



READERS RESPOND TO ROUSSEAU: THE FABRICATION OF ROMANTIC SENSITIVITY

WHEN THE *philosophes* set out to conquer the world by mapping it, they knew that their success would depend on their ability to imprint their world view on the minds of their readers. But how was this operation to take place? What in fact was reading in eighteenth-century France? Reading still remains a mystery, although we do it every day. The experience is so familiar that it seems perfectly comprehensible. But if we could really comprehend it, if we could understand how we construe meaning from little figures printed on a page, we could begin to penetrate the deeper mystery



The joys of motherhood by Moreau Le Jeune

of how people orient themselves in the world of symbols spun around them by their culture. Even then, we could not presume to know how other people have read in other times and places. For a history or anthropology of reading would force us to confront the otherness in alien *mentalités*.¹ As an example, consider the place of reading in the death rites of Bali.

When the Balinese prepare a corpse for burial, they read stories to one another, ordinary stories from collections of their most familiar tales. They read them without stopping, twenty-four hours a day, for two or three days at a time, not because they need distraction but because of the danger of demons. Demons possess souls during the vulnerable period immediately after a death, but stories keep them out. Like Chinese boxes or English hedges, the stories contain tales within tales, so that as you enter one you run into another, passing from plot to plot every time you turn a corner, until at last you reach the core of the narrative space, which corresponds to the place occupied by the corpse within the inner courtyard of the household. Demons cannot penetrate this space because they cannot turn corners. They beat their heads helplessly against the narrative maze that the readers have built, and so reading provides a kind of defense fortification surrounding Balinese ritual. It creates a wall of words, which operates like the jamming of radio broadcasts. It does not amuse, instruct, improve, or help to while away the time; by the imbrication of narrative and the cacophony of sound, it protects souls.²

Now, reading may never have been so exotic in the West, although our use of the Bible—in the taking of oaths, confirmations, and other ceremonies—might look extravagant indeed to the Balinese. But the Balinese example illustrates an important point: nothing could be more misleading in an attempt to recapture the experience of reading in the past than the assumption that people have always read the way we do today. A history of reading, if it can ever be written, would chart the alien element in the way man has made sense of the world. For reading, unlike carpentry or embroidery, is not merely a skill; it is an active construal of meaning within a system of communication. To understand how the French read books in the eighteenth century is to understand how they thought—that is, those of them who could participate in the transmission of thought by means of printed symbols.

The task may seem impossible because we cannot look over the shoulders of eighteenth-century readers and question them as a modern psychologist can question a reader today. We can only ferret out whatever remains of their experience in libraries and archives, and even then we can rarely get beyond the retrospective testimony of a few great men about a few great books: Rousseau's recollections of reading Plutarch and Stendhal's of reading Rousseau. But one dossier—the only one of its kind that exists in the archives of France and Switzerland, or anywhere else as far as I know—makes it possible to follow the readings of an ordinary bourgeois in the course of an ordinary life in provincial France during the last two decades before the French Revolution.

I would like to present the dossier, making due disclaimers about its representativeness or the possibility of locating any typical Frenchman under the Old Regime. It comes from the archives of the Société Typographique de Neuchâtel (STN), an important Swiss publisher of French books in the prerevolutionary period, and it concerns Jean Ranson, a merchant from La Rochelle.³ In 1774 when he began to correspond with the STN, Ranson was twenty-seven. He had taken over his family's business in the silk trade after the death of his father, and he lived with his mother in the heart of the Rochelais Protestant community. The Ransons were well off, though not as wealthy as some of the families who lived from the Atlantic trade. Jean had inherited 20,000 livres from his father. When he married in 1777, his wife was to bring him a dowry of 10,000 livres. After her death, a second marriage in 1788 would produce an equivalent amount (8,000 livres and an annuity based on a capital of 2,000 livres). And by then Ranson's own fortune, excluding dowries, would come to 66,000 livres—a fairly handsome sum, especially if one takes into account the slump produced in the local economy by the American war.⁴ While his business prospered, Ranson occupied an increasingly important place in his town and church. He was an officer (*lieutenant du prévôt de la Monnaie*) of the local mint. He directed the Protestant hospital founded by his father in 1765. And during the Revolution, he supervised poor relief as president of the *Bureau de bienfaisance*, in addition to serving on the *Conseil municipal* and the *Conseil des prisons* once the Terror had passed.

Ranson's position in the core of La Rochelle's merchant oligarchy shows up clearly in his marriage contract of 1777. Seventy-six witnesses signed the contract; all but three of the men identified themselves as merchants (*négociants*). They included a former mayor, the director of the Chambre de commerce, two previous directors of the Chambre, and the flower of the Rochelais trading families: Raboteaus, Seignettes, Belins, Jarnacs, Roberts, and the Ransons themselves. All of Ranson's male relatives appeared in the contract as *négociants*, and so did those of his bride, Madeleine Raboteau—not surprisingly, for she was his second cousin.

Ranson's letters in Neuchâtel confirm the impression given by the documents in La Rochelle. They suggest that he was serious, responsible, hard-working, civic-minded, and rich—the very picture of the provincial bourgeois. Above all, he was Protestant. Like most members of the r.p.r. (religion prétendue réformée) in France, his parents had made a formal avowal of Catholicism in order to provide their children with a civil status, for the state did not legally recognize the existence of Protestants, though it had allowed them to hold services in La Rochelle since 1755. The Ransons also wanted their son to have a solid Calvinist education. They therefore sent him to the *collège* (secondary school) in Neuchâtel, where he studied with Frédéric-Samuel Ostervald, a learned local notable, who was to found the STN a few years later, in 1769. The French student developed a strong attachment to his Swiss master. So when he returned to La Rochelle, Ranson kept in touch by letter; and when Ostervald took up publishing, Ranson bought books from him. He bought a great many because he was an avid reader and the STN, which did a huge business as a wholesale bookdealer in addition to its printing, could supply him with almost everything he wanted. Unlike the STN's other correspondents, who were mainly booksellers, Ranson chatted about his literary interests and family life when he sent in his orders. Thus his dossier—forty-seven letters amidst the fifty thousand of the STN papers—stands out in the commercial correspondence of the STN precisely because it was so uncommercial. It provides a rare view of a reader discussing his reading while going about the everyday affairs of life in a quiet corner of the provinces.

In confronting the dossier, the first question to ask is: what did

Ranson read? One cannot reconstruct his library, because he owned a great many books that he did not order from the STN. He received some from his family and bought others from Guillaume Pavie, his favorite bookseller in La Rochelle. But his letters to the STN—which include orders for fifty-nine titles over a period of eleven years—provide enough information for one to form a general idea of his taste and reading habits. The orders fall into the following pattern (for bibliographical details, see the appendix):

I. Religion (12 titles)

Holy Scripture, devotional works

La Sainte Bible

Psaumes de David

Abrégé du catéchisme d'Ostervald

Recueil de prières, Roques

Nourriture de l'âme, Ostervald

Morale évangélique, Bertrand

Dévotions chrétiennes

Sermons

Année évangélique, Durand

Sermons sur les dogmes, Chaillet

Sermons, Bertrand

Sermons, Perdriau

Sermons, Romilly

II. History, travel, geography (4 titles)

Histoire philosophique, Raynal

Voyage en Sicile et à Malte, Brydone

Voyage dans la Suisse, Sinner

Description des montagnes de Neuchâtel, Ostervald

III. Belles-lettres (14 titles)

Works

Molière

La Harpe

Crébillon père

Piron

Rousseau (1775)

Rousseau (1782)

Oeuvres posthumes de Rousseau

Novels

Histoire de François Wills, Pratt

Le Paysan perverti, Restif de la Bretonne

Adèle et Théodore, Mme de Genlis
Don Quichotte, Cervantes
 Other

Théâtre de société, Mme de Genlis
L'An 2440, Mercier
Mon bonnet de nuit, Mercier

IV. Medicine (2 titles)

Soins pour la conservation des dents, Bourdet
Avis contenant un remède contre la rage

V. Children's books, pedagogy (18 titles)

Amusement

Théâtre d'éducation, Mme de Genlis

Nouveaux Contes moraux, Mme Leprieux de Beaumont

Magasin des enfants, Mme Leprieux de Beaumont

L'Ami des enfants, Berquin

Fables de La Fontaine

Les Hochets moraux, Monget

Les Jeux d'enfants, Feutry

Lectures pour les enfants

Conversations d'Emilie, Mme d'Épinay

Entretiens, drames et contes moraux, Mme de Laftie

Instruction

Annales de la vertu, Mme de Genlis

Cours de géographie élémentaire, Ostervald

Les Vrais Principes de la lecture, Viard

Abrégé de l'histoire universelle, Lacroze

Pedagogy, moral education

Legs d'un père à ses filles, Gregory

Dissertation sur l'éducation physique, Ballexserd

Education morale, Comparet

Instructions d'un père à ses enfants, Trembley

VI. Other (9 titles)

Encyclopédie, Diderot and d'Alembert

Le Socrate rustique, Hirzel

Le Messager boiteux

Mémoires secrets, Bachaumont

Relation des derniers jours de J.-J. Rousseau, Le Bègue de Presles

Discours sur l'économie politique, Rousseau

Lettres de Haller contre Voltaire

Tableau de Paris, Mercier

Portraits des rois de France, Mercier

The above rubrics correspond to the categories in the catalogues of eighteenth-century libraries, but they exclude a good deal of the standard fare in the literature of the time. Ranson did not order any classics, any legal works, or anything in the natural sciences, except two volumes of popular medicine. True, he may have procured books on those subjects from other sources, although he could have got them from the STN. But his main interests were limited to the following topics:

Children's literature and pedagogy. These books provide the biggest surprise in the dossier. Although they do not seem to have occupied much of a place in the (admittedly few) eighteenth-century libraries that have been studied by historians,⁵ they represent almost a third of the works that Ranson ordered from the STN. Their importance can be explained by his interest in his own children, but there is more to it than that, as we shall see.

Religion. Ranson's letters indicate that he was a devout Protestant, and his books suggest that his piety shaded off into pietism. He showed no interest in theology, but he wanted Holy Scripture—a new Protestant edition of the Bible, the Psalms—and especially sermons. He kept calling in his letters for “good new sermons; France has been famished for them for a long time.”⁶ He favored the moralistic preaching of Swiss and Dutch divines, which occasionally summon up the religion of Rousseau's Savoyard vicar.

History, travel, and general nonfiction. Ranson's religious principles did not prevent him from ordering the *Encyclopédie* or the equally outspoken and encyclopedic *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes* by the abbé Raynal. Travel and history books, a favorite category in eighteenth-century libraries, often provided a screen upon which Enlightenment authors projected criticisms of contemporary society. Ranson even bought two forbidden books that made the criticism explicit: Mercier's *Tableau de Paris* and Bachaumont's *Mémoires secrets pour servir à l'histoire de la république des lettres*. But he avoided the racier and more radical works in the STN's catalogue, concentrating instead on the sentimental and moralistic books that were becoming increasingly popular during the pre-romantic era.

Belles-lettres. Those books stand out in Ranson's orders for fic-

tion. Although he bought some seventeenth-century classics (Molière, Cervantes), he favored contemporary writers like Mme de Genlis, Mercier, and Restif de la Bretonne. But the one who occupied most of the space on his shelves and most of the discussions in his letters was Rousseau—"l'*Ami* Jean-Jacques" as Ranson called him, although Jean-Jacques was a friend whom he had never met and could know only through the printed word. Ranson devoured everything he could find by Rousseau. He ordered two editions of the complete works and a twelve-volume set of the posthumous writings. The first edition, published by Samuel Fauche of Neuchâtel in 1775, was the best Ranson could obtain during Rousseau's lifetime, but it contained only eleven volumes in octavo. The second, put out by the Société typographique de Genève in 1782, ran to thirty-one volumes and contained a great many previously unpublished works. Ranson ordered it unbound and stitched, "so as to have the full enjoyment of the work as soon as it arrives and not to wait upon the binder, who is very negligent."⁷ He was as hungry for information about the writer as for copies of the writings. "I thank you, Monsieur," he wrote to Ostervald in 1775, "for what you were so kind as to tell me about l'*Ami* Jean-Jacques. You give me great pleasure every time you can send me anything about him."⁸ Ranson was the perfect Rousseauistic reader. But how did he read?

To pass from the *what* to the *how* of reading is an extremely difficult step. One can approach it indirectly by posing a second preliminary question: how did Ranson look at a book when he took it in his hands? Books as physical objects were very different in the eighteenth century from what they are today, and their readers perceived them differently.

Ranson's perceptions can be surmised from his letters to the STN, for he often discussed the physical aspects of books. For example, before undertaking a new edition of the Bible, Ostervald sounded him out on the format that would be preferred in La Rochelle; and after consulting his friends Ranson replied, "Every-one pronounced in favor of the in-folio. It is more majestic and more imposing in the eyes of the multitude for whom this divine book is intended."⁹ Ranson showed a great concern for typograph-

ical niceties in discussing a project to reprint a *Cours de géographie élémentaire*: "I hope it will be done with more handsome type and finer paper than that of the third edition, which in those respects is far inferior to the second edition printed in Bern."¹⁰ He especially cared about the raw material of books. "Handsome paper so far as can be had," he reiterated in his orders.¹¹ And he emphasized the importance of harmonizing paper, print, and binding. When Ostervald asked him to inspect some books that the STN had recovered from a bankrupt dealer in La Rochelle, he reported: "How could you have spent three livres fifteen sous on the binding for books printed so badly on such bad paper, which you sell for fifteen sous in sheets? I might eventually be able to find someone willing to take those in basan [a relatively cheap sheepskin binding], but I have little hope for the others."¹²

Such comments were common in the eighteenth century. The STN often received letters from customers who complained about sloppy printing and from booksellers who worried that the choice of a type face or a kind of paper would make a book unsellable. For example, after offering the *Système de la nature* to Pavie, Ranson's bookseller in La Rochelle, the STN received a reply indicating that the material quality of the book mattered as much as its intellectual content:

I know of four editions of the *Système de la nature*. The first is from Holland, a magnificent edition. The second and the third are quite comparable. The fourth, from which I include a sample sheet, has been execrably produced, both in the printing, which is full of mistakes, and in the paper, which is detestable. I wouldn't give thirty sous for it. If the one you are offering is like the fourth edition, you needn't bother to send it. You can easily compare them from the sample. But as you say that yours is from a very beautiful edition, I presume it is from one of the first three. In that case, you can send me ten copies, in sheets or stitched.¹³

This typographical consciousness has disappeared now that books are mass-produced for a mass audience. In the eighteenth century they were made by hand. Every sheet of paper was produced individually by an elaborate procedure and differed from every other sheet in the same volume. Every letter, word, and line was composed according to an art that gave the artisan a chance to

express his individuality. Books themselves were individuals, each copy possessing its own character. The reader of the Old Regime approached them with care, for he paid attention to the stuff of literature as well as its message. He would finger the paper in order to gauge its weight, translucence, and elasticity (a whole vocabulary existed to describe the esthetic qualities of paper, which usually represented at least half the manufacturing cost of a book before the nineteenth century.) He would study the design of the type, examine the spacing, check the register, evaluate the layout, and scrutinize the evenness of the printing. He would sample a book the way we might taste a glass of wine; for he looked at the impressions on the paper, not merely across them to their meaning. And once he had possessed himself fully of a book, in all its physicality, he would settle down to read it.

That brings us back to our initial question: how did Ranson read? The answer may seem as far away as ever, but we can pursue it down another path, one that leads toward an understanding of reading as it was taught in eighteenth-century schools and depicted in eighteenth-century textbooks. Fortunately, Ranson mentioned his own favorite textbook in his letters. He ordered several copies of it, for the use of his family and his friends. Its title (translated into English) suggests that it conveyed a view of the world as well as a means of mastering the printed word: *The true principles of reading, of spelling, and of French pronunciation, followed by a little treatise on punctuation, the first elements of grammar and of French prosody, and by different reading selections suitable for providing simple and easy notions of all the branches of our knowledge*, by Nicolas-Anoine Viard.

Viard's textbook probably left a mark on several generations of French readers. The Bibliothèque Nationale contains five editions of it from the eighteenth century and nineteen editions from the period 1800 to 1830. It seems doubtful that Ranson himself learned to read from the textbook, as the earliest surviving copy comes from 1763, when he had already reached the age of fifteen. But his letters indicate that he used it during his schooling in Neuchâtel—presumably as an aid for reviewing grammar—and that he meant to use it to teach his own children how to read. One

aspect of it, however, was insupportable to him—its ultraorthodox Catholicism, which stands out clearly in some of the reading selections.¹⁴ Ostervald must have expurgated those passages for the students in Neuchâtel, because in ordering the book Ranson specified that he wanted "some copies of the *Principes de la lecture* by Viard that I would be glad to have with the changes you have made in it."¹⁵ And in a later letter he stressed that he was ordering the "*Principes de lecture corrigés pour les réformés*."¹⁶ I have not been able to locate this Protestant Viard, but the classical Viard, minus some of the religious texts among its reading exercises, seems adequate as a starting point for studying eighteenth-century reading.

Viard himself starts with the smallest units of sound. He shows how they are linked with letters, syllables, and words, progressing from the simple to the complex and avoiding all irregularities, so that the connections between sounds and typographical symbols become firmly fixed in the student's mind. Reading must be learned orally, he insists; writing can come later. "The entire operation consists in simplifying the sounds and in not doing any spelling; it is the only way to make the combination of sounds meaningful to children."¹⁷ Viard requires some memorizing; but for all his drills and scrambled alphabets, his main concern is to get the child to think: "The memory easily retains things read several times; so after having had a child read a short passage, one can begin to question him about it and to help him understand it."¹⁸ Reading is not passive for Viard. He does not see it as a mechanistic process of deciphering but as an active construction of the intellect. Nonetheless, Viard will disappoint anyone who consults him in the hope of finding a contemporary strategy for understanding books. He says nothing about *explication de texte* or ways of formulating interpretations. Wholly absorbed with the problem of extracting sense from combinations of letters, he concentrates on exercises like the following:¹⁹

Les bons livres s'impriment	Les mauvais livres se suppriment
soigneusement.	promptement.*

* This is a drill to help the pupil overcome inconsistencies between sounds and combinations of letters, in this case the suffix *ment*. Although the point gets lost in translation, the phrases may be rendered in English as follows: "Good books are printed carefully. Bad books are suppressed promptly."

For Viard, understanding means mastery of words. If the reader can get the simplest elements straight, he can make sense of entire treatises; for meaning inheres in small semantic units rather than in grammar or in structure. Viard therefore remains at the level of the word, as if the understanding of texts would come of itself.

He does provide some texts, but they hardly illustrate his point; for they are saturated with ideological undercurrents. Thus "La Salutation Angélique" and "La Confession des péchés" in his reading exercises are stripped of ambiguous syllables but loaded down with Counter-Reformation doctrine. And other selections—"Héson," "Généalogie," "Politique," "Le Monde"—read like apologies for the status quo in social and political questions. Viard expected the teacher to bring out the significance of such subjects in discussions with the pupils: "The object is to give the children some simple notions about the arts, sciences, religion, war, trade, and everything else about which one needs to have clear and precise ideas. It is important for the child that the master pause and consider with him each of these subjects, turning them over so to speak beneath his gaze. Each will germinate like a seed, which if cultivated skillfully will make his mind rich and fertile."²⁰ There is no mistaking the conservative character of the text, but the metaphor could have come from *Emile*. Like Rousseau, Viard insists on the importance of patience and gentleness on the part of the teacher. Instead of being crammed with useless information, children should learn according to the natural development of their faculties. Above all, they should learn to be good. For reading is a kind of spiritual exercise: it trains one not for literature but for life.

Despite its orthodoxy, then, Viard's primer might well have seemed attractive to a Rousseauistic reader. But it does not reveal much about the actual process of reading. In fact, it suggests that children learned to sound out words in eighteenth-century France pretty much as they do today. Rousseau himself had no patience for such pedagogy. He insisted in *Emile* that the child learn to read late, when he was ripe for learning, without artificial exercises: "Any method will do for him."²¹ Yet reading is a theme that appears everywhere in Rousseau's works. It obsessed him. If we can understand his understanding of it, we might be able to get beyond the point where Viard left us and to find a third angle from which to attack the problem of eighteenth-century reading.

Rousseau discussed his own induction into reading in the first pages of the *Confessions*:

I don't know how I learned to read; I only remember my first readings and their effect on me: it is from that time that I date without interruption my consciousness of myself. My mother had left some novels. [She had died a few days after Jean-Jacques's birth.] My father and I began to read them after supper, at first only with the idea of using some amusing books for me to practice reading. But soon we took such a strong interest in them that we read without a break, taking turns throughout the whole night. We could never stop before reaching the end of a volume. And sometimes my father, hearing the swallows at the crack of dawn, would say shamefacedly, "Let's go to bed; I am more of a child than you."²²

Having exhausted their stock of novels, they took volumes of Bossuet, Molière, La Bruyère, Ovid, and Plutarch from the libraries of the relatives of Jean-Jacques's mother, who came from a more cultivated milieu than his father, a watchmaker. While the father worked in his shop, the son read to him and they discussed the readings. Jean-Jacques's imagination caught fire, especially when he declaimed from Plutarch. He became the heroes that he read about, and he played out the dramas of antiquity in his Geneva apartment as if he had lived them in Athens and Rome. In retrospect it seemed to him that this experience had marked him for life. On the one hand, he never learned to distinguish between literature and reality, having filled his mind with "bizarre and romantic notions, which experience and reflection never cured me of." On the other, he developed a fiercely independent spirit: "From this absorption in reading and the talks to which it gave rise between my father and me, I developed that free and republican spirit, that proud and indomitable character, so incompatible with subjection and servitude, that has been the torment of my life."²³

The characters in Rousseau's great novel, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, throw themselves into reading with the same abandon. Because it is an epistolary novel, the plot unfolds through the exchange of letters. Living cannot be distinguished from reading, nor loving from the writing of love letters. Indeed, the lovers teach one another how to read just as they teach one another love. Saint-Preux instructs Julie: "To read little and to meditate a great deal upon our reading, or to talk it over extensively between ourselves, that is the

way to thoroughly digest it."²⁴ At the same time, he learns to read from her. Like the tutor of Emile, he devises a "method" especially suited to the independent spirit of his pupil: "... to you who put into your reading more than you take out of it and whose active mind makes another and sometimes better book of the book you read. In this way we will exchange our ideas. I will tell you what others have thought about the subject; you will tell me what you yourself think about it; and I will often leave the lesson better instructed than you."²⁵ This was how Rousseau learned to read from his father—and how he later read with Mme de Warens: "Sometimes I read beside her. I took the greatest pleasure in it; it exercised me in reading well.... We read La Bruyère together: it pleased her more than La Rochefoucauld.... When she drew morals from the text, she sometimes lost the thread a little in her reverie; but kissing her from time to time on the mouth or the hands, I was patient, and her interruptions did not bother me."²⁶ Reading, living, and loving, they were inseparable to the writer who lived more intensely in his imagination than he did in the rounds of daily life.

Thus the great enemy of "method" really had one of his own, the one he had learned from his father. It consisted in "digesting" books so thoroughly that they became absorbed in life. But Rousseau did not merely describe reading as he and the characters of his books experienced it. He directed the reading of his readers. He showed them how to approach his books. He guided them into the texts, oriented them by his rhetoric, and made them play a certain role. Rousseau even attempted to teach his readers how to read and, through reading, tried to touch their inner lives. This strategy required a break with conventional literature. Instead of hiding behind the narrative and pulling strings to manipulate the characters in the manner of Voltaire, Rousseau threw himself into his works and expected the reader to do the same. He transformed the relation between writer and reader, between reader and text. If we can form an adequate idea of this transformation, we should be able to picture the ideal reader envisaged by Rousseau and then to compare that ideal with an actual individual, the reader Jean Ranson.

Consider two key texts, the dual prefaces to *La Nouvelle Héloïse*,

where Rousseau discusses reading and the way to read his novel at some length. Both prefaces—one is a brief introduction to the book, the other is a dialogue in which Rousseau represents himself defending his work to a skeptical critic—confront an objection that could be expected from any reader of Rousseau: how could Jean-Jacques do anything as wicked as to publish a novel? The question may seem absurd today, but it fit squarely into the preoccupations of an age in which novels were seen as a moral danger, especially when they dealt with love and their readers were young ladies. Rousseau had won notoriety by denouncing all the arts and sciences for their effect on morals. Yet here he was, shamelessly displaying his name on the title page of the most corrupting kind of literature—not merely a novel, but a story about a tutor who seduces his pupil and later joins her husband in a *ménage à trois*!

Rousseau met the objection head-on in the first sentence of the first preface: "Theaters are necessary for large cities and novels for corrupt peoples."²⁷ The argument echoed his *Lettre à d'Alembert sur les spectacles*, which condemned theatres, novels, and all modern literature, including the work of the Encyclopedists, for undermining civic virtue in healthy republics like Geneva, yet conceded that they could be of some use in decadent monarchies like France. Rousseau wrote both *La Nouvelle Héloïse* and the *Lettre à d'Alembert* during the great crisis of 1757/58, which resulted in his break with Diderot and the party of the *philosophes*. But both books expressed a theme—the corruptive nature of contemporary culture—that went back to the work that first made Rousseau famous, the *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* (1750). It was a theme that weighed on his whole life and that had to be faced at the point of entry into the story of the modern Héloïse. This great novelist had always preached against novels. How then could he write one?

Rousseau's reply in the prefaces is deceptively simple: "This novel is not a novel."²⁸ It is a collection of letters, which Rousseau presents in the role of an editor, as the subtitle and "editor's" name on the title page make clear: "*Letters of two lovers living in a small town at the foot of the Alps*. Collected and published by J.-J. Rousseau." But that pretense would satisfy no one, least of all Rousseau, who was proud of his work and could not refrain from talking about it: "Although I have only the title of an editor here, I have

worked on this book myself, and I do not hide that fact. Have I done the whole thing, and is the entire correspondence a fiction? Readers from high society [*gens du monde*], what does it matter to you? For you it is certainly fiction."²⁹ Behind this *coquetterie*, Rousseau strategically shifts the question from the role played by him to the role expected of the reader. The book will seem contrived to members of the socio-cultural elite (*le monde*, an expression charged with meaning for Rousseau and other men of letters); but to those who can read it with innocent eyes, it will appear as truth itself. Where does Rousseau locate this truth? As far away from salon society as possible: "This book is not made to circulate in society [*le monde*] and is suitable for very few readers. . . . It will displease religious bigots, libertines, and *philosophes*."³⁰ The ideal reader must be able to divest himself of the conventions of literature as well as the prejudices of society. Only then can he enter into the story in the manner prescribed by Rousseau: "Whoever resolves to read these letters must arm himself with patience about the incorrectness of their language, the overblown character of their style, the ordinary quality of the ideas expressed in their inflated phrasing. He must say to himself in advance that those who wrote them are not French, not sophisticates, not academicians nor *philosophes* but rather provincials, foreigners, recluses, young people, almost children, who in their romantic imaginations take the innocent frenzy of their minds to be philosophy."³¹

These distinctions have a social and political edge to them, for Rousseau saw literature as an element in a power system peculiar to the Old Regime. He rejected it, all of it, *belles-lettres* along with the *beau monde*; and in doing so he broke with the *philosophes*. In his eyes, Diderot, d'Alembert, and the other Encyclopedists belonged to the fashionable world of theaters and salons. Philosophy itself had become a fashion, the ultimate in Parisian sophistication; and as it spread beyond Paris, it endangered the healthiest segments of the body politic. D'Alembert's article on Geneva in the *Encyclopédie* epitomized this process. By deriding the old-fashioned puritans who opposed Voltaire's project to establish a theater in their city, it showed that the cultural cancer was attacking the last bastion of virtue, Calvin's republic—and Rousseau's. The article cut "Jean-Jacques Rousseau, citizen of Geneva"³² to the quick, not merely because he identified with his fatherland but also because the dis-

ease that threatened it had also ravaged him. Had he not sunk deeper into depravity with every step that led away from his original innocence? Had he not attempted to break into *le monde*? And had he not used music, theater, literature, and philosophy as a means of entry? He had lived the formula he invented: culture = corruption. So he would invent another cultural form, an antiliterary literature, in which he could defend the cause of virtue by appealing directly to the unsophisticated. Rousseau found his prophetic voice in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, but he spoke only to those who had ears to hear—which in fact meant those with eyes to read.

La Nouvelle Héloïse therefore required a new kind of reading, one that would succeed in proportion to the reader's spiritual distance from Parisian high society. "In moral matters, I hold that there is no reading that can be of use to society people [*gens du monde*]. . . . The further one moves away from business, big cities, crowded social gatherings, the more the obstacles [to morally effective reading] diminish. At a certain point, books can have some usefulness. When one lives alone, one does not hurry through books in order to parade one's reading; one varies them less and meditates on them more. And as their effect is less mitigated by outside influences, they have a greater influence within."³³ Here was a reply to Diderot's terrible phrase, which had precipitated his break with Rousseau: "Only the evil man lives alone."³⁴ Rousseau's rhetoric opened up a new channel of communication between two lonely beings, the writer and the reader, and rearranged their roles. Rousseau would be Jean-Jacques, citizen of Geneva and prophet of virtue. The reader would be a provincial youth, a country gentleman, a woman stifled by the refined conventions of society, an artisan excluded from refinement—it did not matter, provided he or she could love virtue and understand the language of the heart.

Thus Rousseau did not demand that the reader try to turn himself into a Swiss peasant but rather that he reject the dominant values of literature and society. Anyone who wanted to read the lovers' letters as they deserved to be read would have to place himself spiritually "at the foot of the Alps," where literary niceties made no sense. The letters were not written to "please" in Paris—*plaire* being a refinement idealized in the seventeenth century—but to give free rein to feeling.

If you read them as the work of an author who wants to please [*plaire*], or who takes pride in his writing, they are detestable. But take them for what they are, and judge them according to their kind. Two or three young people, simple but sensitive, speak to one another about the interests of their hearts. They never think of trying to cut a fine figure in each other's eyes. They know and love each other too well for vanity [*amour-propre*], another key word for Rousseau] to have a place in their exchanges. They are children; should they think as adults? They are foreigners; should they write correctly? They are recluses; should they be familiar with the ways of society [*le monde*]? . . . They know nothing of such things. They know how to love; they refer everything to their passion.³⁵

The letters of Julie and Saint-Preux lack refinement because they are genuine. They have nothing to do with literature because they are true. Like music, they communicate pure emotion from one soul to another: "They are no longer letters; they are hymns."³⁶ Rousseau offered the reader access to this kind of truth, but only if he would put himself in the place of the correspondents and become in spirit a provincial, a recluse, a foreigner, and a child. In order to do so, the reader would have to jettison the cultural baggage of the adult world and learn to read all over again, as Jean-Jacques had read with his father, who knew how to become "more of a child than you." Thus Rousseauistic reading would explode the conventions established at the height of the classical period by Boileau. It would revolutionize the relation between reader and text, and open the way to romanticism. At the same time, it would revive a way of reading that seems to have prevailed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: reading in order to absorb the unmediated Word of God. Rousseau demanded to be read as if he were a prophet of divine truth, and Ranson understood him in that way: thus the emphasis on religious literature in Ranson's orders did not contradict his Rousseauism but rather complemented it. What set Rousseauistic reading apart from its religious antecedents—whether they were Calvinist, Jansenist, or pietistic—was the summons to read the most suspect form of literature, the novel, as if it were the Bible. By exploiting this paradox, Rousseau would regenerate *le monde*.

But the new style of reading ran into another paradox, as it struggled for expression in the preface to *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. Rous-

seau insisted on the authenticity of the lovers' letters, but he wrote them himself, using all the devices of a rhetoric that he alone could command. He presented his text as the unmediated communication of two souls—"It is thus that the heart speaks to the heart"³⁷—yet the actual communication took place between the reader and Rousseau himself. This ambiguity threatened to undercut the new relation between writer and reader that he wanted to establish. On the one hand, it tended to falsify Rousseau's position by making him appear as a mere editor. On the other, it left the reader looking on from the sideline, virtually as a voyeur. To be sure, such ambiguities, and a heavy dose of voyeurism, exist in all epistolary novels. The genre had been established long ago in France and was undergoing a revival, thanks to the popularity of Richardson. But Rousseau could not hide behind the conventions of the genre because he meant his text to be nonliterary and "true." He could not deny his authorship of the letters without offending truth, and he could not acknowledge the careful craftsmanship that went into them without spoiling their effect.

The problem may look like a false dilemma to the modern reader, but it obsessed Rousseau's contemporaries. Many readers of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* believed and wanted to believe in the authenticity of the letters. Rousseau understood their need in advance. So he had his questioner, the sophisticated man of letters "N" in the second preface or *préface dialoguée*, return again and again to the query: "Is this correspondence real, or is it a fiction?"³⁸ "N" can not let go of it; it "torments" him, he explains.³⁹ By letting him give vent to his doubts, Rousseau appeared to square with the reader and to face up to the paradox inherent in the epistolary genre. Although he could not resolve the paradox, he seemed to subsume it in an attempt to reach a higher truth. He asked the reader to suspend his disbelief and to cast aside the old way of reading in order to enter into the letters as if they really were the effusion of innocent hearts at the foot of the Alps. This kind of reading required a leap of faith—of faith in the author, who somehow must have suffered through the passions of his characters and forged them into a truth that transcends literature.

Ultimately, then, the power of Rousseau's novel derived from the force of his personality. He initiated a new conception of the

author as Prometheus, one that would go far in the nineteenth century. So in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* instead of hiding behind the scene, he strode to the front of the stage. He related everything in the prefaces to himself, his "I". And after refusing to deny that he might have written the letters, he told "N" that he is their editor:

R [Rousseau]: Does a man of integrity hide himself when he speaks to the public? Does he dare to publish something that he will not dare acknowledge? I am the editor of this book, and I will name myself in it as editor.

N: You will name yourself in it? You?

R: I, myself.

N: What! You will put your name to it?

R: Yes, Monsieur.

N: Your real name? *Jean-Jacques Rousseau* spelled out in full?

R: *Jean-Jacques Rousseau* spelled out in full.⁴⁰

Rousseau then explained that he not only intended to assume responsibility for what he wrote, but "I do not want to be considered any better than I am."⁴¹ It was the same position that he would adopt in the *Confessions*. By confessing his moral failures, he underlined his honesty and at the same time created an ideal Jean-Jacques who could speak directly from the heart to the ideal reader envisioned in the text. Author and reader triumphed together over the artifice of literary communication. This metaliterary impulse, which was to find its ultimate expression in the *Confessions*, drove Rousseau to fly his Jean-Jacques openly over *La Nouvelle Héloïse*—an unusual gesture in an age when authors rarely put their names on novels. But Rousseau did not aspire to be novelistic. He wanted to reach through literature into life, his own and that of his readers.

The impact of Rousseauism therefore owed a great deal to Rousseau. He spoke to the most intimate experiences of his readers and encouraged them to see through to the Jean-Jacques behind the texts. It hardly seems surprising that many of them tried to make contact with him in person—so many that he needed a trap door to escape those who sought him out in his retreat on the Ile Saint-Pierre. Rousseau broke down the barriers separating writer from reader. He created the art that he recommended in *Emile*: "the art of speaking to those who are absent and of hearing them, the art of

communicating to those far away, without any mediation, our feelings, will, desires."⁴² He developed that art, but how did his readers respond to it—real readers, not merely those envisioned in the text? That question brings us back to Jean Ranson.

From the beginning of his correspondence, Ranson made it clear that "l'Ami Jean-Jacques" fascinated him as much as Rousseau's writing. Ostervald was well placed to satisfy that interest, because the Swiss publisher sometimes made business trips to Paris, and after gathering literary gossip he sent reports to his young friend in La Rochelle. Unfortunately, Ostervald's side of the correspondence is missing, but it probably contained some accounts of meetings with Rousseau; for Ranson kept calling for news of his *ami* and complained when it failed to arrive: "What! You have seen l'Ami Jean-Jacques and you do not tell me all about it! I hope you have only postponed the report for another letter."⁴³ Ranson was equally anxious to receive Rousseau's works. Much as he fussed about the quality of the printing, he cared most of all about the authenticity of the texts. "One thing that makes me hesitate to purchase more of them," he explained to Ostervald, "is the disavowal that that great unhappy man made of all the editions that were being sold two or three years ago; he would acknowledge only the first edition, which he helped to produce himself and which has been out of print for years."⁴⁴ In the spring of 1777, when Ostervald was about to leave for another trip to Paris, Ranson wrote, "No doubt you will see l'Ami Jean-Jacques. Please find out from him whether we will be able to have a good edition of his works. And I beg of you especially to send me some word about his health before you return."⁴⁵ The man and the works, they always went together in Ranson's letters.

Ranson also accompanied the references to Rousseau with remarks on his own life. In June, 1777, when he was about to turn thirty, he wrote, "I am sure, Monsieur, that you will be happy to hear that I am about to end my bachelorhood. I have chosen and have been accepted by a Miss Raboteau, my cousin, the sister of the young lady whom M. Rother of Nantes married last year. She is also, on her father's side, a relative of Jarnac to the same degree that I am. The happy character of this dear person combined with

all considerations of propriety makes me hope in this commitment for the most [here there is a hole in the paper!]" Then he moved directly to his favorite subject: "Although I have begged you again and again, Monsieur, to send me news about *l'Ami* Jean-Jacques, in whom I take the deepest interest, you are so cruel as to say nothing about him. Haven't you had a chance to see him and to benefit from a few words with him in Paris? Tell me about it at the first possible moment, I insist, if you don't want me to bear a grudge."⁴⁶

Ranson's association of his marriage and his *ami* did not take place by accident. In his next letter he explained:

I send you my warmest thanks for your good wishes concerning my new estate. My wife is as touched as I am by what you wrote to me on her account. I hope it will not be difficult for me to fulfill my duties toward this dear spouse in the fashion that you prescribe and that I have prescribed for myself. If I have been able to do without women until the age of nearly thirty, though I have certainly never looked upon the fair sex with an indifferent eye, I am sure that one will be enough for me for the rest of my life. Everything that *l'Ami* Jean-Jacques has written about the duties of husbands and wives, of mothers and fathers, has had a profound effect on me; and I confess to you that it will serve me as a rule in any of those estates that I should occupy."⁴⁷

The reference to Rousseau remained implicit in a letter that Ranson wrote a few months later. This time he was the one sending congratulations: "I congratulate you warmly, you and Monsieur and Madame Bertrand [Ostervald's son-in-law and daughter], on the happy birth of your granddaughter, which no doubt the mother will nurse herself as she has done for her other children."⁴⁸ At the end of the year, Ranson learned that he, too, was to become a father. He prepared himself for his new responsibilities by reading: "Please procure for me, if possible, an excellent dissertation on the physical education of children published by M. Ballexserd of Geneva. I am about to become a father, and am thinking of how I can best fulfill my duties."⁴⁹ We have moved from a traditional world, where children are raised according to family lore, to the world of Doctor Spock, where they grow up under instructions from the printed word. Ranson sought guidance above all from Rousseau, the prophet of breast-feeding and maternal love. In May,

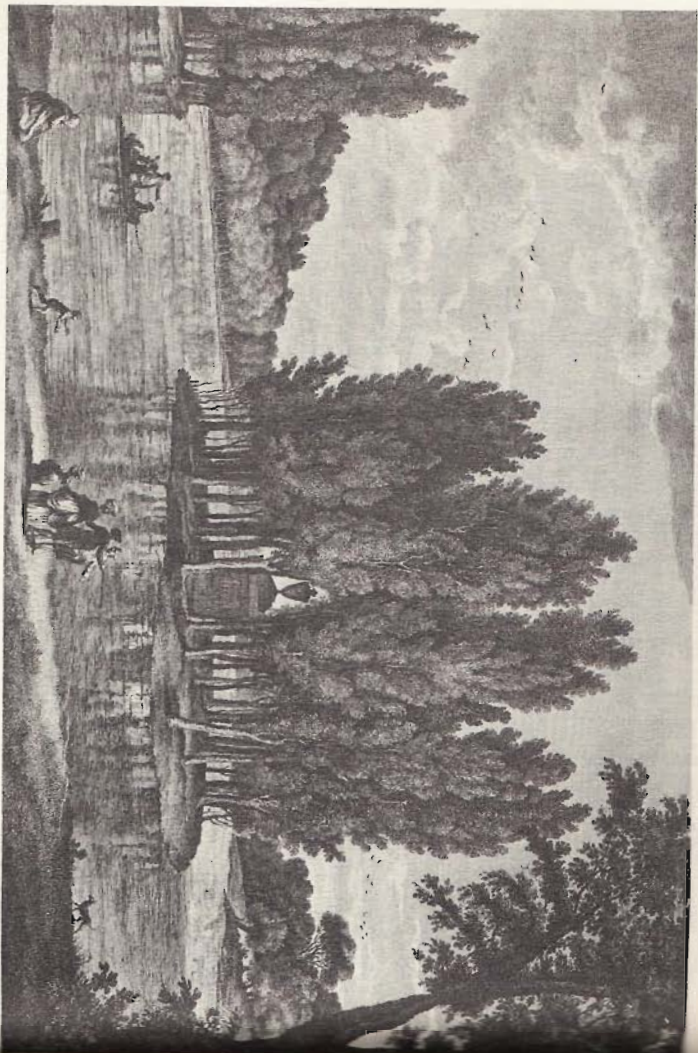
1778, he wrote joyfully, "My wife has made me the father of a girl, who is doing beautifully and who is being nursed by her mother with the greatest success."⁵⁰

But soon afterward he learned that his spiritual guide had died.

So, Monsieur, we have lost the sublime Jean-Jacques. How it pains me never to have seen nor heard him. I acquired the most extraordinary admiration for him by reading his books. If some day I should travel near Ermenonville, I shall not fail to visit his grave and perhaps to shed some tears on it. Tell me, I pray, what you think of this famous man, whose fate has always aroused the most tender feelings in me, while Voltaire often provoked my indignation. . . . He said some years ago that none of the new editions of his works were correct, but rather that all were full of falsifications, cuts, and changes, even the edition of Rey, which he complained about bitterly. I hope he has left behind some manuscripts that will make it possible for one to have an edition free of all those faults. If you learn anything about that, or anything else concerning Rousseau, please share it with me. You would give me the greatest pleasure.

Then, without breaking stride, comes the news of the family: "We are very touched, my wife and I, by the kind things you say about the birth of our daughter, whom the mother continues to nurse with the greatest success and without feeling the slightest discomfort."⁵¹

Ranson went on to talk about Rousseau in a long string of letters. He wanted to know everything about the life and death of his *ami*. He devoured every anecdote he could get his hands on, comparing versions in the *Courier de l'Europe*, *L'Année littéraire*, the *Mercure de France*, the *Annales* of Linguet, and many other periodicals. He hung an engraving of the tomb at Ermenonville on the wall of his study. He bought up eulogies, pamphlets, and even scraps of unpublished manuscripts that were attributed to Rousseau and began to circulate after his death. Ranson also collected rumors, especially those that passed through the shop of his bookseller, Pavie. Some said that Jean-Jacques had died from poisoning. But was it not more probably from stomach trouble, as the *Courier de l'Europe* had claimed? Or did it come as a result of the agony produced by the disappearance of the manuscript of the *Confessions*? The Keeper of the Seals was said to have procured a copy and to have sum-



The tomb of Rousseau at Ermenonville

moned Jean-Jacques to explain how it could be circulating, since he had promised never to release it. Thérèse Levasseur must have sold it behind his back. They needed money desperately at the end, when Jean-Jacques had given up copying music. But why in the world had no one come forth to save them from their misery? Had not Jean-Jacques offered in an open letter of February, 1777, to leave his manuscripts to any patron who would rescue them? The pension that Thérèse received from Marc Michel Rey—and Ranson knew all about the details of Rousseau's domestic life—did not provide enough for them to live on. Perhaps Thérèse would turn to Rey for the publication of the manuscripts now that her husband was dead. According to Pavie, some Parisian booksellers were already offering manuscript copies of the *Confessions* for fifteen louis.

What a treasure those *Confessions* must be! Ranson burned with the desire to read them and everything else that Rousseau had left behind. He wanted to know every secret of his mentor's soul, every detail of his past, every product of his pen, down to the annotations of his music, which Ranson especially requested from the STN. The letters between La Rochelle and Neuchâtel are full of references to plans for the publication of Rousseau's works because the STN was competing with the Société typographique de Genève and a pack of other publishers who wanted to get their hands on the manuscripts left with the marquis de Girardin and Alexandre Du Peyrou. The scramble to put out a full edition of Rousseau's works produced the last great free-for-all in the publishing history of the Old Regime. But to Ranson it did not matter terribly whether the Genevans or his friends in Neuchâtel should win the prize, provided that a complete and accurate edition should appear as soon as possible. He wanted above all to possess the complete Rousseau, to absorb it into his inner world, and to express it in his daily life.

Thus the references to Rousseau continued to appear in his letters as a kind of gloss on the reports about his family. In September, 1778, he linked a long discussion of Rousseau's death and posthumous works to some reflections on the new baby:

I can see from the tenderness that my daughter inspires in me how much the happiness of children must influence that of fathers. How I wish that I knew more, so that I could give my own children lessons,

for no master can teach with the dedication of a father. But if I can teach them the lesson of good morals, if they repay my efforts in that respect alone, I can do without the rest. I speak of my children, and I have only a five-month-old daughter.⁵²

A son was to come in February, 1780, another one in December, 1782. The Ransons named the first Jean Isaac after his maternal grandfather. They named the second Emile. That gesture represented a significant break with family tradition, for the Ransons and Raboteaus had almost always kept to a limited stock of family names—a few Jeans, Pierres, and Pauls among a profusion of the Old Testament variety favored by Protestants: Abraham, Isaac, Elie, Benjamin, Samuel, and Joachim.⁵³ Little Emile was to be a living testimony to his parents' faith in Rousseau's doctrine of education, and human nature in general.

As the children arrived, Ranson sent off announcements of their births accompanied with remarks on their nursing and discussions of Rousseau. He was aware of this double obsession: "I ask your pardon for going on so often and at such length about Jean-Jacques, but I like to tell myself that the enthusiasm he inspires in me, and which is produced entirely by his own enthusiasm for virtue, will excuse me in your eyes and that it will compel you to write to me from time to time about this friend of virtue."⁵⁴ And later, in connection with his daughter: "How much pleasure I take in watching this young creature grow! And how much happiness I will have if she continues to live and if, by a good education, I can make the most of the goodness of her nature. You are a father, Monsieur, and so you will excuse my dwelling on such details, which would have no interest for a man who isn't one."⁵⁵

Ranson's approach to fatherhood explains the importance of the pedagogical and children's literature in his orders with the STN. Those books represented a new attitude toward children and a new desire to oversee their education on the part of parents.⁵⁶ A century earlier, Charles Perrault had produced his tales of Mother Goose to amuse an audience of salon sophisticates. Ranson's favorite authors, notably Mme de Genlis and Mme Leprince de Beaumont, wrote for the children themselves and did so not merely to amuse them but to develop their virtue. The moralistic emphasis of the new children's books stands out in their titles: *Moral playthings, or tales*

for infants and Reading for children, or a selection of short tales equally suited to amuse them and to make them love virtue. It also dominated the new primers for parents, like *Moral education, or a reply to the question: how should one govern the mind and heart of a child in order to make him develop into a happy and useful adult?* These books began from the Rousseauistic premise that children were naturally good and went on to develop a pedagogy saturated with Rousseauism. In addition to them, Ranson owned at least two copies of *Emile*. The remarkable thing, however, is not that he read this or that treatise on children but that he read any treatises at all. He entered into parenthood through reading and relied on books in order to make his offspring into so many Emilés and Emilies.

This behavior expressed a new attitude toward the printed word. Ranson did not read in order to enjoy literature but to cope with life and especially family life, exactly as Rousseau intended. Seen through his letters, Ranson and his wife appear as the perfect image of the readers to whom Jean-Jacques addressed *La Nouvelle Héloïse*: "I like to imagine two spouses reading this collection together, finding in it fresh encouragement to continue with their daily work and perhaps new ways to make it useful," Rousseau wrote in the second preface. "How could they contemplate the picture of a happy household without wanting to imitate such a sweet model?"⁵⁷ Ranson modeled his household in just that way, by reading Rousseau as Rousseau wanted to be read. "My wife sends you her respects," he wrote to Ostervald in September, 1780. "She continues, thank God, to enjoy good health, as does her dear baby, who is doing very well on his mommy's milk. His older sister, a big girl of thirty months, now shows its influence by the best of temperaments. Virtuous Jean-Jacques! It is to thee that I owe this tender obligation."⁵⁸

The rest of the letters in the dossier have the same tone—earnest, intimate, sentimental, and moralistic—the tone set by Rousseau for readers everywhere, however much they differed in their circumstances. Nothing could be more ordinary, perhaps, but the significance of Ranson's letters consists in their ordinariness. They show how Rousseauism penetrated into the everyday world of an unexceptional bourgeois and how it helped him make sense of the things that mattered most in his existence: love, marriage, parent-

hood—the big events of a little life and the stuff that life was made of everywhere in France.⁵⁹

Ranson's way of reading is unthinkable today. And *La Nouvelle Héloïse* is unreadable—if not for everyone, at least for a great many “ordinary” readers of the modern variety, who cannot wade through six volumes of sentiment unrelieved by any episodes of violence, explicit sex, or anything much in the way of plot. The sentiment overwhelmed Rousseau's readers in the eighteenth century—thousands of them, not merely Jean Ranson. By studying their responses, we can put his case in perspective and get a broader view of the gap that separates the readers of the Old Regime from the readers of today.

Although we have very few statistics on book sales under the Old Regime, it is clear that *La Nouvelle Héloïse* was perhaps the biggest best-seller of the century. The demand for copies outran the supply so badly that booksellers rented it out by the day and even by the hour, charging twelve sous for sixty minutes with one volume, according to L.-S. Mercier. At least seventy editions were published before 1800—probably more than for any other novel in the previous history of publishing. True, the most sophisticated men of letters, sticklers for correctness like Voltaire and Grimm, found the style overblown and the subject distasteful. But ordinary readers from all ranks of society were swept off their feet. They wept, they suffocated, they raved, they looked deep into their lives and resolved to live better, then they poured their hearts out in more tears—and in letters to Rousseau, who collected their testimonials in a huge bundle, which has survived for the inspection of posterity.⁶⁰

In going through Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse* mail, one is struck everywhere by the sound of sobbing: “tears,” “sighs,” and “tortment” from the young publisher C.-J. Panckoucke; “delicious tears” and “ecstasy” from the Genevan J.-L. Buisson; “tears” and “delicious outpourings of the heart” from A.-J. Loysseau de Mauléon; “such delicious tears” from Charlotte Bourette of Paris that the mere thought of them set her to weeping more; so many “sweet tears” for J.-J.-P. Fromaget that “at every page my soul melted.” The abbé Cahagne read the same passages aloud to friends at least ten times, each time with bursts of tears all around:

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“One must suffocate, one must abandon the book, one must weep, one must write to you that one is choking with emotion and weeping.” The novel drove J.-F. Bastide to his bed and nearly drove him mad, or so he believed, while it produced the opposite effect on Daniel Roguin, who sobbed so violently that he cured himself of a severe cold. The baron de La Sarraz declared that the only way to read the book was behind locked doors, so that one could weep at one's ease, without being interrupted by the servants. J.-V. Cappeonnier de Gauffecourt read only a few pages at a time because his health was too weak to withstand the emotion. But his friend, the abbé Jacques Perneti, congratulated himself on being robust enough to get through all six volumes without stopping, despite the pounding of his heart. The marquise de Polignac made it to Julie's deathbed scene in volume six but then broke down: “I dare not tell you the effect it made on me. No, I was past weeping. A sharp pain convulsed me. My heart was crushed. Julie dying was no longer an unknown person. I believed I was her sister, her friend, her Claire. My seizure became so strong that if I had not put the book away I would have been as ill as all those who attended that virtuous woman in her last moments.” Lower down on the social scale, Charlotte de La Taille cried her heart out at the death of Julie and did not regain her composure for eight days. Sensing that the end was near for the heroine, Louis François, a retired army officer, found it impossible to continue, though he had wept his way without a halt through the earlier volumes:

You have driven me crazy about her. Imagine then the tears that her death must have wrung from me. Can you believe it? I spent three days without daring to read the last letter, from M. de Wolmar to Saint-Preux. I knew how gripping every detail of it would be. But I could not bear the idea of Julie dead or dying. Still, I finally had to overcome my aversion. Never have I wept such delicious tears. That reading created such a powerful effect on me that I believe I would have gladly died during that supreme moment.

Readers from all ranks of society and all corners of the Continent reacted in the same way. As a normally restrained Swiss reviewer put it: “One must die of pleasure after reading this book, . . . or rather one must live in order to read it again and again.”⁶¹ *La Nouvelle Héloïse* did not produce the first epidemic of emotion

in the history of literature. Richardson had already set off waves of sobbing in England, and Lessing had done the same in Germany. Rousseau differed from them in that he inspired his readers with an overwhelming desire to make contact with the lives behind the printed page—the lives of his characters and his own. Thus after confessing to a confidante that she had wept her heart out over Rousseau's lovers, Mme de Polignac explained to a friend that she had felt an irresistible need to see Rousseau himself.

You know that as long as he only appeared to me to be a philosopher, a man of wit, I never considered attempting to get to know him. But Julie's lover, the man who loved her as she deserved to be loved, oh! that is not the same thing. My first impulse was to order my horses harnessed so that I could go to Montmorency and see him, no matter what the cost, and tell him how much his tenderness places him above other men in my eyes, to persuade him to let me see the portrait of Julie, to kiss it, to kneel before it, and to worship that divine woman who never ceased to be a model of all the virtues even when she lost her virtue.⁶²

Exactly as Rousseau had foreseen in the prefaces, his readers wanted to believe that Julie, Saint-Preux, Claire, and the others had really existed. They saw him as Julie's lover, or at least as someone who must have experienced all the passions of the characters in order to have described them so convincingly. And so they wanted to write to him, to send letters of their own, to assure him that they had felt such emotions in their lives, however obscure, and that their feelings responded to his—in a word, that they understood.

Thus Rousseau's correspondence became the logical extension of his epistolary novel. In sending letters to him, his readers conveyed reassurances that his message had got across, passing beyond the printed page from his soul into theirs. "It seems to me that one cannot exchange thoughts with you without being filled with your spirit," wrote Louis François. "... I have hardly lived as virtuously as Julie, but the soul of Saint-Preux had passed completely into mine. And Julie in the grave! After that I could see nothing but a frightful emptiness in nature. Am I wrong then to say that there is no equal to you on earth? Who but the great Rousseau can over-

whelm his readers in that way? Who else can wield a pen so forcefully as to make his soul pass into theirs?" The same impulse overcame relatively sober readers, like the Protestant minister Paul-Claude Mouton:

No, Monsieur, I can no longer keep quiet. You have overwhelmed my soul. It is full to bursting, and it must share its torment with you. . . . Oh Julie! Oh Saint-Preux! Oh Claire! Oh Edouard! What planet do your souls inhabit, and how can I unite mine with yours? They are the offspring of your heart, Monsieur; your mind alone could not have made them as they are. Open that heart to me so that I can contemplate the living models of the characters whose virtues made me weep such sweet tears.⁶³

Of course, one must make allowances for the hypersensitive style of the time, but many of the letters have a ring of authenticity. A certain Mme Du Verger wrote from an obscure outpost in the provinces because of an invincible desire to know whether Rousseau's characters were real:

Many people who have read your book and discussed it with me assert that it is only a clever fabrication on your part. I can't believe that. If so, how could a mistaken reading have produced sensations like the ones I felt when I read the book? I implore you, Monsieur, tell me: did Julie really live? Is Saint-Preux still alive? What country on this earth does he inhabit? Claire, sweet Claire, did she follow her dear friend to the grave? M. de Wolmar, milord Edouard, all those persons, are they only imaginary as some want to convince me? If that be the case, what kind of a world do we inhabit, in which virtue is but an idea? Happy mortal, perhaps you alone know it and practice it.

Above all, she wanted to make contact with Rousseau himself: "I would not speak to you so freely, if your way of thinking were not already known to me by your works. Besides, I should say straight away that if you were determined to make conquests, mine would not flatter you."⁶⁴

The suggestion of seduction shows through many of the letters from Jean-Jacques's female admirers. Who better understood love than the lover, or at least the creator, of Julie? Women threw themselves at him, in letters and in pilgrimages to his retreat at Montmorency. Marie-Anne Alissan de La Tour cast herself as Julie,

while her friend Marie-Madeleine Bernardoni took the role of Claire, and together they deluged Rousseau with letters so artfully turned that soon he was playing Saint-Preux to them in a correspondence that lasted several years.⁶⁵ Rousseau later noted with some satisfaction in his *Confessions* that his novel had overwhelmed society ladies, even though it represented a rejection of *le monde*: "Opinions were divided among men of letters, but in society everyone agreed. Women especially became so intoxicated with the book and with its author that there were few of them, even of the highest rank, whom I could not have had, if I had attempted their conquest." He told the story of one grande dame who began to read the book after supper, while being dressed for a ball. At midnight, still reading, she ordered her horses to be harnessed. At two o'clock her servants reminded her that the carriage was waiting, but she read on. By four, she was still reading feverishly. Her watch had stopped, so she rang to enquire about the time—and then decided to send the horses back to the stable, undress, and spend the rest of the night in rapturous communion with Saint-Preux, Julie, and Jean-Jacques.⁶⁶

Of course, *La Nouvelle Héloïse* is a love story, but it was love of virtue that Rousseau's readers confessed when they tried to explain the emotion that he had aroused in them. "I would like to take hold of you and squeeze you in my arms," wrote Jean-Joseph-Pierre Fromaget, a minor tax official. "... I must express my gratitude, Monsieur, for all the pleasure you have given me, for all the sweet tears that Saint-Preux, Julie, Mme D'Etange have made me shed. I gladly would have become each of the characters you created. At each page my soul melted: Oh! is not virtue beautiful!"⁶⁷ In trying to make contact with Rousseau by letter, many of his readers were driven by a need to confess to him just as they took him to be confessing to them—indirectly through the letters of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* before the open baring of the soul that was to come in the *Confessions*. They wanted to tell him how they identified with his characters, how they, too, had loved, sinned, suffered, and resolved to be virtuous again in the midst of a wicked and uncomprehending world. They knew his novel was true because they had read its message in their lives.

An anonymous reader overseas explained that he had had to

leave his Julie behind in France. While sobbing through *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, he had seen his life unfold before him and had felt a powerful urge "to throw my arms around you and to thank you a thousand times for the delicious tears that you wrung out of me." A young woman wrote that she could identify with Rousseau's characters, unlike those in all the other novels she had read, because they did not occupy a specific social station but rather represented a general way of thinking and feeling, one that everyone could apply to their own lives and thus become more virtuous. An austere Genevan, who disapproved of all novels, found himself carried away despite his principles: "I confess that I felt all the feelings expressed in those letters become personified in me while reading them and that I became successively Julie, Wolmar, Bomston, often Claire but rarely Saint-Preux, except in the first part." As soon as he put down the book Panckoucke picked up the pen, driven by a need to tell all—even though he did not have much to tell (his speculations in publishing had only begun and he had not yet dreamt of cornering the market for the works of Voltaire):

Your divine works, Monsieur, are an all-consuming fire. They have penetrated my soul, fortified my heart, enlightened my mind. For a long time my reason, given over to the deceiving illusions of an impetuous youth, became lost in the search for truth. I sought happiness, and it eluded me.... The study of some modern authors had confirmed my meditations, and I was already a thorough scoundrel in my heart without having yet done anything that could make me blush. I needed a god, and a mighty god, to pull me away from that precipice, and you, Monsieur, are the god who has performed the miracle. The reading of your *Héloïse* has completed what your other works had already begun. How many tears did I shed over it! How many sighs and torments! How often did I see my own guilt. Ever since I read your blessed book, I have burned with the love of virtue, and my heart, which I had thought extinguished, bears harder than ever. Feeling has taken over once again: love, pity, virtue, sweet friendship have for ever conquered my soul.⁶⁸

Again and again the readers returned to the same theme. Jean-Jacques had made them see deeper into the meaning of their lives. They may have erred like Julie and Saint-Preux, but they had always loved virtue in their hearts and now they would dedicate

themselves to it—not virtue in the abstract, but the homespun variety, which they would work into the fabric of their family lives. M. Rousselot, B.-L. de Lenfant de la Patrie, A.-L. Lalive de Jully read, wept, and resolved to get a grip on their lives. F.-C. Constant de Rebecque learned to love her husband by picturing him as Saint-Preux and herself as Julie. And J.-L. Le Coindre saw his whole family in a new light: “Sincerely committed to a young wife, I have learned from you, and she has, too, that what had seemed to us to be a mere attachment based on the habit of living together is in fact a most tender love. At the age of twenty-eight, I am a father of four children, and I will follow your lessons in order to form them into men—not the kind of men you see everywhere around you, but the kind that we see in you alone.”⁶⁹

It would be wrong to dismiss such effusions as fan mail—although the very idea of a writer receiving mail from unknown admirers was a significant novelty, part of the new cult of the writer that Rousseau was helping to create. Naïve and sentimental as the letters may seem today, they testify to the effectiveness of Rousseau’s rhetoric two hundred years ago. His “fans” read him in the way that he asked to be read and threw themselves into the role called for in the prefaces. “In truth, Monsieur, I do not think that you can find on earth a reader more worthy of you than I am,” wrote A.-J. Loyseau de Mauléon. “There is not a description, not a sentiment, not a reflection, not a principle in your book that does not correspond to my unhappy lot.” In describing the way they suspended their critical instinct, identified with the characters, and let waves of emotion wash over themselves, the readers paraphrased or quoted, consciously or not, the instructions that Rousseau had given them in the prefaces. One admirer explained that he had been so moved by Julie’s love story that he knew it must be true; only to the heartless sophisticates of *le monde* could it be “a fiction.” Another reproduced the moral argument of the prefaces almost exactly, concluding, “I feel myself to be a better person ever since I read your novel, which I hope is not a novel.” And a third made the allusion explicit: “Your book produced in me the effects that you had foreseen in your preface.”⁷⁰

The flood of tears unloosed by *La Nouvelle Héloïse* in 1761 should not be considered as just another wave of preromantic senti-

mentality. It was a response to a new rhetorical situation. Reader and writer communed across the printed page, each of them assuming the ideal form envisioned in the text. Jean-Jacques opened up his soul to those who could read him right, and his readers felt their own souls elevated above the imperfections of their ordinary existence. Having made contact with “l’Ami Jean-Jacques,” they then felt capable of repossessing their lives, as spouses, parents, and citizens, exactly as Ranson was to do a few years later, when he began to read Rousseau.

Ranson was not, therefore, an aberration. The letters that he sent to Ostervald from 1774 to 1785 show the same kind of response that one can find spread out horizontally, so to speak, in the letters received by Rousseau in 1761. The two dimensions complement each other and suggest that Rousseauistic reading was an important phenomenon in prerevolutionary France. How important? One cannot measure it precisely, but one can hold it up against the main governing hypothesis—in fact, the only broad generalization—in the newly emerging field of the history of reading: namely, that a “reading revolution” (*Leserevolution*) took place in Europe toward the end of the eighteenth century.

As developed by Rolf Engelsing and other German scholars, this notion divides the development of reading into two phases.⁷¹ From the Renaissance until 1750 approximately, Europeans read “intensively.” They had access to very few books—the Bible, devotional works, an occasional chapbook or an almanac—and they read them over and over again, meditating on them inwardly or sharing them aloud with others in family and social gatherings (the *Spinnstube* and *weilée*). In the second half of the eighteenth century, educated people began to read “extensively.” They ran through a great deal of printed matter, especially novels and journals, the favorite genres in the reading clubs (*Lesegesellschaften*, *cabines littéraires*) that proliferated everywhere in urban centers. And they read each item only once, for amusement, then raced on to the next.

The distinction between intensive and extensive reading may serve as a way to contrast the behavior of readers five centuries ago with that of readers today, but does it help one to locate a turning point in the late eighteenth century? Not if Ranson’s case has any

typically. True, Ranson read a great many novels and journals, and he sometimes read them with friends, in a way that bears some resemblance to the sociability of the German *Lesgesellschaften*. Thus he remarked in a letter to Ostervald of 1774, "Nordingh, who reads various journals with me, asks you to stop sending yours to him because the copy I receive will do for both of us."⁷² But reading of this kind did not exclude intensity, and seven years later Ranson wrote that he was cutting down on his subscriptions to journals in order to read still more intensively: "I must say that I am overwhelmed with periodicals, which take away time that I should devote to solid reading; so instead of increasing the number I receive, I am doing all I can to reduce it."⁷³ Ranson's interest in contemporary novels did not mean that he neglected the classics, or that he read the great figures of French literature rapidly and only once. He wrote that he liked Mercier and the *Tableau de Paris*, "but I cannot forgive him for what he says about Racine, a divine poet, whom I never reread without discovering new charms."⁷⁴ One could hardly find a more intensive reader than Ranson, and his reading became more intense as he did more of it. If anything, it illustrates a "reading revolution" in reverse.

That Ranson's way of reading did not run counter to the main trend of his time can be appreciated by the German counterpart of Viard: *Die Kunst Bücher zu Lesen* (Jena, 1799), a manual on reading by Johann Adam Bergk, which should be the embodiment of a *Leserevolution*, if there were one. Instead of dwelling on problems of pronunciation in the manner of Viard, Bergk propounded a full-blown "art of reading." He began with advice on how to approach books physically. You should never read while standing or after having finished a meal. Instead, you should wash your face with cold water and take your book outdoors, where you can read it in the bosom of nature—and aloud, for the sound of the voice facilitates the penetration of ideas. But most important, you should have the right spiritual disposition. Instead of responding passively to the text, you should throw yourself into it, seize its meaning, and apply it to your own life. "We must relate everything we read to our 'I,' reflect on everything from our personal point of view, and never lose sight of the consideration that study makes us freer and more independent, and that it should help us find an outlet for the

expression of our heart and mind."⁷⁵ Bergk attributed this conception of reading to Jean-Jacques Rousseau. He devoted a crucial chapter to Rousseau and cited on his title page the very lines from *La Nouvelle Héloïse* that meant so much to readers like Ranson: "To read little and meditate a great deal upon our reading, or to talk it over extensively between ourselves, that is the way to thoroughly digest it."⁷⁶ This notion is quite compatible with Viard's emphasis on reading as a moral preparation for living. In fact, the reading that was expounded in the textbooks, called for by Rousseau, and experienced by Ranson was essentially the same; but it was not the "extensive" reading of Engelsing's revolution.

It seems to me, in short, that no such revolution took place. But something happened to the way that readers responded to texts in the late eighteenth century. How many readers? How many texts? The quantitative questions will not admit of answers. One can only assert that the quality of reading changed in a broad but immeasurable public toward the end of the Old Regime. Although many writers prepared the way for this change, I would attribute it primarily to the rise of Rousseauism. Rousseau taught his readers to "digest" books so thoroughly that literature became absorbed in life. The Rousseauistic readers fell in love, married, and raised children by steeping themselves in print. They were not, of course, the first to respond dramatically to books. Rousseau's own reading showed the influence of the intense, personal religiosity of his Calvinist heritage. His public probably applied an old style of religious reading to new material, notably the novel, which had previously seemed incompatible with it. And there may be a spark of that spirit in the way readers have reacted to Nietzsche or Camus or even popular psychology today. But to search for parallels to Rousseauistic reading in other ages is to blur its specificity and to blunt its significance. Ranson and his contemporaries belonged to a peculiar species of reader, one that arose in the eighteenth century and that began to die out in the age of Madame Bovary. The Rousseauistic readers of prerevolutionary France threw themselves into texts with a passion that we can barely imagine, that is as alien to us as the lust for plunder among the Norsemen . . . or the fear of demons among the Balinese.

If I had to place this kind of reading in a general pattern, I would

locate it between the reading intended to please (*plaire*) in the late seventeenth century and to amuse (*distrainre*) in the late nineteenth century. But that schema is also too simplistic. It leaves no room for those who read in order to reach heaven, to understand the laws of nature, to improve their manners, or, eventually, to repair their radios. Reading has assumed too many forms to follow a single course of development. But its Rousseauistic variety should be recognised as a distinct historical phenomenon and should not be confused with reading in the present, for the readers of the Old Regime lived in a mental world that is almost unthinkable today.

The need to think the almost unthinkable and to capture the differences in the ways men have construed the world brings us back to Jean Ranson. I must admit in the end that I do find him exemplary, not because he conforms to any statistical pattern but because he was exactly the "other" addressed in Rousseau's writing. He embodied both the ideal reader envisioned in the text and the real reader who bought the books. And the way he brought those roles together demonstrated the effectiveness of Rousseauistic rhetoric. By stamping his vision of the world on Ranson's daily life, Rousseau showed how he could touch lives everywhere. And by absorbing the texts as Rousseau taught him, Ranson testified to a new relationship between the reader and the printed word. Writer and reader together realized a transformation in a mode of communication that went far beyond literature and that would leave its mark on several generations of revolutionaries and romantics.

APPENDIX: RANSON'S ORDERS FOR BOOKS, 1775-85

The following list covers all the books Ranson ordered from the STN from 1775 to 1785. As he gave only a brief version of the titles, each title, along with other bibliographical information (including the format for works of more than one volume), has been given according to information available in various bibliographies of eighteenth-century literature. It is impossible to know precisely which edition of the books Ranson received, so the dates of the editions given here correspond as closely as possible to the dates of

Ranson's orders. In order to know which editions were available, I have relied primarily on the catalogues of the STN, which were sent regularly to La Rochelle. The STN did a huge wholesale trade in addition to its printing business—the catalogue of 1785 contains 800 titles—and it received books that it did not have in stock from other Swiss publishers. So Ranson could have procured virtually any current book from his supplier in Neuchâtel. But it should be remembered that he bought books from other sources, notably his local bookseller Guillaume Pavie. Thus the following list has a bias in favor of Swiss publications, and it provides only a general indication of Ranson's current reading, not an exact inventory of his library.

The original spelling of the titles has been retained, along with the place of publication given on the title pages. I was not able to identify three of the books.

1. Religion (12 titles)

Holy Scripture, devotional works

La Sainte Bible, qui contient le vieux & le nouveau Testament, revue & corrigée sur le texte hébreu & grec, par les pasteurs & professeurs de l'église de Genève, avec les arguments & les réflexions sur les chapitres de l'Écriture sainte, & des notes, par J. F. Osterwald (Neuchâtel, 1779), 2 vols. in-folio.

Les psaumes de David, mis en vers françois, avec les cantiques pour les principales solennités (Vevay, 1778).

Abrégé de l'histoire-sainte & du catéchisme d'Osterwald (Neuchâtel, 1784). *Recueil de prières, précédé d'un traité de la prière, avec l'explication et la paraphrase de l'Oraison dominicale* (Celle, 1762), by J.-E. Roques.

La nourriture de l'âme, ou recueil de prières pour tous les jours de la semaine, pour les principales fêtes de l'année & sur différents sujets intéressans (Neuchâtel, 1785), by J. F. Osterwald.

Morale évangélique, ou discours sur le sermon de N.S.J.C. sur la montagne (Neuchâtel, 1776), 7 vols. in-8°, by J.-E. Bertrand.

Sermons

Année évangélique, ou sermons pour tous les dimanches & fêtes de l'année (Lausanne, 1780), 7 vols. in-8°, by J.-F. Durand.

Sermons sur les dogmes fondamentaux de la religion naturelle (Neuchâtel, 1783), by H.-D. Chaillet.

Sermons sur différents textes de l'Écriture-sainte (Neuchâtel, 1779), 2 vols. in-8°, by J.-E. Bertrand.

Sermons de Jean Perdreau [not identified].

Sermons sur divers textes de l'écriture-sainte (Genève, 1780), 2 vols. in-8°, by J. E. Romilly.

II. History, travel, geography (4 titles)

Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes (Genève, 1780), 4 vols. in-4°, by G.-T. Raynal.

Voyage en Sicile et à Malte, traduit de l'anglois de M. Brydone, par M. Demeunier (Londres, 1776), 2 vols. in-8°, by Patrick Brydone.

Voyage historique & littéraire dans la Suisse occidentale (Neuchâtel, 1781), 2 vols. in-8°, by J.-R. Sinner.

Description des montagnes & des vallées qui font partie de la principauté de Neuchâtel & Valengin (Neuchâtel, 1766), by E.-S. Osterwald.

[*Abrégé élémentaire de l'histoire universelle et Cours de géographie élémentaire*: see under Children's books.]

III. Belles-lettres (14 titles)

Works

Oeuvres de Molière (Rouen, 1779), 8 vols. in-12.

Oeuvres de M. La Harpe (Paris, 1778), 6 vols. in-8°.

Oeuvres de Crébillon père (Paris, 1774), 3 vols. in-12.

Oeuvres complètes d'Alexis Piron (Neuchâtel, 1777), 7 vols. in-8°.

Oeuvres de J.-J. Rousseau (Neuchâtel, 1775), 11 vols. in-8°.

Oeuvres de J.-J. Rousseau (Genève, 1782), 31 vols. in-12.

Oeuvres posthumes de J.-J. Rousseau, ou recueil de pièces manuscrites pour servir de supplément aux éditions publiées pendant sa vie (Neuchâtel et Genève, 1782-83), 12 vols. in-8°.

Novels

Histoire de François Wrills ou le triomphe de la bienfaisance (Neuchâtel, 1774), by S. J. Pratt.

Le paysan perversi, ou les dangers de la ville, histoire récente mise au jour d'après les véritables lettres des personnages (La Haye, 1776), 4 vols. in-12, by N.-E. Resif de la Bretonne.

Adèle et Théodore ou lettres sur l'éducation, contenant tous les principes relatifs aux trois différents plans d'éducation des princes, des jeunes personnes, & des hommes (Paris, 1782), by S.-F. Ducrest de Saint-Aubin, marquise de Silley, comtesse de Genlis.

Histoire de l'admirable Don Quichotte de la Manche (Lyon, 1781), 6 vols. in-12, by Miguel de Cervantes y Saavedra.

Other

Théâtre de société (Neuchâtel, 1781), 2 vols. in-8°, by Mme de Genlis. *L'an deux mille quatre cent quarante, rêve s'il en fut jamais* (Londres, 1775), by L.-S. Mercier.

Mon bonnet de nuit (Neuchâtel, 1784), 2 vols. in-8°, by L.-S. Mercier.

IV. Medicine (2 titles)

Soins faciles pour la propreté de la bouche & pour la conservation des dents, par M. Boudet, dentiste, suivi de l'art de soigner les piéds (Lausanne, 1782), by Bernard Boudet.

Avis, contenant la manière de préparer une remède contre la rage, publié à Berlin par ordre du Roi de Prusse [not identified].

V. Children's books, pedagogy (18 titles)

Amusement

Théâtre d'éducation, à l'usage des jeunes personnes (Paris, 1785), by Mme de Genlis.

Nouveaux contes moraux (Lyon, 1776), 2 vols. in-12, by Marie Leprince de Beaumont.

L'ami des enfans (Lausanne, 1783), 5 vols. in-12, by Arnaud Berquin.

Fables de La Fontaine (Paris, 1779), by Jean de La Fontaine.

Les hochets moraux, ou contes pour la première enfance (Paris, 1784), 2 vols. in-12, by Monget.

Les jeux d'enfans, poème tiré du hollandais (Neuchâtel, 1781), by A.-A.-J. Feutry.

Lectures pour les enfans, ou choix de petits contes également propres à les amuser & à leur faire aimer la vertu (Genève, 1780), anonymous.

Magasin des enfans, par Mad. le Prince de Beaumont, suivi des conversations entre la jeune Emilie & sa mère (Neuchâtel, 1780), 2 vols. in-12, par Marie Leprince de Beaumont.

Conversations d'Emilie, ou entretiens instructifs & amusans d'une mère avec sa fille (Lausanne, 1784), 2 vols. in-12, by L.-F.-P. Tardieu d'Esclavelles, marquise d'Epinau.

Entretiens, drames, et contes moraux à l'usage des enfans (La Haye, 1778), by M.-E. Bouée de Laftte.

Instruction

Annales de la vertu, ou cours d'histoire à l'usage des jeunes personnes (Paris, 1781), 2 vols. in-8°, by Mme de Genlis.

Cours de géographie élémentaire, par demandes & réponses (Neuchâtel, 1783), by E.-S. Osterwald.

Les vrais principes de la lecture, de l'orthographe et de la prononciation française, suivis d'un petit traité de la ponctuation, des premiers éléments de la grammaire et de la prosodie française et de différentes pièces de lecture propres à donner des notions simples & faciles sur toutes les parties de nos connaissances (Paris, 1763), by N.-A. Viard.

Abrégé élémentaire de l'histoire universelle destiné à l'usage de la jeunesse (s.l., 1771), by Mathurin Veyssièrre de Lacroze and J.-H.-S. Formey.

Pedagogy, moral education

Legs d'un père à ses filles (Lausanne, 1775), by John Gregory.

Dissertation sur l'éducation physique des enfants, (Paris, 1762), by J. Ballesserd.
Education morale, ou réponse à cette question, comment doit-on gouverner l'esprit et le cœur d'un enfant, pour le faire parvenir un jour à l'état d'homme heureux et utile (1770), by J.-A. Comparct.
Instructions d'un père à ses enfants sur le principe de la vertu & du bonheur (Genève, 1783), by Abraham Trembley.

VI. Other (9 titles)

Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts & des métiers (Genève et Neuchâtel, 1778-79), 36 vols. of text and 3 vols. of plates in-4°.
Le socrate rustique, ou description de la conduite économique et morale d'un paysan philosophe (Lausanne, 1777), by Hans Caspar Hirtzel.
Le messager boïeux (Berne, 1777).
Mémoires secrets pour servir à l'histoire de la république des lettres en France depuis 1762 jusqu'à nos jours (Londres, 1777-83), 21 vols. in-12, attributed to Louis Petit de Bachaumont and others.
Relation ou notice des derniers jours de M. J.-J. Rousseau, circonstances de sa mort et quels sont les ouvrages posthumes qu'on peut attendre de lui (Londres, 1778), by A.-G. Le Bègue de Presles and J.-H. Magellan.
Discours sur l'économie politique (Geneva, 1785), by Jean-Jacques Rousseau.
Lettres de feu M. de Haller contre M. de Voltaire (Berne, 1778), by Albrecht von Haller.
Tableau de Paris (Neuchâtel, 1783), 8 vols. in-8°, by L.-S. Mercier.
Portraits des rois de France (Neuchâtel, 1784), 4 vols. in-8°, by L.-S. Mercier.

CONCLUSION

HAVING MADE this quick trial run through eighteenth-century culture, can we draw any conclusions about the history of *mentalités*? The genre remains obscure, although the French have tried to surround it with prolegomena and discourses on method. The most revealing of their programmatic statements is an essay by Pierre Chaunu: "Un Nouveau Champ pour l'histoire sérielle: Le Quantitatif au troisième niveau" ("A New Field for Statistical History: Quantification at the Third Level.") Chaunu makes explicit a set of assumptions that can be found almost everywhere in recent French historiography, that unites Marxists and revisionists, that determines the structure of the best doctoral theses, and that is inscribed in the title of France's most influential historical journal, *Annales: Économies, sociétés, civilisations*—namely, that one can distinguish levels in the past; that the third level (culture) somehow derives from the first two (economics and demography, and social structure); and that third-level phenomena can be understood in the same way as those on the deeper levels (by means of statistical analysis, the play of structure and conjuncture, and considerations of long-term change rather than of events). This historiographical tradition, usually identified loosely as the "*Annales* school," has

- Century Background of Leibniz's Synthesis of Order and Disorder* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), and Paolo Rossi, *Philosophy, Technology and the Arts in the Early Modern Era* (New York, 1970). On encyclopaedias before Diderot's *Encyclopédie*, see Robert Collison, *Encyclopaedias: Their History throughout the Ages* (New York, 1966), and Frank A. Kafker, ed., *Noble Encyclopaedias of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Nine Predecessors of the Encyclopédie*, *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, CXCV (Oxford, 1981). For a recent but rather superficial overview of systems for classifying knowledge, see Fritz Machlup, *Knowledge: The Branches of Learning* (Princeton, 1981). I am indebted to Anthony Grafton for bibliographical guidance and criticism in my attempts to make sense of these subjects.
6. *Discours préliminaire* in *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, par une société de gens de lettres* (Paris, 1751–72), I, i. All subsequent references to the *Discours préliminaire* come from the first edition of the *Encyclopédie*.
 7. *Prospectus de l'Encyclopédie* in Denis Diderot, *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris, 1969), II, 281. On the notion of an encyclopædia as a circle or great chain of knowledge, see also Diderot's key article, *ENCYCLOPÉDIE* in *Encyclopédie*, V, reprinted in Diderot, *Oeuvres complètes*, II, 365–463.
 8. *Discours préliminaire*, p. xv.
 9. *Prospectus*, p. 285–86.
 10. *Prospectus*, p. 285.
 11. Ephraim Chambers, *Cyclopaedia: or an Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences*, 5th ed. (London, 1741), I, p. ii.
 12. *Ibid.*, p. iii.
 13. *Discours préliminaire*, p. xxiv.
 14. See the articles in the *Mémoires de Trévoux*, Jan. and Feb., 1751, reprinted in Diderot, *Oeuvres complètes*, II, 325–32 and 352–55.
 15. Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, ed. W. A. Wright (Oxford, 1876), p. 268.
 16. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
 17. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
 18. *Discours préliminaire*, p. xvii.
 19. Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*, p. 86.
 20. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
 21. *Discours préliminaire*, p. xlvii.
 22. *Lettre de M. Diderot au R. P. Berthier, jésuite* in Diderot, *Oeuvres complètes*, II, 334.
 23. *Discours préliminaire*, p. li.
 24. *Encyclopédie*, I, 498.
 25. Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*, pp. 109–10. Bacon acknowledged the force of inductive reasoning about God, but he considered it dangerous: "Out of the contemplation of nature, or ground of human knowledges, to induce any verity or persuasion concerning the points of faith, is in my judgement not safe" (p. 109).
 26. *Discours préliminaire*, p. xvii.
 27. *Ibid.*, p. xlviii. For Locke's version of this argument, see *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. A. S. Pringle-Pattison (Oxford, 1960), book II, chap. 23, 154–74.
 28. *Discours préliminaire*, p. iii.
 29. *Ibid.*, p. iv.
 30. *Ibid.*, p. iv.
 31. *Ibid.*, p. iii.
 32. *Ibid.*, p. ix.
 33. *Ibid.*, p. xiv.
 34. *Ibid.*, p. ix.
 35. *Ibid.*, p. xiv.
 36. *Ibid.*, p. xvii.
 37. See also d'Alembert's "Avertissement" to the third volume of the *Encyclopédie* (III,

iv) "In this world, one will not find . . . the companion who have created the earth, but rather the immortal geniuses, who have enlightened it. Not [with] one find a crowd of sovereigns who should have been proscribed from history. Even the names of princes and great personages have no right to a place in the *Encyclopédie*, except by virtue of the good they have done for science, because the *Encyclopédie* owes everything to talent and nothing to titles. It is the history of the human spirit, not of the vanity of mankind."

38. *Discours préliminaire*, p. xxvi.
39. *Ibid.*, p. xxvi.
40. *Ibid.*, p. xxvii.
41. *Ibid.*, p. xxvi.
42. D'Alembert, *Essai sur la société des gens de lettres et des grands, sur la réputation, sur les Mérites, et sur les récompenses littéraires* in *Mélanges de littérature, d'histoire et de philosophie* (Amsterdam, 1773, 1st ed., 1752), p. 330.
43. *Encyclopédie*, VII, 599.
44. On the metamorphoses of this essay, which Voltaire also reprinted in *Les Lois de Minos* (1773), see Herbert Dieckmann, *Le Philosophe: Texts and Interpretation* (Saint Louis, 1948).
45. For documentation of this theme, which still needs further exploration, see Ira Wade, "The Philosopher" in the *French Drama of the Eighteenth Century* (Princeton, 1926).
46. For a preliminary survey of philosophy and *Encyclopédisme* as terms in vogue during the eighteenth century, see Ferdinand Brunot, *Histoire de la langue française des origines à nos jours* (Paris, 1966), VI, part 1, 3–27.
47. D'Alembert also stressed this in the "Avertissement" (*Encyclopédie*, III, iv): "It is thus principally by its philosophical spirit that we shall attempt to make this dictionary stand out."

Chapter 6

1. This essay is an attempt to combine traditional history, based on archival research, with textual interpretation of the kind developed by literary critics such as Wolfgang Iser, Hans Robert Jauss, Wayne Booth, Stanley Fish, Walter Ong, Jonathan Culler, Louis Marin, and others. For a survey of the work in this field and a thorough bibliography, see Susan R. Suleiman and Inge Crosman, eds., *The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation* (Princeton, 1980). As examples of work concerning Rousseau, see: Robert J. Ellrich, *Rousseau and His Reader: The Rhetorical Situation of the Major Works* (Chapel Hill, 1969); Harald Weinrich, "Muss es Romanlektüre geben? Anmerkungen zu Rousseau und zu den Lesern der *Nouvelle Héloïse*," in *Leser und Lesen im 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Rainer Gruenter (Heidelberg, 1977), pp. 28–32; Roger Baucé, "Einführung in einige Texte von Jean-Jacques Rousseau," in *Leser und Lesen*, pp. 33–39; and Hans Robert Jauss, *Ästhetische Erfahrung und literarische Hermeneutik* (Frankfurt am Main, 1982), pp. 585–653.

2. I owe this information to A. L. Becker, who has observed many Balinese funerals as a linguist and ethnographer.

3. References to Ranson's dossier, in the Bibliothèque de la ville de Neuchâtel, ms. 1204, will be indicated hereafter by the abbreviation STN. Some excerpts from it will be published by R. A. Leigh in volumes XI and XII of the *Correspondance complète de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*. The information on Ranson from La Rochelle comes from his marriage contracts of June 24, 1777, and Nov. 29, 1788, Archives départementales de la Charente-Maritime, Minutes Crasous 3 E 776 and Minutes Roy 3 E 89, which were most obligingly sent to me in photocopy by Mlle O. de Sainte-Affrique.

4. Ranson made his own estimate of his wealth in his marriage contract of Nov. 29,

elle Héloïse, see the critical study by Bernard Cayron in *Oeuvres complètes*, II, xxvii-188.

35. Rousseau, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, II, 16.

36. *Ibid.*, II, 16.

37. *Ibid.*, II, 15.

38. *Ibid.*, II, 11.

39. *Ibid.*, II, 29.

40. *Ibid.*, II, 26-27.

41. *Ibid.*, II, 27.

42. Rousseau, *Emile*, IV, 357.

43. Ranson to STN, Aug. 9, 1775.

44. Ranson to STN, Jan. 25, 1777.

45. Ranson to STN, March 8, 1777.

46. Ranson to STN, June 10, 1777.

47. Ranson to STN, July 12, 1777.

48. Ranson to STN, Sept. 27, 1777.

49. Ranson to STN, Nov. 29, 1777.

50. Ranson to STN, May 16, 1778.

51. Ranson to STN, Aug. 1, 1778.

52. Ranson to STN, Sept. 12, 1778.

53. The Ransons had named their daughter Elisabeth for Ranson's mother. The information on the children's births and the family names comes primarily from the contract for Ranson's second marriage, dated Nov. 29, 1788. His first wife, Madeleine Raboteau, had died sometime within the previous three years, and Ranson married her cousin, Jeanne François Raboteau.

54. Ranson to STN, Dec. 27, 1778.

55. Ranson to STN, March 16, 1779.

56. See Philippe Ariès, *L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime* (Paris, 1960).

57. Rousseau, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, II, 23.

58. Ranson to STN, Sept. 16, 1780.

59. The last letter in Ranson's dossier is dated August 30, 1785. Ranson almost certainly continued to write to Ostervald after that date, but the letters are not to be found in the STN papers because Ostervald withdrew from the direction of the STN's affairs in 1784/85. Thus one cannot follow Ranson's career and family life to the death of his first wife, his remarriage, and through the Revolution. As mentioned above, he played a minor and moderate role in local revolutionary politics, and he died on August 5, 1823, at the age of seventy-five, having outlived his second wife.

60. For a general view of the response to *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, which includes a brief study of the mail received by Rousseau, see Daniel Mornet, *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (Paris, 1925), I, 247-67. Mornet's findings have been extended in the more systematic and sociological analysis by Daniel Roche, "Les primitifs du Rousseauisme: une analyse sociologique et quantitative de la correspondance de J.-J. Rousseau," *Annales: Economie, sociétés, civilisations* (Jan.-Feb., 1971), xxvi, pp. 151-72. The texts of the letters received by Rousseau can now be read in the splendid edition of Rousseau's correspondence by R. A. Leigh: *Correspondance complète de Jean Jacques Rousseau* (Geneva, 1969), vols. VIII-X.

61. The quotations and other references, in the order of their appearance, come from Rousseau's *Correspondance complète*: C.-J. Panckoucke to Rousseau, Feb., 1761, VIII, 77-78; J.-L. Buisson to Rousseau, Feb. 11, 1761, VIII, 88; A.-J. Loysseau de Mauléon to Rousseau, Feb. 18, 1761, VIII, 130; Charlotte Bourette to Rousseau, Feb. 21, 1761, VIII, 148; J.-J.-P. Fromaget to Rousseau, June 5, 1761, IX, 3; abbé Cahagne to Rousseau, Feb. 27, 1761, VIII, 187 and 191; J.-F. Bastide to Rousseau, Feb. 12, 1761, VIII, 91-92; Daniel Roguin to Rousseau, Feb. 27, 1761, VIII, 181; A.-P. de Gingins, baron de La Sarraz to Rousseau, March (?), 1761, VIII, 263; Jacques Pernetti and Jean-Vincent Capronnet de Gauffecourt to Rousseau, Feb. 26, 1761, VIII, 178; D.-M.-Z.-A. Mazurini-Mancini, marquise de Polig-

1788). In a letter to the STN of March 16, 1779, he remarked that the war had damaged the trade in La Rochelle severely, although it had not hurt his own business. The letter cannot be converted meaningfully into modern currency, but as an example of its value in the eighteenth century, a skilled artisan often made about five hundred livres in a year.

5. For a survey of the literature on eighteenth-century libraries and reading habits in general, see Robert Darnton, "Reading, Writing, and Publishing in Eighteenth-Century France: A Case Study in the Sociology of Literature," *Diacritics* (Winter 1971), 214-56. The most recent study is Michel Marion, *Recherches sur les bibliothèques privées à Paris au milieu de XVIII^e siècle (1750-1759)* (Paris, 1978).

6. Ranson to STN, April 29, 1775.

7. Ranson to STN, Sept. 27, 1780.

8. Ranson to STN, Oct. 17, 1775.

9. Ranson to STN, March 8, 1777.

10. Ranson to STN, Dec. 27, 1774.

11. Ranson to STN, Aug. 30, 1785.

12. Ranson to STN, June 10, 1777.

13. Pavie to STN, March 4, 1772.

14. For example, "False religions. One calls heretics all those who do not believe everything that the Catholic religion commands us to believe. Such are Lutherans, Calvinists, and many others"; N.-A. Viard, *Les vrais principes de la lecture* . . . (Paris, 1763), p. 76.

15. Ranson to STN, Aug. 9, 1775.

16. Ranson to STN, Oct. 17, 1775.

17. Viard, *Les vrais principes de la lecture*, p. i.

18. *Ibid.*, p. xi.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

20. *Ibid.*, p. x.

21. J.-J. Rousseau, *Emile ou de l'éducation in Oeuvres complètes*, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris, 1969), IV, 358.

22. J.-J. Rousseau, *Les Confessions de J.-J. Rousseau in Oeuvres complètes* (Paris, 1959), I, 8.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

24. J.-J. Rousseau, *Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse in Oeuvres complètes* (Paris, 1961), II, 57-58.

25. *Ibid.*, II, 56-57.

26. Rousseau, *Confessions*, I, 111-12.

27. Rousseau, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, II, 5.

28. *Ibid.*, II, 12.

29. *Ibid.*, II, 5.

30. *Ibid.*, II, 5.

31. *Ibid.*, II, 6.

32. Rousseau wore his title "citizen of Geneva" defiantly on the title pages of the works that he wrote during this period, notably his open letters to d'Alembert and to Christophe de Beaumont. The latter offered a provocative contrast between the simple Swiss republican and the powerful archbishop of Paris: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *citoyen de Genève, à Christophe de Beaumont, archevêque de Paris, duc de St. Cloud, pair de France, commandeur de l'ordre du Saint-Esprit, procureur de Sorbonne, etc.* Rousseau left "citizen of Geneva" off the title page of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* because he did not want to "profane" the name of his fatherland in associating it with a novel: *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, II, 27. In the eighteenth-century novels were often considered either morally suspect or a low form of literature, and novelists usually did not put their names on the title pages of their books. In fact, people rarely used first names in their everyday activities, except perhaps among the peasantry. By identifying himself as "Jean-Jacques," Rousseau invited his readers to enter into an unusual, intimate relationship.

33. Rousseau, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, II, 18-19.

34. On the split with Diderot and the circumstances in which Rousseau wrote *La Nou-*

nue to M. M. de Brémont d'Ar, marquis de Verdun, Feb. 3, 1761, VIII, 56; Charlotte de La Taille to Rousseau, March 10, 1761, VIII, 239-40; Louis François to Rousseau, March 24, 1761, VIII, 278-79; and the issue of the *Journal hebdomadaire* of February, 1761, quoted in VIII, 73.

62. D.-M.-Z.-A. Mazarini-Mancini, marquis de Polignac to M.-M. de Brémont d'Ar, marquise de Verdun, Feb. 3, 1761, in *Correspondance complète*, VIII, 56-57.

63. Louis François to Rousseau, March 24, 1761, in *Correspondance complète*, VIII, 278-79; and Paul-Claude Moutou to Rousseau, March 7, 1761, VIII, 225-26.

64. Mme Du Verger to Rousseau, Jan. 22, 1762, in *Correspondance complète*, X, 47.

65. See *Correspondance complète*, IX, 132-55, for the beginning of this correspondence.

66. Rousseau, *Confessions*, I, 545-47.

67. Fromaget to Rousseau, June 5, 1761, in *Correspondance complète*, IX, 3.

68. An anonymous reader to Rousseau, April 6, 1761, in *Correspondance complète*, VIII, 296; letter from an anonymous young woman, March, 1761 (?), VIII, 258-59; Pierre de La Roche to Rousseau, Oct. 16, 1761, IX, 168; and C.-J. Panckoucke to Rousseau, Feb., 1761, VIII, 77-78.

69. M. Rousselot to Rousseau, March 15, 1761, in *Correspondance complète*, VIII, 252; B.-L. de Lefant de la Parrière, baron de Bornes to Rousseau, March 27, 1761, VIII, 280-81; A.-A. Lalive de Jully to Rousseau, Jan. 31, 1761, VIII, 43; F.-C. Constant de Rebecque to F.-M.-S. Constant de Rebecque, Feb. 9, 1761 (?), VIII, 72; and J.-L. Le Coite to Rousseau, April 5, 1761, VIII, 292-93.

70. A.-J. Loyseau de Mauléon to Rousseau, Feb. 18, 1761, in *Correspondance complète*, VIII, 131; an anonymous reader to Rousseau, April 6, 1761, VIII, 296; an anonymous reader to Rousseau, March, 1761, VIII, 256-57; and an anonymous reader to Rousseau, March, 1761, VIII, 257-58. All of these phrases, and expressions in other letters received by Rousseau, adhered closely to the phrasing of the prefaces.

71. Rolf Engelsing, *Der Bürger als Leser: Lesegeschichte in Deutschland 1500-1800* (Stuttgart, 1974). For critical discussions of Engelsing's thesis, see Reinhart Siegert, *Aufklärung und Volkslektüre exemplarisch dargestellt an Rudolph Zacharias Becker und seinem "Noth- und Hülfbüchlein" mit einer Bibliographie zum Gesamthema* (Frankfurt am Main, 1978); and Martin Welke, "Gemeinsame Lektüre und frühe Formen von Gruppenbildungen im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert: Zeitungslesen in Deutschland," in *Lesegeschichten und bürgerliche Emanzipation: Ein europäischer Vergleich*, ed. Otto Dann (Munich, 1981).

72. Ranson to STN, Dec. 27, 1774.

73. Ranson to STN, May 8, 1781.

74. Ranson to STN, June 12, 1785.

75. Johann Adam Bergk, *Die Kunst Bücher zu Lesen* (Jena, 1799), 411.

76. For example, on p. 302 of *ibid.* Bergk emphasized, "Rousseau with his blazing, creative imagination and with his penetrating understanding overwhelms us in his grip and affords us a pleasure that pierces to the innermost recesses of our heart. He tears the veil away from the secrets of nature, and his descriptions like a mighty torrent sweep us off our feet."

Conclusion

1. Pierre Chaunu, "Un Nouveau Champ pour l'histoire sérielle: Le Quantitatif au troisième niveau" in Pierre Chaunu, *Histoire quantitative, histoire sérielle* (Paris, 1978), pp. 216-30. By *sérielle* Chaunu means something more specific than statistical or quantitative, but the word does not translate well as "serial". Also, Chaunu does not discuss the way phenomena

from the last two levels affect those on the third. For an explicit account of that theory, see Fernand Braudel and Ernest Labrousse, *Histoire économique et sociale de la France* (Paris, 1970), II, 693-740; and Albert Soboul, *La Civilisation et la Révolution française* (Paris, 1970), pp. 459-80. For discussions of the history of mentalités as a genre, see the essays by Lucien Febvre reprinted in *Combats pour l'histoire* (Paris, 1965), pp. 207-39; Georges Duby, "Histoire des mentalités" in *L'Histoire et ses méthodes* (*Essai de philosophie de la pensée*, Paris, 1961), pp. 937-66; Alphonse Dupront, "Problèmes et méthodes d'une histoire de la psychologie collective," *Annales: Economie, sociétés, civilisations*, XVI (1961), 3-11; Louis Teyssand, "Histoire des mentalités collectives: Les Livres, bilans et perspectives," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, XV (1968), 691-703; Robert Mandrou, "Histoire sociale et histoire des mentalités," *La Nouvelle Critique* (1972), pp. 3-11; Jacques Le Goff, "Les Mentalités: Une Histoire ambiguë," in *Paire de l'histoire*, ed. Jacques Le Goff and Pierre Nora (Paris, 1974), III, 76-94; Philippe Ariès, "L'Histoire des mentalités," in *La Nouvelle Histoire*, ed. Jacques Le Goff, Roger Chartier, and Jacques Revel (Paris, 1978), pp. 402-22; and Michel Vovelle, "Histoire des mentalités—Histoire des résistances de ou les prisons de la longue durée," *History of European Ideas* II (1981), 1-18. *La Nouvelle Histoire* provides a survey of the historiographical trends that are identified with the "Annales school." For examples of excellent doctoral theses that are constructed according to the same model, see F. G. Dreyfus, *Sociétés et mentalités à Mayenne dans la seconde moitié du dix-huitième siècle* (Paris, 1968); part I, "Economie," part II, "Structure sociale," part III, "Mentalités et culture"; Maurice Gaden, *Lyons et la Lyonnais au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1970); part I, "Démographie," part II, "Société," part III, "Structures mentales et comportements collectifs"; and François Lebret, *Les Hommes et la mort en Anjou aux 17^e et 18^e siècles* (Paris, 1971); part I, "Structures économiques et géographiques," part II, "Structure démographique," part III, "Mentalités."

2. Ernest Labrousse, *La Crise de l'économie française à la fin de l'Ancien Régime et au début de la Révolution* (Paris, 1944), I, xxix; Pierre Chaunu, "Dynamique conjoncturelle et histoire sérielle: Point de vue d'historien," in Chaunu, *Histoire quantitative, histoire sérielle*, p. 17. I have attempted to survey the French literature in a series of articles in *The New York Review of Books*, some of which have been republished as "The History of Mentalités: Recent Writings on Revolution, Criminality, and Death in France," in *Structure, Consciousness, and History*, ed. Richard H. Brown and Stanford M. Lyman (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 106-36. It should be added that some historians connected with the *Annales*, notably Jacques Le Goff and Jean-Claude Schmitt, are now turning away from the quantitative analysis of culture and toward anthropology. See Roger Chartier, "Intellectual or socio-cultural history? The French trajectories," in *Modern European Intellectual History: Reappraisals and New Perspectives*, ed. Dominick La Capra and Steven L. Kaplan (Ithaca, 1982), pp. 13-46; and André Burguière, "The Fate of the History of Mentalités in the *Annales*," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, XXIV (1982), 424-37. However, this anthropology generally remains restricted within the structuralist system of Claude Lévi-Strauss or the functionalism derived from Emile Durkheim. It has not been affected by the symbolic strain in American anthropology, which developed under the influence of Edward B. Tylor and Franz Boas, nor by the Weberian strain, which has flowered in the work of Clifford Geertz. While Americans tend to ignore systems of relations, the French generally neglect systems of meaning.

3. William Langer, *Political and Social Upheaval, 1832-1852* (New York, 1969); Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York, 1971); Hildred Geertz and Keith Thomas, "An Anthropology of Religion and Magic," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, VI (1975), 71-109; Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (New York, 1977); Philippe Ariès, *L'Homme devant la mort* (Paris, 1977); and Michel Vovelle, *Piété baroque et déchristianisation en Provence au XVIII^e siècle: Les Attitudes devant la mort d'après les clauses des testaments* (Paris, 1973).

4. Keith Thomas, "History and Anthropology," *Past and Present*, no. 24 (1963), 3-24; E. E. Evans-Pritchard, "Anthropology and History," in E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Essays in Social Anthropology* (London, 1962). It would be vain to list all the works in anthropology and