Rousseau which further delineates the contrasting import of nature in their lives and their works. Because Rousseau was so much like the Orientals (in emphasizing imagination), flowers, trees, lakes, and meadows were not all that relevant to his general well-being. His success or failure in self-awareness
did not hinge on his relationship with nature.

On the other hand, when "revery taxed or fatigued Jean-Jacques, he sometimes relied on material objects to provide him with a "délaissement." Yet, nature per se or the natural wonders of the physical world were not mandatory or even necessary to execute the change of pace. For example, by pushing aside the fatiguing demands of voluntary flights of fancy, and submitting himself to the powerful influences of his senses, he frequently became vulnerable to the persuasion and spell of any object, no matter what it was. And the worth of the object was evaluated according to the release it gave. "Le plus indifférent spectacle a sa douceur," he felt, "par le relâche qu'il nous procure, ..." (O. C., i, p. 816). What is more, he admitted that only at these times did an interest in the particular appeal to him. At all other times, he found greater pleasure in the general or total appearance of things. That is to say, only during these occasional periods of "délaissement," following strenuous, but delectable intervals in "rêverie," was his attention attracted to the details, parts and properties of the matter composing reality. All things considered, then, he was ultimately interested in the "repos" which these material objects provided him. As the following passage bears out, nature per se was neither essential, nor even requisite to obtaining this "repos."
Le contemplatif J. J. en tout autre temps si peu attentif aux objets qui l'entourent a souvent grand besoin de ce repos et le goute alors avec une sensualité d'enfant dont nos sages ne se doutent guères. Il n'aperçoit rien sinon quelque mouvement à son oreille ou devant ses yeux, mais c'en est assez pour lui. Non seulement une parade de foire, une revue, un exercice, une procession l'amusent; mais la grue, le cabestan, le mouton, le jeu d'une machine quelconque, un bateau qui passe, un moulin qui tourne, un bouvier qui laboure, des joueurs de boule ou de battoir, la rivière qui court, l'oiseau qui vole attachent ses regards. Il s'arrête même à des spectacles sans mouvement, pour peu que la variété y supplée. Des colifichets en étalage, des bouquins ouverts sur les quais et dont il ne lit que les titres, des images contre les murs qu'il parcourt d'un oeil stupide, tout cela l'arrête et l'amuse quand son imagination fatiguée a besoin de repos (O. C., i, pp. 816-17).

It is of interest to note that, unlike Thoreau, whose sensuality is mature and often shockingly real, Jean-Jacques' tends to view his own sensuality in terms of childlike innocence. Since children are generally thought to be purely sensual creatures, Rousseau may be purposefully defending his own pleasure of the senses by aligning it with the natural and innocent inclination present in children. On the other hand, "sensualité d'enfant" might well refer to the complete and intensive satisfaction with which he savors the communications from his senses.

As he grew older, however, Jean-Jacques' imagination grew progressively weaker and more "effarouchée." As a result, very near the end of his life, he was forced to rely even more on his senses than on his imagination for diversion. "Hélas, c'est quand on commence à quitter sa dépouille qu'on est le plus offusqué," he wrote in the
Rêveries, (O. C., i, p. 1049). It was at this moment in his life, the spring of 1777, a year before his death, that he learned to understand and accept the natural world as he had never done before. His interest in botany having brought him closer to nature, he became aware of nature's distinctive characteristics, the wonderment of her colors, her fragrances, her myriad shapes. He saw "pour la première fois détailler le spectacle de la nature, que je n'avais guère contemplé jusqu'alors qu'en masse et dans son ensemble" (O. C., i, p. 1062). Nature, thus, entered a fresh and primarily untried phase. It lost its subservient role to imagination and rose to sovereignty as an influence in Rousseau's life. It now assumed the responsibility which imagination had, heretofore, fulfilled; consequently, the essence of diversion was now in the sense of rather than in meditation.

Mon imagination qui se refuse aux objets de peine laissoit mes sens se livrer aux impressions légères mais douces des objets environnants. Mes yeux se promenoient sans cesse de l'un à l'autre, et il n'étroit pas possible que dans une variété si grande il ne s'en trouvât qui les fixoient davantage et les arrêtoient plus longtemps (O. C., i, p. 1063).

Now serving the same function as imagination, that of deliverance from frustration and mental suffering, nature played a decisively more important role. A broken man who idealized nature, Jean-Jacques Rousseau discovered new solace in an old friend.
La nature des objets aide beaucoup à cette diversion et la rend plus séduisante. Les odeurs suaves, les vives couleurs, les plus élégantes formes semblent se disputer à l'envi le droit de fixer notre attention. Il ne faut qu'aimer le plaisir pour se livrer à des sensations si douces, et si cet effet n'a pas lieu sur tous ceux qui en sont frappés, c'est dans les uns faute de sensibilité naturelle et dans la pluspart que leur esprit trop occupé d'autres idées ne se livre qu'à la dérobée aux objets qui frappent leurs sens (O. C., i, p. 1063).

Thus, it becomes increasingly more evident that the physical environment carried very little persuasion, materially speaking, until the very end of Rousseau's life. His interest, knowledge, and perception of it rarely exceeded an ordinary, commonplace appreciation and understanding. His botanical interest grew out of his solitary life rather than out of a personal penchant for natural history. Unlike Thoreau, he did not take an active, even "pseudo-scientific" interest in plant study, but adopted it as a "passe-temps," unessential to self-realization. Owing to the kind of spiritual release and escape which "rêverie" provided, it was more advantageous for Jean-Jacques to rely on his imagination than on nature. Consequently, he both rejected and ignored many of nature's attributes and much of its potential influence upon his senses. However, after many years of suffering, and following the decline in strength of his imaginative faculties, and the advent of old age, he frequently turned from the world of fantasy and thought to the world of nature, and deliberately imbibed the odors, sounds, and sights of the outdoors.
Henry Thoreau's sensual response to nature's stimulation sent him searching for new and distinctive experiences in the world of nature. This was essential to him, for his understanding of himself depended to a great degree on his comprehending the exterior world both materially and symbolically. Unlike Jean-Jacques, Thoreau was neither running, nor hiding from reality; hence, he did not have to rely on his imagination for diversion. His greatest source of enjoyment and amusement was found in voluntary, personal contact with the earth.
CHAPTER VI.

NATURE AS SYMBOL

One large question troubled Thoreau during much of his literary career. Is nature matter or symbol? "When Thoreau left Concord and went to the woods," writes Charles Anderson, "he walked straight into a paradox. Is nature out there, a reality, or is it only a symbol" (Anderson, p. 93)? The origins of the problem seemed to lie in Emerson's influence on Thoreau. The young Thoreau was familiar with his mentor's major theoretical work *Nature*, in which Emerson expounded his theory of symbolic idealism. There, Emerson wrote that "the greatest delight which the fields and woods minister is the suggestion of an occult relation between man and the vegetable" (*Nature*, p. 18). He was suggesting what Lamartine had described in "Le Lac;" that between man and the physical world there exists a relationship inspired by the divine nature of the universe; nature and man are united in the oneness of the universe. Nature is sympathetic with man; it understands and incessantly works for "the profit of man" (*Nature*, p. 19). Or, in the words of Norman Foerster, "nature is moored to the soul" (Foerster, p. 67). This inherent relationship exists because both nature and man were created by the same divine power, and this power works
through nature to assist man in his mortal state. Nature, therefore, is an instrument designed to benefit man and to exploit his divine potential. By knowing it well, man may also come closer to understanding his Creator.

But how is it possible for nature to assist man? The answer to this question, Emerson felt, is found in nature's role as a symbol. All of the various parts of nature are considered to be symbolic of universal truths. Nature possesses eternal verities because of its purpose as an intermediary between God and man. It is the expositor of the divine mind. In other words, it contains what the Supreme Being would have to be known. It is the material manifestation of spiritual truths. "Every natural fact," wrote Emerson, "is a symbol of some spiritual fact" (Nature, p. 29). Human thought, for example, finds analogies in nature. Language—the expression of thought—is fundamentally linked to natural fact since the latter provides the substance for expressing ideas. "Every word which is used to express a moral or intellectual fact, if traced to its root, is found to be borrowed from some material appearance" (Nature, p. 28). A very general example would be the symbolic relation of a lion to courage or ferocity. The characteristics of bravery and anger evident in the lion are also present in man, and vice-versa. The concept of courage and ferocity, therefore, finds form in its analogy to the wild beast. "Every appearance in nature corresponds to some state of the mind, . . . ." (Nature, p. 29).
Consequently, the minutae of the natural world, since they are material manifestations of the spirit, demand inspection and deserve comprehension. Once man is attuned to the "voice" of nature, Emerson felt that "the universal spirit speaks to the individual, and strives to lead back the individual to it" (Nature, p. 56). "A god in ruins," man can then be restored to his godly potential.

As a plant upon the earth, so a man rests upon the bosom of God; he is nourished by unfailing fountains, and draws at his need inexhaustible power. Who can set bounds to the possibilities of man (Nature, p. 57)?

Thoreau's earliest tendency was to disagree with Emerson. He had long been sensitive to the beauty and imitable character of nature, having been prompted towards intimacy with it from childhood. Its "perfectness" was incontestable and unquestionably implied a divine creator. In the Week he wrote:

May we not see God? Are we to be put off and amused in this life, as it were with a mere allegory? Is not Nature, rightly read, that of which she is commonly taken to be the symbol merely (Week, p. 408)?

But he was going one step beyond his mentor's position by suggesting the role of the senses in "rightly reading" nature. He was not suggesting a pantheistic faith in God, but merely pointing out the majestic wonderment of the physical presence of the natural world. His exposure to both primitive and pastoral nature was leading him to question nature's subservience for man's profit. Is nature only present and
submissive for man's sake? He asked. Or is it an independent and often unsympathetic force which thrives on freedom and survives where no men exist? Because of his own involvement in the outdoors, and mainly because of his trips to Maine and Canada, he realized that nature was much more than what Emerson had led him to believe. He would ultimately put himself at a completely opposite pole from Emerson. Joel Porte points out that "for Emerson willingness to depart from the world of sense experience was clearly a sign of nobility and virtue" (Porte, p. 49). Thoreau was unable to follow Emerson's leap into absolute idealism, and so he was forced to look for nobility and virtue elsewhere. And yet, he did not totally deny the possibility of its being symbolic.

Different from the poets who founded their art on their visionary abilities, Thoreau turned a more practical eye towards nature. He felt that the artist himself was a craftsman and "changes the direction of Nature and makes her grow according to his idea" (J., VII, p. 10). He gave more responsibility to himself and to his association with nature. He found inspiration in "his relation" to the outdoors. Nature did not wear the colors of his spirit as Emerson had suggested. He wore the colors of its influence upon him. He struggled to understand and appreciate the tangible world. Each of nature's parts was important because it had a message to convey to him. Nature as matter symbolized many truths. He was intent in his desire to recognize these
truths and to accept nature as a guide to life and to art. He was less interested in describing visions than in pointing out the practical truths which exist in his environment.\textsuperscript{58} It was for this reason that he tended to approach nature with quasi-scientific interest. He was not oblivious to the fact that science was no way to know nature, as we have already seen in Chapter V. Yet, he purposefully avoided a superficial appreciation to reveal that within the natural world there are lessons to be learned in living. The more he realized that Emerson's theory of nature's "mouldability" lacked authenticity, the more he found it necessary to analyze the meaning behind its individuality.\textsuperscript{59} Its many parts, therefore, were symbolic of moral and artistic principles which would serve him in giving meaning to life and direction to his art. His purpose then was to apprehend nature's meaning and give it form by means of his own thoughts.

Thoreau early perceived in nature the symbol of patience, order and calm. "Nature never makes haste," he wrote in his \textit{Journal}; "her systems revolve at an even pace" (J., I, p. 92). The slow almost imperceptible maturation of buds stirred him and impressed upon him the need for less speed and more method in man's dealings and actions. The act of Spring occurs as if nature had an eternity to spend in bringing it about. By its patience, nature thus taught him to do things well, to be restful and to work without confusion.
Why . . . should man hasten as if anything less than eternity were allotted for the least deed? Let him consume never so many aeons, so that he go about the meanest task well, though it be but the paring of his nails (J., I, p. 92).

He also held nature up as a model of well-being and a cure for poor health. It became increasingly apparent to him as his animosity for society increased that nature was the only place where mental health was truly realized. Society, he felt, was sick and diseased. Personal and intimate contact with the physical environment promised rewards of sanity and vitality.

In society you will not find health, but in nature. You must converse much with the field and woods, if you would imbibe such health into your mind and spirit as you covet for your body (J., I, p. 306).

Thoreau implied with this accusation the destructive power of competition and conformity which thrive in the soil of social involvement. He renounced the harvests of such involvement as being too meagre for the time and effort required to bring them about. An individual cannot survive without greater spiritual nourishment.

Religion, on the other hand, (just as was the case with Rousseau) did not provide for his spiritual need because nature and religion were opposites. In the Natural History of Massachusetts he went so far as to scorn doctrines and priests, chiding their distance from the "natural man." He felt that they reflected the social sickness. Nature, then, was representative of the kind of health which one
could not find in "religion."

Methinks some creeds in vestries and churches do
forget the hunter wrapped in furs by the Great Slave
Lake, and that the Esquimaux sledges are drawn by
dogs, and in the twilight of the northern night the
hunter does not give over to follow the seal and wal-
rus on the ice. They are of sick and diseased imagi-
nations who would toll the world's knell so soon.
Cannot these sedentary sects do better than prepare
the shrouds and write the epitaphs of those other
busy living men (Nat. Hist., p. 105).

Later, when the warm fires of his friendship with
Emerson had cooled, he even turned his back on society in
general because he had had enough of "the rottenness of human
relations" (Days, p. 329). Nature, even more so, was in his
own terms, "another name for health" (J., V, p. 395).

In March of 1842, two months following his brother
John's death, Thoreau spoke of nature as a symbol of life.
The progressive and constant growth of moss and fungi on the
monuments of departed friends buoyed him up and instilled in
him a certain stoical spirit of acceptance and endurance.
The vegetable life was an aid in accepting death because it
was a reminder that time is a respecter of no man. It also
proved that the sad heart can be comforted in time and with
change. With the passage of time, nature could esthetically
transform inanimate symbols of death (the tombstones) into
living objects of beauty. It taught Thoreau the lesson that
"nature doth" with time "kindly heal every wound" (J., I,
p. 328).

The same year in the Natural History, Thoreau felt
that nature expresses a certain philosophic determination. He praised its disregard for opposition. He admired the poplar buds' refusal to cower to the menacing presence of frost, and their insistence to follow a natural inclination to sprout according to their season. Their "naked confidence" was inspirational. What he esteemed most was the fact that nature is not subject to discouragement, periodic emotional inertia, and ordinary defeat. "The 'winter of their discontent' never comes," he concluded (Natural History, p. 125).

In his search for principles on which he would base his literary creation, nature became a symbol of artistic perfection. Every natural form constituted absolute art. Thoreau found no greater achievement than the art of nature. An acorn, for example, is in itself an object of singular esthetic quality. Its form inspires principles of beauty. Thoreau recognized a balanced harmony in purpose and in design in the forms of leaves, trees, and flowers. He unhesitatingly raised them up as examples of pure art, unending in stimulation for creative work.

All nature is classic and akin to art. The sumach and pine and hickory which surround my house remind me of the most graceful sculpture. Sometimes their tops, or a single limb or leaf, seems to have grown to a distinct expression as if it were a symbol for me to interpret. Poetry, painting, and sculpture claim at once and associate with themselves those perfect specimens of the art of nature--leaves, vines, acorns, pine cones, etc. The critic must at last stand as mute though contented before a true poem as before an acorn or a vine leaf. The perfect work of art is received
again into the bosom of nature whence its material proceeded, and that criticism which can only detect its unnaturalness has no longer any office to fulfill (J., I, p. 380).

F. O. Matthiessen makes an interesting observation regarding Thoreau's search for true art. "When he tried to apply these principles to creation in literature," writes Matthiessen, Thoreau

... sometimes was content with saying that 'true art is but the expression of our love of nature.' But he often pushed to a rigorous extreme not merely the supremacy of nature over art and of content over form, but also that of the artist's life over his work" (American Renaissance, p. 154).

In January 1853, his ire raised against the pettiness of bickering individuals, Thoreau found strength from his close observation of natural phenomena. A sprouting bud, only recently drawn from the embryonic state by the warm spring sun, inspired independence and autonomy. It was a boost he needed.

May I lead my life the following year as innocently as they! May it be as fair and smell as sweet! ... How innocent are Nature's purposes. How unambitious! Her elections are Presidential. The springing and blossoming of this flower do not depend on the votes of men (J., IV, p. 461).

In the winter of 1855, when his health began visibly to wane, he envied nature's perennial rejuvenation. He coveted its frugality with all forms of existence. "In nature nothing is wasted. Every decayed leaf and twig and fibre is only the better fitted to serve in some other department, and all at last are gathered in her compost-
heap" (J., VIII, p. 110). Undoubtedly, Thoreau was trying to draw parallels in his own life. He was probably searching for ways in which he might use and might have used his own life more "economically." Nature had inspired this theme many years earlier, at the time he was writing Walden. Now only recently published, and having previously undergone considerable revising, Walden concerned itself with this very question. No wonder the question was in the forefront of his mind. He had written in his best known work that the value of an object could easily be assessed by the amount of "life" one spent in procuring the object. With his life now threatened by poor health, he was ever more cognizant of "economy." "The cost of a thing is the amount of what I will call life which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the long run" (Walden, p. 34). Thoreau placed a sacred price on life and nature helped in inspiring wise use of it.

Thoreau sometimes grew impatient with the way men handled their lives. He found them faltering in their ability to make life meaningful. They have to struggle to give purpose to their existence, he thought; but he did not find the same true for nature. At least it defied any thoughts of insignificance in living. Every day, it seemed, nature accepted life with balanced interest and faith. "Though life is trivial and handselled," he wrote in his Journal, "Nature is holy and heroic. With what infinite faith and promise and
moderation begins each new day! It is only a little after 3 o'clock, and already there is evidence of morning in the sky" (J., II, p. 384). Thoreau was sceptical, but certainly not pessimistic. He did not preclude any possibility for change in man and his approach to life. (Did not his own demand for independence preclude any pessimism over man's condition?) Rather, he criticized constructively the languid and unhealthy attitude with which he accepts the mortal condition; consequently, man's need for nature is great. A tonic for the soul, it provides vitality and inspiration. Without it, one could grow stagnate. It is itself the embodiment of the human condition, with the exception that it is self-rejuvenating and ever dynamic. "We can never have enough of Nature," he noted in the next to the last chapter of Walden.

We must be refreshed by the sight of inexhaustible vigor, vast and Titanic features, the sea-coast with its wrecks, the wilderness with its living and its decaying trees... We need to witness our own limits transgressed, and some life pasturing freely where we never wander (Walden, p. 350).

Man's tendency to exalt himself above nature and to see himself as a paragon of virtue troubled and even irritated him. When viewed alongside the "pristine vigor" of the fields and woods, mankind, he felt, did not display a very pleasant picture. He questioned the wisdom in naming mountains, lakes, streams and other such objects after humans whose lives were rarely as representative and pure. In his
view, "the moral aspect of nature is a jaundice reflected from man" (J., I, p. 265). His own experience had proved to him the presence of moral values in nature. The "white water-lily," for example, was an "emblem" of purity, and its scent suggested it to him. It was symbolic of the kind of moral growth available to man.

Growing in stagnant and muddy water, it bursts up so pure and fair to the eye and so sweet to the scent, as if to show us what purity and sweetness reside in, and can be extracted from, the slime and muck of the earth (J., VI, p. 352).

Thoreau associated this capacity for moral growth with man's need for direction and purpose in his life. Nature was again symbolic to him. "If Nature can compound this fragrance still annually, I shall believe her still full of vigor, and that there is virtue in man, too, who perceives and loves it" (J., VI, p. 352).

Thoreau was not a blind idealist, although he felt that nature served as a means to an end. He found it especially valuable when it worked for the good of man. He could not deny that its true beauty and force were to be found in the way it complements the human life. In fact, it was this attitude which made him immune, or nearly immune, to the curious glances and cruel remarks which followed him as he walked the streets of Concord. He was content spending his life in nature and in nature study because he saw that his association with the earth drew him out of himself. He found principles in nature which challenged his own. He was
determined to incorporate them into his life and make them his. "So long as I find here the only real elysium, I cannot hesitate in my choice," he wrote fondly of the outdoors (J., IX, p. 121). To live fully and deliberately was his goal. In effect, writing was only secondary, and so was nature. This is why he could say that "man is all in all, Nature nothing, but as she draws him out and reflects him" (J., IX, p. 121).

If we turn to Rousseau, it becomes evident that the use of nature as a symbol during the "American Renaissance" of Thoreau's time is far removed from Jean-Jacques' own use of the word. It is true that the school of poetic idealism inspired by Emerson had its deepest roots in European literature. And should one want to investigate the role which Jean-Jacques has played in the development of European literary thought, one might find a distant, but curious relationship to the school. Nonetheless, he did not branch out in the direction of platonic idealism.

Rousseau understood nature in its ordinary material sense. His interest tended toward the concrete, the effect of the tangible on the spirit. In this sense, he finds himself on common ground with Thoreau. For, as we saw in Chapter V, both men, irrespective of their differences in esthetics, were greatly affected by nature's influence on their senses.

Rousseau also recognized that in the physical world the order and harmony, the beauty and vitality present there
are evidences of a divine creator. Yet, he was not a pan-
theist, in any sense of the word. Nature inspired adoration
and prayer, but it did not promise tangible communion with
the Divine. In this respect, Jean-Jacques is again similar
to Thoreau.

Je n'ai jamais pu croire que Dieu m'ordonnât sous
peine de l'enfer, d'être savant. J'ai donc refermé
tous les livres. Il en est un seul ouvert à tous les
yeux, c'est celui de la nature. C'est dans ce grand
et sublime livre que j'apprends à servir et adorer son
divin auteur. Nul n'est excusable de n'y pas lire,
parmi qu'il parle à tous les hommes une langue intel-
ligible à tous les esprits (Emile, p. 378).

Both men also believed that nature's presence leads man
closer to God than does organized religion.

Unlike Thoreau however, Jean-Jacques did not inten-
tionally search for symbolic meaning in the component parts
of a flower or a twig. The mere presence of greenery, peaks,
and streamlets was sufficient to cause an awareness of a Su-
preme Being and to promote an understanding of a divine pur-
pose to the mortal condition. Because of its divine source,
nature was logically a worthy object for consideration and
comparison. Its presence was inspirational, particularly in
inspiring ethical principles. Like Thoreau, but in a much
less intellectual sense, Jean-Jacques used nature as a model
for a very general esthetic standard. He based his "esthetic"
on its harmony with ethics, for example, what is good is
beautiful. Nature was thus a symbol of moderation, of bal-
ance, of "bon goût."
Rousseau only rarely referred to the outdoors in this very generalized symbolic way. These few times were primarily in reference to what was good or bad taste. He had no reservations as to the superiority of nature's creations over those of men; yet, he acknowledged man as "le roi de la terre" (Emile, p. 336). Even so, he regarded the natural world as a model and guide for men in their efforts to create items of beauty: having "du bon goût." Unlike man, nature, he felt, has remained in most cases in its primitive state as divinely created. Because of this esthetic and ethical purity, it is worthy of emulation and imitation. He could not resist mocking the inferior taste of men who had deviated from nature's way and who lived luxuriously in society. He ridiculed them because of their tendency to be garish and gaudy, explaining that "les hommes ... ne font rien de beau que par imitation. Tous les vrais modèles du goût," he said "sont dans la nature" (Emile, p. 425).

He again lashed out rather vehemently in La Nouvelle Héloïse against the pretended superiority of human, artistic ingenuity. The human desire for embellishment, he noted, destroys natural beauty. By his efforts to improve upon it, man ruins nature. The garden, especially the rigid, symmetrical designs of the classical gardens inspired by André Le Nôtre, he found inferior to natural beauty in almost all details (one exception would be the English garden with its attempt to assimilate natural growth and distribution and
which Julie cultivates at Clarens). In his estimation, men
tend to display an exterior façade of "grandeur" because of
their inner misery and frustration. An elaborate garden
only reflects their emotional discomfiture and boredom in
life, their deviation from natural beauty really being noth-
ing more than a reflection of the depravity of the present
social condition.

A ne consulter que l'impression la plus naturelle,
il sembleroit que pour dédaigner l'éclat et le luxe on
a moins besoin de modération que de goût. La simétrie
et la régularité plait à tous les yeux. L'image du
bien-être et de la félicité touche le coeur humain qui
en est avide: mais un vain appareil qui ne se rap-
porte ni à l'ordre ni au bonheur et n'a pour objet que
de frapper les yeux, quelle idée favorable à celui qui
l'étale peut-il exciter dans l'esprit du spectateur?
L'idée du goût? Le goût ne paroit-il pas cent fois
mieux dans les choses simples que dans celles qui sont
offusquées de richesse. L'idée de la comodite? Y
a-t-il rien de plus incommode que le faste? L'idée
de la grandeur? C'est précisement le contraire. ...
O homme petit et vain, montre-moi ton pouvoir, je te
montrerais ta misère (O. C., ii, pp. 546-47):

Like Thoreau, who marveled at the inimitable grace
and finish of a snowflake, impressed that nature does not im-
itate or monotonously repeat itself, Rousseau was content to
find the substance of his "esthetics" in nature's moderation
and simplicity. Natural beauty was the antithesis of opu-
ulence and gaudiness. "Plus nous nous éloignons du maître
[nature]," he said,"plus nos tableaux sont défigurés"
(Emile, p. 425).

Jean-Jacques' attention to flowers, plants and wild-
life, however, had little bearing on his use of nature as a
symbol. Nature as an interest was secondary to his writing, though he may not have wanted it this way. He spent most of his time defending his ideas and attacking those which opposed his own. Nature study was little more than a solace to his solitary life. The meadows and fields possessed no hidden messages, and if they did he was not interested in searching out their meaning.

Using nature as a symbol did not demand living in nature, nor being truly familiar with the natural environment. Jean-Jacques candidly admitted that he could get along equally well in a dungeon, alone with his thoughts, as on an island surrounded by greenery (although the latter would be preferable). It goes without saying that he did not find the same satisfaction and rewards in outdoor life as did Thoreau. In effect, he did not enjoy nature as much as solitude.

It is because of this difference that there is a big disparity in Rousseau's use of the natural world as a symbol and Thoreau's use. Thoreau studied nature because he felt he needed it to express his ideas. "My thought," he wrote, "is a part of the meaning of the world, and hence I use a part of the world as a symbol to express my thought" (J., X, p. 410). He felt that his thoughts were part of the oneness of the universe. Such was not the case for Rousseau. He found his thought in infinite sympathy with the natural order of things, but his use of nature as a metaphor or simile was certainly not related to idealistic monism or his limited interest in
physical nature.

As Rolf Tobiassen points out in his book *Nature et Nature Humaine dans l'Emile*, the word "nature" can be used by Rousseau with considerable disregard to specific meanings. On the one hand, he may use it to define the natural world of mountains, rivers, and plants, while on the other, he may have it stand for God, "l'Auteur de toute chose." Quite frequently, as was true of most eighteenth century writers, he uses it to refer to human nature (or instinct) and often to the universe with its system of natural laws.

As Lester G. Crocker illustrates in his book *Nature and Culture*, the word enjoyed a complex and infinitely flexible employment during the French Enlightenment. It was elevated to a sophisticated philosophic level, aimed at defining the essence, rights, and duties of man. It was primarily employed in terms of ethics.

This is the way in which Rousseau tends to use the word. It is a very general symbol for what is "right" and "good," "correct" and "divine." The meaning is rarely limited to a reference to the natural world. That is, Rousseau rarely draws analogies between human values and the natural principles evident to Thoreau in the outdoors. Nature as matter played a very minor role with respect to its emblematic value. Thus, the word for Rousseau was used in a far more abstract sense than with Thoreau. There was little relation between nature as symbol and nature as matter.
A good example of this use is in Emile where nature is held up as the human goal. The struggle in the development (or "education") of the individual is to remain as close as possible to nature, or to whatever is natural. Our make-up, Rousseau notes, is largely determined by three influences: "les hommes, les choses et la nature." But only "la nature ne dépend point de nous." Man should, therefore, have one goal in the "education" of the individual. "Quel est ce but? C'est celui même de la nature" (Emile, p. 7).

Any attempt to make an individual into something other than he is "naturally," that is, to change the very substance of his individuality, is to go counter to what Rousseau felt was the right of "nature." By imposing arbitrary values on the individual, men of an "un-natural society" thwart the true development of the personality. "Nature" is, therefore, unable to follow its divinely ordained course, obliged to bow before artificial principles. Virgil Topazio has called it turning "god-man" into "man-man." In effect, this is what Jean-Jacques meant when he said that human interference with the natural order of things leads ultimately to decadence. "Tout est bien sortant des mains de l'Auteur des choses, tout dégénère entre les mains de l'homme" (Emile, p. 5).

In La Nouvelle Héloïse we have another poignant example of what Rousseau intended when he used the word. Here, he underlines the devious ways of a nature-divorced society, pointing to the contrasting values present there and those
which belong to "nature." Julie is deeply in love with Saint-Freux and wants to accept his proposal for marriage. Her father refuses because of Saint-Freux's inferior social status (he is a "roturier" or commoner). He wants his daughter to marry into the noble or elite class. Jean-Jacques takes this opportunity to point to the "un-natural" standard which Julie's father holds to be of the highest value. He suggests the dis-service which such a standard does for the family, suggesting ultimately that this kind of standard undermines the very foundation of the true society--the family. He thus emphasizes the inhuman, ungodlike attitude which, he feels, has permeated the value structure of eighteenth century society. He therefore condemns present society as being "un-natural."

"Ah, ma Cousine," writes Julie to her cousin Claire, "quels monstres d'enfer sont ces préjugés, qui dépravent les meilleurs coeurs, et font taire à chaque instant la nature" (O. C., ii, p. 177). Thus, "nature" is again associated with what is "right" and "divine."

Since Jean-Jacques used the term "nature" in this very abstract sense more often than he did in the literal sense, it becomes apparent that his now famous call for a "retour à la nature" was perhaps not for the same reasons as was Thoreau's.

Thoreau was a strong advocate of the natural way of life. He urged greater simplicity or "economy" in living, calling to mind the burden which luxuries impose upon man. His plea was to find oneself and to discover life. "However
mean your life is, meet it and live it," he wrote in the conclusion of *Walden*, "do not shun it and call it hard names. It is not so bad as you are" (*Walden*, p. 361). It was this latter call for personal exploration which encouraged him to advocate a more sincere understanding and appreciation of the natural world. He felt that nature was invaluable in bringing about this moral reconstitution. He hoped to cause an awareness of the rapid pace which men were (and are) following towards alienation from the natural environment. He actually, at one time in his career, desired to incorporate the natural simplicity of the Indian into his own life. He envied the primitive's closeness to the earth, longing for the same personal contact with nature that he had. He, however, recognized definite disadvantages in living too primitive. He was not blind to the merits of some aspects of social development. Like the "Bon Bramin" of Voltaire, he preferred to be educated and miserable in his knowledge than ignorant and living in dumb bliss. But, despite his awareness of the Indian's shortcomings, he never altered his views on the necessity of closer association with nature, and a natural way of life. He was personally so much closer to the physical environment that, in contrast, he makes Rousseau appear almost disinterested in nature.

Jean-Jacques' plea was less personal and much more universal. It was a call for social reform, for change in the actual social structure and environment. It was a per-
sonal plea for a "habitable" society. Contrary to what Voltaire had said, he was not advocating a literal return to primitivism. The author of Candide, having read the "Premier Discours," was one of the first to deform our author's thought and to imply that he wanted to return civilization to its most primitive stage. "On n'a jamais employé tant d'esprit à vouloir nous rendre bêtes," wrote Voltaire; "il prend envie de marcher à quatre pattes, quand on lit votre ouvrage."

When contrasted with Thoreau's emphasis on literal involvement in nature, Jean-Jacques' plea loses its "primitiveness" and reveals the insignificance of nature in its author's doctrine on social and moral decadence.

Rousseau's outdoor activity, his interest in botany, and his general interest in natural beauty appear to have had little effect on his desires to restore "naturalness" to the social order. The employment of the word "nature" in this particular context was not related to the natural framework of mountains, lakes or plants. All things considered, Rousseau's use of the word was not stimulated by an intimate acquaintance with nature as matter.
CHAPTER VII.

NATURE: A MEANS TO AN END

Closely associated with nature is the notion of solitude. Nature is often considered the sanctum wherein solitude is found. There, the confusion and concern of society are lost and the tranquility of silence rediscovered.

When we speak of solitude we mean the state of mind in which one finds himself when he is freed from the entanglements and restraints of the exterior world. It is a sensation of inner peace, a retreat into the self, but it can also mean loneliness and melancholy. Solitude is, therefore, frequently linked with the solitary life. That is to say that in preference to social involvement, one alienates himself from friends and associates to be alone. However, self-isolation is not necessary to achieve what is desired in solitude. An individual may pull himself from others to gain access to a simple place where he can periodically meditate undisturbed and alone, only to return to his relations with others a little later. One can even withdraw into himself in the midst of social activity, pulling himself ever inward, leaving the tumultuous world outside for a sanctum inside. There, as well as in physical isolation, the mind may be free and tranquil, removed from time and space.
There can be no doubt that for Rousseau and Thoreau solitude became a greater and more pressing need as each was drawn into his literary career. What is of interest to us is the role which nature played in prompting these authors to withdraw from society and to seek the quiet of solitude.

In a letter to his sister Helen, the same year he graduated from Harvard (1837), and before he had begun his Journal, Thoreau expressed a need to be free. Independence, he felt, was the only avenue to self-knowledge which he desired. "You know," he wrote to his sister, "we have hardly done our own deeds, thought our own thoughts, or lived our own lives hitherto. For a man to act himself, he must be perfectly free. . ." (Shores, p. 51).

At twenty, when he began to write in his new journal, his first thoughts were of solitude and discovery of himself.

To be alone I find it necessary to escape the present—I avoid myself. How could I be alone in the Roman emperor's chamber of mirrors? I seek a garret. The spiders must not be disturbed, nor the floor swept, nor the lumber arranged. The Germans say, "Es ist alles wahr wodurch du besser wirst"68 (J., I, p. 3).

However, it took approximately eight years before the urge culminated in his retirement to Walden Pond. Yet, there is no telling the number of times he found moments to sit and gather his thoughts, finding himself in occasional moments of solitude.

* Sherman Paul notes in The Shores of America that Thoreau did not write about solitude until he was in his late
twenties. The idea itself was of popular interest during Thoreau's youth. According to Paul, it had been incorporated into the literary circles of the day by the romantic poets and by a treatise _Über die Einsamkeit_ written by Johann von Zimmerman, a Swiss contemporary of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Henry S. Canby points out in his biography of Thoreau that the author was in possession of an English translation of selections from Zimmermann's work. Now, it is hard to evaluate the kind of influence which the work had on Thoreau, but Canby feels that it may have prompted him to go to Walden Pond. He adds, however, that the book itself would have had no influence on the outgrowth of the Walden experience.

In any case, three years after his brother John's tragic, premature death, Thoreau decided to seclude himself at Walden Pond. Here he produced his first major work, and perhaps the major portion of _Walden_. It is in _The Week_, his first work, and in part a literary monument to the memory of his brother, that he defined the reason for his withdrawal. To penetrate deeply into the self, he explained, to tear away the façade which hides the true man, to gather one's feelings and values for reappraisal, a man must retire from the routine of daily existence and start searching. The quiet of "solitude and silence," he felt, were most conducive to this kind of exploration.
There are times when we have had enough even of our Friends, when we begin inevitably to profane one another, and must withdraw religiously into solitude and silence, the better to prepare ourselves for a loftier intimacy. Silence is the ambrosial night in the intercourse of Friends, in which their sincerity is recruited and takes deeper root (Week, p. 288).

It was not a question of escaping from problems and people, but one of spiritually rejuvenating the "self." It was an intellectual goal of self-purification, of shedding the old unknown self for a new, discovered self. It is for this reason that Thoreau's retirement to Walden can not and should not be associated with a desire to withdraw because of de-spondency or melancholy. He was not so deeply saddened by his brother John's death, or by the failure of his romance with Ellen Sewall that isolation from others seemed the only possible route left to follow. He put it plainly when he said that his purpose was "to transact some private business with the fewest obstacles" (Walden, p. 21). Faithful to his statement, he did return to live in Concord after the business was transacted. He was not trying to escape because he could not live with and around others. The pleasures of Thoreau's solitary living should be more closely aligned with his penchant for scholarship and intellectuality, as Sherman Paul points out. At least initially,

Solitude was merely one of the needs of the literary man. . . . It was the condition of meditation, or withdrawing from the world in order "'to view the world moving within ourselves. . .!'" (Shores, p. 41).

Transcendentalism, with its emphasis on introspection,
social and literary involvement, seems to have been at the foundation of Thoreau's retreat. Although Emerson felt that the scholar should be active in society, ready to influence its direction, Thoreau placed solitude ahead of social action. He could not act before he had found himself. Even so, and despite his many lectures favoring abolition of slavery and decrying nineteenth century mercantilism, he was less a man of social action than of social protest. He is most remembered for his extreme acts, notes Matthiessen, but the "heart of Thoreau's revolt" was in his demand for personal freedom available to all. Thus, his own demand, realized by his insistence on an unencumbered and independent life, was the expression of his protest. Solitude was his way of practicing what he preached. Nevertheless, he did serve the community's interest by his surveying, pencil making and studying of nature. Still, his personal, intellectual and literary wants dominated his service to the community. Thoreau's purpose, in the eyes of Charles Anderson, "was to express himself not in action but in words . . . , to illuminate the quest of a life lived deliberately in accordance with nature and the spirit" (Anderson, p. 44).

But what of nature's role? Was it not a force drawing Thoreau toward a pastoral retreat? Thoreau seems to answer this question himself several years later in *Walden*. His focus on physical nature, he informs us, was an arbitrary outgrowth of his interest in finding solitude and not
vice versa! He candidly admits that after a few weeks in
seclusion at the pond he suddenly experienced sensations of
loneliness. These sensations led him, quite unexpectedly,
as he puts it, to discover nature's inner voice and the
correspondence which seemed to exist between man and the
natural world.

In the midst of a gentle rain while these thoughts
prevailed, I was suddenly sensible of such sweet and
beneficent society in Nature, in the very pattering of
the drops, and in every sound and sight around my house,
an infinite and unaccountable friendliness all at once
like an atmosphere sustaining me, as made the fancied
advantages of human neighborhood insignificant, and I
have never thought of them since. Every little pine
needle expanded and swelled with sympathy and be-
friended me. I was so distinctly made aware of the
presence of something kindred to me, even in scenes
which we are accustomed to call wild and dreary, and
also that the nearest of blood to me and humanest was
not a person nor a villager, that I thought no place
could ever be strange to me again (Walden, p. 146).

If, as this passage bears out, nature was not ini-
tially the total motive directing him toward seclusion, it
certainly became a prominent reason for his remaining aloof
from society. If he was not at first interested in confining
his attention to nature alone, it was not long thereafter be-
fore nature study began serving a very important end. Since
Thoreau was primarily interested in realizing his own unex-
ploited potential, he did not hesitate in experimenting with
tools which would be useful to this end; consequently, he
discovered the power of nature. It was the particular in-
fluence which the verdant country and wildlife around Con-
cord had upon him that sent him searching for unlimited new
adventure in his relations with the natural world. "My body is all sentient," he wrote, thus declaring the reason for his interest in the play of his senses. "To perceive freshly, with fresh senses, is to be inspired" (J., VIII, p. 44), he noted, rendering implicit the meaning of his unending intimacy with nature. F. O. Matthiessen sums up well Thoreau's relation with nature when he writes that Thoreau wanted "to study the exact evidence of his senses, since he believed that only through their concrete reports could he project his inner life" (Matthiessen, pp. 89-90). This also accounts for his abiding fidelity in the pioneer spirit of exploration and discovery; he purposefully tried to avoid over-familiarity with nature for fear of learning nothing new. This sentiment obviously accounts for his later frustration, which he experienced when he felt himself being drawn into scientific observations because of his inability to "perceive freshly" in age, what youth had given him so abundantly.

Thus, it is unfair to quickly exclude nature from Thoreau's purpose for searching for solitude, even when it is evident that it was not the earliest factor prompting him to go into seclusion. We concur with Sherman Paul that "the enjoyment of solitude was a sign of intellectual distinction more than an opportunity for communion with nature" (Shores, p. 41). Even so, it must be conceded that once his relationship with nature was well established, this relationship was
without a doubt one of the primary motivating influences which kept Thoreau from freely involving himself with others in society.

Even after 1850, when nature nearly became an obsession, Thoreau did not intend it to be a protective tunnel leading him away from others, or a shield against adversity. His motive was always self-understanding and not nature per se. Such a motive required uninterrupted exploration; hence solitude was the only truly effective alternative to society. He felt no "weariness of the world," as Matthiessen emphasizes, but wanted only to fully savor life--his own life. Thus, the hills, streams and wildlife were the means to this end.

Let us turn now to our Swiss author. Happiness was throughout Rousseau's life associated with pastoral life in the country. Even when he was forced out of his "paradis" at Bossey owing to the episode of the combs, he consistently identified his former happiness with the "champêtre" setting in which he found it. Likewise, at Charmettes, he related his "jouissances" to the natural framework in which he and Mme de Warens lived and played.

Yet, can we rely on his romantic identification with nature to express his final intention for solitude in seclusion? That is, did his first idyllic experiences in nature determine his later decision to withdraw from society and enter into isolation in a natural setting? This is obviously
a very difficult question to answer since most of our information regarding his seclusion and his feelings for nature comes from Rousseau's own writings made after his retirement from social life, when he was attempting to vindicate his decision to withdraw from society. It is therefore difficult to separate fact from feeling. There can be little doubt that Jean-Jacques' retirement into the French countryside in 1756 had a definite effect upon his attitude towards nature from that point forward. The circumstances leading him to isolate himself from Parisian society certainly made the country appear very pleasant, even if it was only a refuge from the boisterousness of city life. It just so happens that these circumstances tend to explain the very reason behind the retirement and also bring light on the role which nature played in drawing Jean-Jacques into solitude and isolation.

At times Rousseau would have us believe that he had a natural propensity for solitude. In a letter to Malesherbes in 1762, following his decision to move from Paris and live away from his close friends, he confided that his personality was such that he was naturally prone to solitude. "Je suis né avec un amour naturel pour la solitude ..." (O. C., i, p. 1131), he wrote, adding that it had only grown in intensity as his relationship with others had grown worse. Considering the violent quarrels which he had with Diderot and Mme d'Epinay, it is not unlikely that he was trying to jus-
tify his decision to leave active social involvement behind. He pointed to the past as a "bile noire" eating away at his heart. Contrast, he said, what I have produced since my entrance into solitude, and you will find "une certaine sérénité d'âme." In effect, he was blaming society and most of those in it for his penchant for solitude, a contradiction, unfortunately, to what he had just said.

As late as the composition of the sixth "Promenade" in 1777, he confessed a certain human satisfaction in being near his peers and a part of their company. Left to himself, he felt that he could have found in the center of the social order the balance between his need and desire for people, and the psychological necessity and simple pleasure of solitude. Here, he seemed to be harmonizing his "amour naturel pour la solitude" with his poor relationship with the members of society. That is, he felt he could have adjusted himself to society if those in society would have tolerated his presence. In effect, what he searched for in tranquility could be found in the midst of his associates and the welcome din of their activities. It was not, therefore, complete isolation which obsessed him.

Si ma figure et mes traits étoient aussi parfaitement inconnus aux hommes que le sont mon caractère et mon naturel, je vivrois encor sans peine au milieu d'eux. Leur société même pourroit me plaire tant que je leur serois parfaitement étranger. Livré sans contrainte à mes inclinations naturelles, je les aimerois encore s'ils ne s'occupoient jamais de moi. J'exercerois sur eux une bienveillance universelle et parfaitement désintéressée: mais sans former jamais...
d'attachement particulier, et sans porter le joug
d'aucun devoir, je ferois envers eux librement et de moi-
même, tout ce qu'ils ont tant de peine à faire incités
par leur amour-propre et contraints par toutes leurs loix
(C. C., i, p. 1057).

In some of the autobiographical fragments which have
been uncovered since his death, there is evidence again that
Rousseau did not desire to withdraw from society for reasons
of interest in nature. It becomes more and more apparent
that something other than a personal interest in nature en-
couraged him to withdraw. In one of the fragments, he accused
his poor health, stating that it impeded a good rapport be-
tween him and others. If he had not been prone to illness,
he felt, a healthy social interaction would have been pos-
sible. "Je ne suis solitaire que parce que je suis malade et
paresseux; il est presque assuré que si j'étois sain et actif
je ferois co[m]e les autres" (C. C., i, p. 1125).

Obviously, Rousseau has not been consistent. How-
ever, if we penetrate a little further back to about the time
of his first "Discours" the real purpose becomes clearer.

After 1751, just following the publication of the
Discours sur les sciences et les arts, Jean-Jacques' decision
was uniquely associated with the depravity of the present
social order. He had made a gallant effort to break into the
social world four years after his love affair with Madame de Warr-
ens ended in 1738. But this attempt resulted only in frequent
disillusionment. Even his stay in Venice as the secretary to
the Comte de Montaigu, ambassador to Venice from France,
failed for him. And yet in the eyes of critics Gagnebin and Raymond this attempt to make good was "un cas exceptionnel" in his life. For the first time, write the two critics, Rousseau "s'efforce de sortir de soi, d'agir et de se faire sa place dans le monde" (O. C., i, p. 1392). Even so, these struggles, and the many others which followed, often ended in failure and frustration. Ultimately, Jean-Jacques turned his frustration towards the "opposition," denouncing the social order and those within it, and blaming them for his lack of success.

Such attacks on society as those in his first and second "Discours" were unquestionably motivated by his failure to integrate into society. J. H. Broome confirms this in his book *Rousseau: A Study of his Thought*. He writes that "the line of thought is thoroughly comprehensible as an explosion of feelings of frustration resulting from the failure of his earlier projects" (Broome, p. 19). Jean Starobinski would agree, but he also asks if the accusations were not initially caused by Rousseau's general make-up and not just by his failures. True, Rousseau was defending his own reasons for moving outside of society, but, says Starobinski, "n'a-t-il pas forgé des principes et des explications historiques à seule fin d'excuser et de légitimer son étrange vie, sa timidité, sa maladresse, son humeur inégale..." (Transparence, p. 42)? In other words, the volume of Rousseau's protests was proportionately related to the in-
tensity of his desire to get out of society. His protests would justify the exit he was looking for, and so the louder he voiced them, the sooner he could justify his departure.

Virgil Topazio, in his article on Rousseau and 76 Pirandello, would concur with Starobinski. He feels that Jean-Jacques repudiated society because the social order forced him to betray his inner nature. "A social life was a life of 'lies' constantly contributing to the incrustations that concealed the human soul from his fellow-beings and eventually himself" (Topazio, p. 1580). In other words, Rousseau left the social context in which he found himself in order to preserve himself. According to Topazio, it was romantic egocentricity which forced our author to alienate himself from those who were so different from himself. "Such a person," he concludes, "obviously would have more to lose by having his 'self' lost among the 'non selves' poured out by the social mould" (Topazio, p. 1582).

Thus, although he wrote that he was "fait pour être le meilleur ami qui fut jamais," Rousseau was unable to accept and endure the obligations of social intercourse. Even though he said he wanted to be close to people, it was almost impossible for him to sustain long-term working relations with them. Solitude thus permitted him to live with his ineptness. It is the conclusion of Gagnebin and Raymond 77 that Rousseau was basically "un homme insociable." Their contention is that "un homme qui brûle de vivre dans 'une
société selon son coeur, mais qui est toujours prêt à renoncer à tout si les exigences de sa tendresse ne sont pas satisfaites est un homme insociable" (O. C., i, p. 1288).

In our view, Rousseau's decision to separate himself from his contemporaries was a psychological urge related to his ineptitude for interaction within a social context. He gave expression to his impulse by denouncing the rest of humanity, which he felt had fallen from its natural condition to an unnatural state. He defended his position by setting himself up as an example of what the "natural man" was like, whereby he hoped to attract as many as possible of his human counterparts into recognizing that separatism was the only way of preserving the natural self in an unnatural milieu. He further hoped that his Contrat Social would provide an avenue by which society might return to a more natural state and the natural man might find his way to greater self-fulfillment and freedom.

If Rousseau found a valid answer to his isolationism by finding in society the evils which inhibit man from realizing his full potentialities, it does not mean that the criticism which he made of society was not, or, for that matter, is not, valid and useful. On the contrary, it represented a rather humane observation of the progressive alienation of the individual from the natural environment. Today his accusations are very contemporary and appeal to us by their plea to discover one's identity and to protect and maintain that
identity in a world of greater and greater pressure for conformity. Like Thoreau, his ultimate influence is humanistic, as is reflected in his concern for man and freedom, particularly the freedom of the individual.

It is apparent, nevertheless, that Rousseau had no sincere intention of divorcing himself from active community life because of an inherent love for nature. Solitude was first and foremost a personal need; the decision to leave society for life in nature was really an outgrowth of his personal animosity toward eighteenth century society. In short, his decision was an ethical decision rather than an esthetic or intellectual one. Nature played a very minor, even insignificant, role in his retreat from society.

Thus neither Rousseau nor Thoreau retired from active lives in society because of nature, but because of their need for solitude which they found in nature. The natural world was never an end in itself. We must be careful to note, however, that after Thoreau became more familiar with the tangible advantages of knowing nature "deliberately," the swamps and ponds around Concord were reason enough to disengage himself from the entanglements of social life. Curiously enough, however, unlike Rousseau, who wished for complete isolation, Thoreau desired solitude only periodically. On the other hand, like Rousseau, he was called a misanthrope and a hermit. However, both men scorned the titles and, in our estimation, proved themselves otherwise.
After the Walden experiment, Thoreau rarely secluded himself again. Living at home, he was in contact with many family members and friends. Rousseau, unlike Thoreau, became more and more reclusive as he grew older and the persecution grew more burdensome. He literally sought an escape in his retirement. By doing so, he made it appear that nature was the real motive for his progressive denunciation of society. This has perhaps been the reason for the consistent identification which time has made with him and nature.
CONCLUSION

It is not unusual to find divergent opinions regarding Rousseau's importance and significance as a nature-lover. This is understandable since there exists a prominent paradox between what he said in his writings and what he did in actual life. On the one hand, he accused society of forcing him to withdraw into nature, while on the other, he implied that his affection for the outdoors was fundamentally a part of his personality. It is only when one examines closely his true relationship with nature that it becomes obvious what role nature really played in Rousseau's life.

Concerning his understanding and appreciation of the natural world, many critics have taken Jean-Jacques' writings "au pied de la lettre," concluding unequivocally that Rousseau was a great sensitive admirer of the outdoors. In effect, he has been traditionally accepted as the eighteenth century prophet of nature, who restored the beauty and wonder of the natural world to that otherwise cold and rationalistic age. Some have methodically concluded that Rousseau's love for the outdoors is apparent because of his descriptions and praise of "la vie champêtre." Others, however, with less restraint, laud what they feel is an indisputable affinity for the natural world. William Hudson, for one, finds that Jean-Jacques' place "as the first interpreter of wonder and glory
of the Alps is incontestable.\textsuperscript{80} Another, Alfred Biese, writes that Rousseau was the real exponent of rapture for "romantic scenery in general."\textsuperscript{81} What is more, Biese finds that Jean-Jacques actually preferred nature to humanity, his love for the outside world being such that it alienated him from common communication and association with other human beings. "A morbid impulse to flee from them [human beings]," he writes, "was always present as a negative element in the background of his love for her [nature]," (Biese, p. 268).

Now Paul Van Tieghem and Daniel Horne approach Rousseau's penchant with greater caution. Both subscribe to the feeling that "l'intérêt sentimental," and not nature, was at the base of Rousseau's popularity and subsequent greatness. Both admit, nonetheless, that before Jean-Jacques, the place which eighteenth century French novels gave to nature was "presque insignifiante; de rares phrases, et très vagues."\textsuperscript{82} Nevertheless, Havelock Ellis is openly critical and suggests that "it can scarcely be said that Rousseau admired aspects of nature which had never been admired before."\textsuperscript{83} In fact, some critics, such as Claire-Eliane Engel,\textsuperscript{84} would venture to suggest that he was even insincere when speaking of his affection for primitive and crassy settings.

Though some critics now attempt to dispel some of the myths shrouding Thoreau's own involvement in the outdoors, few would disagree that he was one of America's truly great naturalists--naturalist, not only in the scientific
sense of the word, for he was a little of this too, but in the sense that he literally loved the natural world and searched every possible avenue in order to reach a fuller understanding of nature and have a greater involvement in it. His own Journal attests to this extraordinary association with the outdoors, and his life and interest in nature are exemplary of what a true naturalist is. It is Thoreau's relationship with nature, when contrasted with Rousseau's, that makes it evident that Jean-Jacques was not a naturalist, and that his love for nature was indeed only ordinary.

Our study thus confirms many suspicions regarding Rousseau's hermit-naturalist image. It is in firm opposition to the consensus that Rousseau, like Thoreau, loved nature first and despised culture second. In fact, in contrast to what is often accepted, we feel that nature was transformed by Jean-Jacques into a major motive for alienating himself from society, once it became apparent to him that his adjustment to contemporary social customs and institutions was impossible. Thoreau, on the other hand, opposed society for a basically different reason; it did not serve him in his search for correspondence with the earth. On the contrary, it inhibited him from reaching his goal. His interest in building the individual dominated any concern for society and since the latter stood in the way of realizing this goal, he preferred to divorce himself from it. Nature promised greater rewards and provided, for the most part, the most
direct route toward happiness. For Rousseau, however, it was solitude more than nature which brought him happiness; and even on that point we must admit that it is difficult to determine if Jean-Jacques was truly happy isolated from others.

It has been our view that Rousseau is far more a literary artist than a naturalist. This is indeed apparent when he is contrasted and compared with someone like Thoreau, who was very much an artist and very much a naturalist also. There are numerous repetitions of the same elements which compose the major natural settings in the backgrounds of Rousseau's writings. There are also frequent contradictions regarding his preference for certain natural settings and the effects of such settings on him. Though he would probably deny it, Jean-Jacques was a literary artist who used nature to suit his didactic purposes. He was endlessly conscious of the readers and the persuasion of his subject matter on them. It is probably for this reason that his descriptions of nature fuse the fantastic and poetic qualities of a writer such as D'Urfé, and the more realistic characteristics of a poet such as Haller. His success, however, extended beyond the natural details to the depth of expression, the union of the two—nature with feeling—lending support to his popularity. Yet, his own experience cannot be underestimated for, like Thoreau, Jean-Jacques was, after all, familiar with much of the countryside which he related in
his writings. Even so, his sentimentality and nostalgia prompted him to incorporate the idyllic or bucolic, which he loved in the pastoral novels of La Calprenède, Madeleine de Scudéry, and D’Urfé, and the actual, which he had known in the happier days of his youth. As a consequence, his natural world is often highly mannered and intentionally combines traditional objects and favorite scenes. Thoreau was likewise a great artist. Through the fusion of art and reality, he brought a poetic beauty to his writings, which might have otherwise been less inviting. The woods of Concord frequently become enchanted with a mythological beauty.

Rousseau was not however, a naturalist in the same sense as Thoreau. His communion with the earth was far less frequent and certainly less deliberate. He was not a scientist, nor an accurate painter because he covered his literary canvas with impressions often drawn from imprecise memories. He related best what he had felt; hence his emotions were the primary interpreters of the worth of any naturalistic setting. And in this respect, Rousseau's use of nature was original, and, for the eighteenth century, his personalized association with, and his portrayal of, the environment initiated a rewarding "feeling" for nature. In contrast to the indifference which most of the "philosophes" of the period expressed, Jean-Jacques generated a revolution of emotion. It was, however, the sentiment and emotion which he used to express himself, and not nature per se, which accounted for
the interest and excitement he produced. Certainly, by comparing and contrasting his penchant for and his statements about nature with those of Henry Thoreau, it is apparent that his relationship with and feeling for nature were indeed only ordinary. From childhood, Thoreau had lived close to, and had had frequent contact with, the outdoors. A keen observer of natural phenomenon, he became increasingly interested in scientific investigation, making minor, but significant contributions to natural science. Unlike Jean-Jacques, who studied botany to amuse himself in his solitude, Thoreau aimed for discovery in his observations. It was for this reason that he walked and observed even in the evening and early morning hours. He hoped that the change in light or the effect of the mist would provide him with different facets of nature.

Rousseau's frequent advocacy of a simple life in nature, in contrast to Thoreau, was definitely not an invitation to know nature because it represented a fascinating and unexplored world of beauty and purity. Yet, there can be no doubt of his influence in popularizing ruralism. However, it is our view that his ruralism is perhaps associated more with the seed of revolt against the eighteenth century social institutions he despised and to which he could not adjust, than with a love and need for physical nature. We find his very attraction to the outdoors highly related to his rebellious or frustrated personality. If not a direct manifestation,
his tie to nature was, at least, an indirect manifestation of his inaptitude in things social, things and events which required more than he felt he could give. The fields, streams and flowers served as a buffer against social ills and personal discontent. No better place than nature could be found to provide the needed retreat from frustration and unhappiness. And furthermore, no greater bliss had been realized than the one he had known in solitude with an intimate companion, or by himself in nature. And, what is more, there was no better motive to justify his withdrawal from society.

One of the most significant differences between Thoreau and Rousseau is the deliberate or intentional action which Thoreau took to enhance his relation with the outdoors. His senses were one of the means of finding himself. Nature was a tool which he hoped would bring him out of himself so that he could understand and enjoy his true self. Nature's effect upon him was an important factor in his search for happiness and pleasure in life; therefore, it deserved attention and, in fact, cultivation. Ironically, it was the world of reality which was essential to reach the world of the ideal. Yet, Rousseau struggled to free himself from the bonds of reality, and unfortunately, escaped into the realms of the fantasy which denied him, for the most part of his life, the sensuous rewards found in nature.

Now it would be grossly unfair to suggest that he was totally indifferent to the natural wonders around him, except
perhaps when they served his literary purposes as an escape. In addition to their providing a bastion of seclusion and solitude, and to offering practical literary value, the flowers, rivers, and birds could capture his heart and soothe his spirit. What they could not control, however, was his mind and imagination. Their influence upon his senses was a reality; yet, their significance, as a source of inspiration and as subjects of scientific curiosity, is plainly lacking. Despite all the musing and revery which dominated his hours of leisure, Jean-Jacques was really unable to easily deliver himself up to the persuasion of nature's powerful stimuli.

He was unfortunately continuously pre-occupied with his condition, trying desperately to substitute dreams and fantasy for reality. He endlessly worked, defended, accused and shed tears, leaving himself rarely free to understand and enjoy nature; hence, his moments of mental pre-occupation in actual work or in fantasizing were more numerous than those in which he delivered himself up to the effects of the natural world. Ironically, his revery was a form of work; thus, he even had to struggle to remain aloof from reality. Is it any wonder that nature had little chance to dominate and direct his life? It was only at the very end of his life that he managed to resign himself to nature.

Indeed, he spoke of hearing the melodic sounds of birds, of seeing lovely flowers in bright array, and of his sensitivity to the exquisite beauty of a sunrise and a
sunset. Yet, he heard only the same birds, saw the same flowers, and basked in nearly the same pleasures at each sunrise and sunset. Despite his "herborisations," and his infinite "promenades," Jean-Jacques never knew nature very intimately. Only in the most general way did it catch his fancy and serve his notions. Only when it harmonized with the inner demands of his emotional self and complemented his personal disgust with others and society, did it really satisfy what he desired and demanded of it. Yes, he was conscious of the presence of nature, but only enough to observe its most evident features or to contrast its most apparent differences. Consequently, his life in and out of nature remained extremely self-oriented and was not a product of any intimate relationship with the world of plants and wildlife. This, of course, accounts for the paucity of detail.

If, as we believe, Rousseau's egocentricity denied our author much intimacy with nature, it is interesting that it is at the very base of his humanism. That is to say, his preoccupation with realizing himself was the motivating influence which made him determined to fight for the freedom and independence of the individual. He rebelled against the opposition when it required him to submit to values foreign to his own. His whole life, like Thoreau's, was, in effect, a statement of individualism, of the right to be a non-conformist in the realization of oneself. Both men, by denouncing the "establishment" when it revoked and abrogated
the rights of those whose freedom it was designed to protect, aided the cause of every man.

It is important to remember, however, that, unlike Thoreau, who felt that nature could literally assist him in his search for his true self, Rousseau gave nature the primary role of serving as protection and security. In or out of nature, Jean-Jacques felt he knew who he was; his problem was realizing fully the man Rousseau. This he found impossible within the limits of society. Although he may not have done so deliberately, he made it thus appear that nature was the true reason for his progressive denial of social life. Consequently, nature became a motif which dominated his works. Just as Henry David Thoreau, only more justifiably, achieved literary fame a century later, it is his association with nature that has helped immortalize Jean-Jacques Rousseau in literature.
FOOTNOTES

1. Mr. Geoffrey Atkinson's preface to his book *Le Sentiment de la nature et le Retour à la vie simple* (Paris: Libraire Minard, 1960), was a source of inspiration for my own preface to this section.

2. Rousseau was raised in the Calvinist tradition. His mother Suzanne Bernard was raised by Samuel Bernard, a prominent Calvinist minister. Rousseau later abjured the Protestant faith for Catholicism, but eventually reconverted only to develop his own personal religious belief as expressed in the "Profession de foi d'un Vicaire Savoyard."

Rousseau too was brought up in the Calvinist tradition. His father never formally joined a church, but his mother was a Unitarian who tried to join a stricter Calvinist group called the Trinitarians. His own religious conviction was personal and vague. He never subscribed to any sectarian creed, disliked ministers and was endlessly critical of the effect of religion upon men. He did, however, believe in God.

3. Neither the *Week* nor *Walden* set the literary world on fire. Thoreau was not a popular writer in his own time and even today cannot be considered a popular author, although he has gained considerable stature in the literary world.


8. Rousseau writes the following about his older brother: "J'avais un frère plus âgé que moi de sept ans. Il
apprenoit la profession de mon pere. L'extrême affection qu'on avoit pour moi le faisit un peu négliger, et ce n'est pas cela que j'approuve. Son éducation se sentit de cette négligence" (O. C., i, p. 9).


10 Joseph Wood Krutch, Henry David Thoreau (New York: The American Men of Letters Series, William Sloan Associates, 1948), p. 168. Hereinafter referred to as Krutch. It is true that Henry greatly admired his brother and the two of them spent many hours together exploring the Concord area, in addition to teaching school together. He was greatly saddened by his brother's premature death.


12 Lake Léman is the official name given to the lake on which Geneva and Lausanne are located. The residents of Geneva, however, refer to it as Lake Geneva. Rousseau likewise uses this name.

13 Rousseau gives 1722 as the date, but F. C. Green reports that the correct date is 1724. See Green, p. 5.

14 Based on the date which Green gives as being correct (Cf. footnote #13), Rousseau would be about twelve years old.

15 Samuel Bernard was a pastor in Sacconex, near Geneva. He was Rousseau's great uncle and not his grandfather as once believed. He raised Jean-Jacques' mother Suzanne and, at his death, shared his wealth with her and his own son. It was from his own father, a pastor also, that he inherited a very complete library.


17 Even Jean-Jacques refers to his experiences at Bossey as being a sort of "paradis terrestre." Following an incident in the Lambercier home, in which he was unjustly accused, he refers to the consequences as being responsible for his having been forced from his "paradis terrestre."

18 Henry Thoreau, The Writings of Henry David Thoreau (Walden or Manuscript Edition, Boston: Houghton Mifflin and
Company, 1906, 20 vols), II, p. 161. Hereinafter referred to according to the specific work being cited. For example, *Walden*, *The Week* and other works will be referred to individually, although they are part of this complete edition. References to the *Journal*, which comprises Volumes VII to XX of the *Writings*, but is renumbered separately, will be made in the same way, and the renumbering will also be included.

19 Being subject to a person only four years his senior did not appeal to Jean-Jacques. It must have been difficult for him to accept orders and endure punishment from someone as young as Ducommun.


22 Cf. p. 11 et passim.

23 Celadon and Astrée are both principal characters in Honoré d'Urfé's famous novel *Astrée*, popular at the beginning of the 17th century.


25 Jean Starobinski has written a very interesting article on the subject of Rousseau's illness. He concludes that "no anatomical document can inform us what use a man has made of his sickness." (*Yale French Studies*, No. 28, 1961-62), p. 74. Obviously then, it is almost impossible to determine just exactly how good or how bad Rousseau's health really was. There can be no doubt, however, that he did suffer physically. He frequently complained of his health and this gives one the impression that it was poor.

26 Starobinski feels that Jean-Jacques uses the same moralizing or rationalizing technique in his justification for entering into solitude. He writes: "L'on se demande si toute la théorie historique de Rousseau n'est pas une construction destinée à justifier un choix personnel. S'agit-il pour lui de vivre selon ses principes? Tout au
contraire, n'a-t-il pas forgé des principes et des expli-
cations historiques à seule fin d'excuser et de légitimer
son étrange vie, sa timidité, sa maladresse, son humeur in-
égale, cette Thérèse si fruste avec qui il s'est mis en
ménage? Le conflit que Jean-Jacques dénonce dans l'histoire
n'est-il pas, originellement, un conflit personnel" (Transparence, p. 42)?

27 Jean-Jacques loved dogs and owned at least two,
"Achate" and "Sultan." He also owned a cat.

28 Cf. Paul Meyer's article "The Individual and
Society in Rousseau's Emile," NLQ, XIX, 1958. He writes that
Rousseau's purpose was not to keep the individual away from
society, but to prepare him to take part in, and "fulfill his
duty as, a member of the community." p. 108.

29 Claire-Eliane Engle, La Littérature Alpestre en
France et en Angleterre aux 18e et 19e Siècles (Chambery:
Libraire Dardel, 1930).

30 We must admit, however, that both young men did
not prepare their own meals, but preferred to enjoy the
luxury of returning to Wheeler's home to eat with his family.

31 Paul feels that it is possible that Thoreau read
Emerson's Nature in the fall of 1836, before he had graduated
from Harvard. He did not meet Emerson, however, until a year
or two after Emerson had settled in Concord in 1835. Harding
feels that this is as close as one can approximate their
first acquaintance since there are so many contradictions in
the evidence available. (Handbook, p. 5).

32 "Higher Laws" is the title Thoreau gave to Chap-
iter XI of Walden. This is the term he applies to the "spiri-
tual life" which in order to reach he must transcend the
world of the material. This is the inner latent potential

33 Cf. Shores, p. 46 et passim.

34 Like Thoreau, Rousseau was interested in developing
the whole man. He felt that Emile, his ideal man, would have
the advantage over the others in society if he conformed to
physical nature as the primitive conforms. What he meant was
that by keeping himself physically fit, remembering both his
needs and his ability to satisfy those needs, recognizing his
own limitations, living simply, exploiting as much of his po-
tential as he knew how, and remaining self-reliant, Emile
could assure his independence and freedom in society.

Paul points out that this prose work is personal in that Thoreau, having suffered the loss of his brother John, now turns to nature for solace and thus makes his thesis in this treatise "the re-creation of man in nature" (Shores, p. 106 et passim).

37 In the literal sense of the term poet, Thoreau was this also. The Week has many of his poems in it; however, Walden is nearly void of poetry. Here is one of his poems entitled "Nature."

O NATURE! I do not aspire
To be the highest in thy quire,--
To be a meteor in the sky,
Or comet that may range on high;
Only a zephyr that may blow
Among the reeds by the river low;
Give me thy most privy place
Where to run my airy race.

..................................
(Writings, V, p. 395)

38 Harding writes that Thoreau was growing restless living at the Emerson's, that he had little to show for his twenty-five years on earth, and that this bothered him. He began to look for new employment, asking Emerson to keep "his ears alerted for any employment that might be appropriate. He was particularly anxious to further himself as an author" (The Days, p. 145).

39 Greeley was the editor of the New York Tribune. Harding writes that "Greeley offered his services gratis as Thoreau's literary agent and for the remaining years of Thoreau's life spent many hours annually in placing Thoreau's essays in magazines and touting his two books in the pages of the Tribune" (Handbook, p. 7).

41 He later returned to Maine on other excursions and even ventured into the rugged areas of Canada. His Canadian trip however, was not a true success: "What I got by going to Canada was a cold" (The Days, p. 282).

42 Agassiz was interested in cataloging all the flora and fauna of America. Thoreau sent him several different specimens, some of which were new to the Harvard scientist.

43 Jean-Antoine d'Ivernois, (1703-1765). Medical doctor and botanist whom Rousseau met in Môtiers in 1764. His association with Jean-Jacques was very brief owing to his death in January, 1765.

44 Rousseau writes in the Confessions concerning his new found interest. "... le goût de la botanique que j'avais commencé de prendre auprès du Docteur d'Ivernois donnant un nouvel intérêt à mes promenades me faisait parcourir le pays en herborisant sans m'émouvoir des claveurs de toute cette canaille, dont ce sang-froid ne faisait qu'irriter le fureur" (O. C., i, p. 631).

45 Pierre Trahard dismisses Rousseau's scientific interest as being very limited. I am indebted to him for this quote about science. He took it from Bernadin de Saint-Fierre's Études de la Nature (Oeuvres Complètes, Paris: Dupont, 1826, T. V, p. 59). Additionally, Trahard points out that Rousseau's penchant for science would be of minor concern because "la biologie ne lui semble pas nécessaire à la connaissance de l'être" (Pierre Trahard, Les Maîtres de la Sensibilité Française au 18e Siècle, Paris: Boivin & Cie., 1932, 4 vols, p. 10).

46 Rousseau's interest vacillated. In 1770 he supposedly gave all his "livres de botanique" to his friend du Feyrou, thus abandoning his studies. By 1773, his interest was waning and though he had moments of renewed interest, it appears that he never regained his original enthusiasm. The following represents his feelings at the time of a letter to Nalesherbes the 8 of March 1773.

"... je m'étais proposé, ..., de mettre à chaque plante le nom de Linnaeus, ..., Mais le partage de mon temps et la diminution de mon goût pour la botanique me feront de laisser cette entreprise imparfaite, à moins que vous ne désiriez, Monsieur, qu'elle soit achevée, ce qui serait peut-être me rendre un bon office en réveillant un goût qui jusqu'ici n'a pas pas contribué à me rendre agréable la vie solitaire à laquelle je me suis consacré" (C. G., XX, p. 217).
Madame de Warens kept him busy pulling herbs and making "des drogues" for her. But, he admits, "je passois mon temps le plus agréablement du monde, occupé des choses qui me plaisoient le moins" (Cf. O. C., i, p. 109).

This is the response which Rousseau made to Helvétius' claim that reason (or judgment) was to be identified with sensation. (Cf. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Oeuvres Complètes, Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie., 1912, T. XII, p. 300. NB. footnote #1 on same page).


Harding says that "one must be careful not to go too far in depicting Thoreau as an epicurean. He was not interested (theoretically, at least) in sense stimulation for its own sake. It was only a means toward an end. His ultimate goal was to find his place in the universe. He developed his senses to ascertain more accurately where that place was" (Handbook, p. 134).

According to Maya, when men see trees it is because trees are there, though they are not the Real. By such reasoning Maya accounts for all phenomena and is accepted as the modus operandi of the universe, even though concealing the eternal Reality of Brahma" (Charles R. Anderson, The Magic Circle of Walden, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968, p. 93).

Jean-Jacques was rarely totally isolated from people. He received many visitors and carried on a vast correspondence. He says that he preferred to be alone, but from all indications, he was frequently surrounded by people. Thérèse accompanied him on almost all his trips, and various members of her family frequently joined them.

Jean-Jacques felt that his own body was a deterrent to full realization of himself. His carnal appetites raked his conscience and, in his own words, kept him from profound, satisfying and resourceful thoughts. Nature, on the other hand, distracted him from his carnal needs (and also from concern about his health). "Non, rien de personnel, rien qui tienne à l'interest de mon corps ne peut occuper vraiment mon âme. Je ne médite, je ne rêve jamais plus délicieusement que quand je m'oublie moi-même" (O. C., i, p. 1065).

Marcel Raymond annotated the text of Les Confessions and Les Rêveries in the "Fléaide Edition" of Rousseau's
Oeuvres Complètes which I am using for reference.

55 Does Rousseau reach a sort of "nirvana"? This question has been suggested by M. Osmond and F. C. Green. Osmond feels he does, but Green does not. According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica (Chicago: William Benton, Publisher, 1967, Vol. 16, p. 531), nirvana "is the ultimate goal of Buddhist thought, aspiration and practice." It emphasizes a "waning away of deluded egocentricity, with its attendant passionate, sensual and selfish desires." We must agree with Green that Rousseau does not reach such a state. The very purpose of Jean-Jacques' "rêverie" was to free himself of those obstacles which prevented any realization of his "egocentricity." As a result, "rêverie" provided the means to "passionate, sensual and selfish" ends. On the other hand, nirvana is the "reality beyond all change and suffering, it is peace, security, supreme joy, unspeakable bliss." In this respect, we can see the reason for Osmond's correlation; Jean-Jacques does obtain the tranquility and security, the happiness and bliss which he needs in "rêverie." Unfortunately, it is not as permanent as he would have liked to have had it.

56 For this reason, there is no similarity between Thoreau's revery and nirvana. Cf. footnote #13.


58 Charles Feidelson writes that "Thoreau really cannot deal with 'the vision, the truth alone.' He must also deal with the subject and object which the vision lies 'between.' He cannot merely feel and speak, losing himself and nature in the experience and the word" which somewhat sustains Porte's position on Thoreau as a Lockean disciple. Cf. Charles Feidelson, Symbolism and American Literature (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 137.


60 By underlining. It is important to note that Thoreau was not blind to nature's irregularities, such as a wrinkled leaf or a misshapen tree.

I have used the title which F. O. Mathiessen has given to his work on esthetics in the early nineteenth century. See footnote #61.

Mark Temmer is the first to our knowledge to have traced the "course of ideas that leads from Geneva to Concord." See his very interesting article "Rousseau and Thoreau" Yale French Studies, 28-31, (Fall-Winter, 1962), 112-121. See also Ernst Cassirer, Rousseau, Kant and Goethe (New York: Harper and Row, 1963).


Lester G. Crocker, Nature and Culture: Ethical Thought in the French Enlightenment (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1963). Mr. Crocker has compared and contrasted the major and minor interpretations of "nature" as it applies to the concept of natural law. He too feels that Rousseau favored culture over the state of nature (i.e., primitivism). He writes:

We need not enter into a refutation of the common notion, now disproven, that he preferred nature to culture. In summary, we may say that he held social man to be in some ways worse off than "natural man," and that he felt romantic longings for the independence, immediacy, and guiltlessness of the original state; but that he considered the moral and even the rational development in the social state to be inherently of greater worth. It allows men, miserable and at war with each other because of the mixture of the two states in which they are now living, to conceive of ways of moving on to a purely social state, in which equality and happiness will be regained through the complete sublimation of natural independence (Nature and Culture, p. 135).


Concerning the myth which has followed Rousseau's attack on society, Henry V. S. Ogden has written that the inference that Jean-Jacques was "urging a return to that primitive plane of existence" is "invalid in the face of his explicit statements." "The Antithesis of Nature and Art. . ." American Political Review (32, 1939), pp. 643-54. Paul H. Meyer has written that "It is Rousseau's avowed purpose to outline the moral provisoire of the regenerated individual, living in the community and willing to accept its responsibilities as long as the world is more or less what it is," "The Individual and Society in Rousseau's Emile", Modern
68. As the translation of the quote in German illustrates, Thoreau felt that candid recognition of what he really was would be the "moral" way to face life. Living in a myth of self-deception could only be injurious and a waste of time as far as he was concerned. "Es ist alles wahr wodurch du besser wirst" or "Truth is that which improves man."


70. See Shores, p. 40.

71. At first only an essay, but later enlarged into four volumes, this same treatise published in 1756, the same year Rousseau moved into isolation at the Hermitage, was one of the influential forces in popularizing solitude as a romantic ideal a little less than a hundred years later in Thoreau's New England. Of this work, we learn in the Biographie universelle (1843) that Zimmermann, though less poetic and in a style inferior to Jean-Jacques', expressed his emotions with equal sincerity on the subject of solitude. His work also had a greater influence because "son instruction est plus variée et plus profonde" (Vol. 45, p. 530). Although there is no established influence of Rousseau on Thoreau, it is interesting to find that a man such as Zimmermann draws the two men closer together. Zimmermann was also a fond admirer of Rousseau (See François Jost, Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Suisse, Fribourg: Editions universitaires, 1961, 2 vols, p. 361).


73. Ibid., p. 206.

74. We should not forget that Thoreau made some scientific contributions as a result of his nature studies. See Walter Harding, A Thoreau Handbook (New York: New York University Press, 1961), pp. 135-40.


77. Marcel Raymond and Bernard Gagnebin are the general editors of the Fléiade Edition of Rousseau's works which we are using.


79. See Max Lerner, "Thoreau: No Hermit," in Thoreau edited by Sherman Paul (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1962), pp. 20-22. Thoreau's own comment about his heretical nature is worthy of consideration: "I think that I love society as much as most, and am ready enough to fasten myself like a bloodsuck for the time to any full-blooded man that comes in my way. I am naturally no hermit, but might possibly sit out the sturdiest frequenter of the bar-room, if my business called me thither" (Walden, p. 155).


84. Claire-Eliane Engel, La Littérature alpestre en France et en Angleterre aux 18e et 19e siècles (Chambery: Librairie Dardel, 1930).
BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. ROUSSEAU

A. Primary Sources


B. Secondary Sources

Allers, Ulrich S. "Rousseau's Second Discourse." Review of Politics, XX, 91-120.


"L'unité de l'oeuvre de Rousseau." Revue de métaphysique et de morale, LXV, 199-209.


II. THOREAU

A. Primary Sources


B. Secondary Sources


