

Artikel

Names A new approach to the figurative writing in Rousseau's *Julie ou La Nouvelle Héloïse*

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Abstract

Lately, the fictional names of the letter writers in Rousseau's novel seem to have ceased tempting scientific research in an illuminating way. Mistakenly regarded as negligible, they remain behind the predominance of the pronouns. And yet, it is worth giving them a closer look since they might turn out to be not only fictional but also figural and thus to be the key to a deeper understanding of the allegoric dimensions of Rousseau's poetics. In the essay presented here, intertextuality is serving as the contributing structural principle in the attempt to make them reappear as meaningful signs. It is the very attempt of an extraction of secrets so obviously put on display by the author, so well forgotten by the reader. The degree of difficulty of revealing those secrets is determined by the insight that the process of reading in itself is always belated; therefore, the attempt at entirely 'getting' a literary text, considering it in its totality, is always futile. Nevertheless, that is the challenge.

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A new approach to the figurative writing
in Rousseau's *Julie ou La Nouvelle Héloïse*

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Nature is a book, a letter, a fable (in the philosophical sense of the term), or however one likes to call it. Assuming that we know all of its letters as best we can, that we spell and pronounce every single word, that we even understand its language – is all of that sufficient yet to understand a book, to pass judgement on it, to characterize it or to extract from it? So it takes more than physics to interpret Nature.

(Hamann, *Pastoral Letters*)

Lately, the fictional names of the letter writers in Rousseau's novel seem to have ceased tempting scientific research in an illuminating way. Mistakenly regarded as negligible, they remain behind the predominance of the pronouns. And yet, it is worth giving them a closer look since they might turn out to be not only fictional but also figural and thus to be the key to a deeper understanding of the allegoric dimensions of Rousseau's poetics.

In the essay presented here, intertextuality is serving as the contributing structural principle in the attempt to make them reappear as meaningful signs. It is the very attempt of an extraction of secrets so obviously put on display by the author, so well forgotten by the reader. The degree of difficulty of revealing those secrets is determined by the insight that the process of reading in itself is always belated; therefore, the attempt at entirely 'getting' a literary text, considering it in its totality, is always futile. Nevertheless, that is the challenge.

For the analysis of figural language in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Julie ou La Nouvelle Héloïse*, a very particular intertext proves to be generously prolific: *Le Roman de la rose* by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, the great dream allegory of the 13th century. Its presence in the novel is not restricted on the one sentence inserted in

Letter IV/10 (“Richesse ne fait pas riche, dit le Roman de la Rose.”; II:466).¹ In his essay “The Rhetoric of Temporality”, Paul de Man discovered the close similarity between the garden of Deduit (Pleasure) and the garden of Julie being described in the following letter (IV/11). Although he did not investigate the sentence regarding its subject matter (the philosophical subject), his finding proves to be an argument for the hypothesis that the citation could have an essential function in the text as a whole. According to de Man, the Elisée is not an image of nature that can be perceived. Julie’s garden can neither be read as a realistic description of a new naturalness nor as a metaphor of a “personal *état d’âme*”, but only as an allegory: in the novel, it functions as the landscape representative of the “beautiful soul”.² Thus, in Rousseau, it mirrors the truth. The portrayal of the garden of Deduit, as being one of the most famous versions of the traditional topos of the love garden, is clearly serving as a literary source, but the meaning of the imagery has changed: erotic sensuality has now been replaced by “an ethic of renunciation”.³ To be materialized, the allegorical language has to involve a constitutive temporal element, as it always refers back to an anterior sign but never coincides with it. De Man calls this element “*repetition* (in the Kierkegaardian sense of the term)”.⁴ The garden scene is compared to the Meillerie episode whose language is purely metaphorical: it particularizes the subject / object relationship that is communicated through the parallel movements of nature and emotion. Yet, in Rousseau, it is the language of error and relapse. “The novel could not exist without the simultaneous presence of both metaphorical modes, nor could it reach its conclusion without the implied choice in favor of allegory over symbol.”⁵

As a further comment, we may remark that the *Roman de la rose* is carrying a comparable, yet heterogeneous metaphorical tension. In Guillaume de Lorris’ part, it is performed by the lover’s look into the *fontaine d’amors*, as the transposed and transformed fountain of Narcissus which involves the risk of error and pain; in Jean de Meun’s part, it is revealed in the corrective remodelling of this *mirouers perilleus* into

¹ All references to *Julie ou La Nouvelle Héloïse* are to ROUSSEAU, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. II. Rousseau’s quotation refers to v. 5191 in NICHOLAS LENGLET DU FRESNOY (ed.), *Le Roman de la Rose, par Guillaume de Lorris et Jean de Meun dit Clopinel*, vol. 1-3, Amsterdam/Paris 1735. See also OTT, v. 4975 and LECOY, v. 4945.

² MAN, *Blindness and insight*, p. 201

³ *Ibid.*, p. 203

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 207. Cf. for example KIERKEGAARD, *Either / Or*, “The Immediate Erotic Stages”, p. 67-69.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

the *fontaine de vie*, where error is cancelled out. In Rousseau, this tension is transposed into the settings of the (real) lake, the (natural) streamlets of the copse, and the (artificial) watercourses in Julie's garden (the former orchard). Here and there, despite all differences, the purpose of the trial by water is to test one's faith, to reveal what is genuine, to prove what is true and expose what is false. The heroes' destinies are shaped by their individual (in-)capability of overcoming the erratic obstacles. *Nosce te ipsum* versus *Si se non noverit*.

The figurative dialogue

In order to plumb the depth of Rousseau's figurative writing, it is appropriate in a first step to fathom the artistic scope of the paratexts which surround the epistolary novel. Since 1761, the texture of the title page is presented as follows:

Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse.

Lettres de deux amans, habitans d'une petite ville au pied des Alpes.
Recueillies et publiées par J. J. Rousseau.

Non la connobe il mondo, mentre l'ebbe: Connobill'io ch'a pianger qui rimasi.
Petrarca.⁶

A Amsterdam, chez Marc Michel Rey. MDCCLXI.

Rousseau quotes Petrarca instead of using his original motto (*vitam impendere vero*).⁷ His choice already indicates a specific structural function of the verses in the textual system. The Petrarcan lyrical self (*io*) relates the second verse to itself; it expresses a fictive action started in the past (*Connobill'*), and a present action cross-referenced to the future (*qu'a pianger qui rimasi*). The reader of *Julie*, being the proposed addressee, might take it as an author's motto, if it was hypothetically referred back to Rousseau, being the actual sender. Rousseau himself is ambiguously playing with the role of the

⁶ PETRARCA, *Canzoniere*, sonnet CCCXXXVIII (*Lasciato ài, Morte, senza sole il mondo*). Rousseau translated it as follows: „Le monde la posséda sans la connaître, et moi je l'ai connue, je reste ici-bas à la pleurer.“ (II:1339)

⁷ Rousseau, ambiguous as always, refused the editor's proposal to put the original motto on the titlepage: „Je ne vois pas trop ce qu'elle [la devise] feroit là, et d'ailleurs il me paroît de mauvais goût que le titre d'un livre de cette espèce soit bigarré de latin, de françois et d'italien.“ (II:1336). Of course, he did quite the opposite by bringing on a French title that refers to an allusionated Latin predecessor, and by adding an Italian motto.

sender. In the *Préface dialoguée*, the narrator R. says: “car qui peut savoir si j’ai trouvé cette épigraphe dans le manuscrit, ou si c’est moi qui l’y ai mise?” (II:29).

Alongside the situative / temporal determination of the *io*, the second verse includes an emotive component: the initially self-referential condition implied in *pianger*. *Piangere* can signify “crying”, but also “mourning” in the sense of “declaring”, “notifying”, especially in confrontation with the first verse, in particular: the confrontation of *mondo* (not aware) and *io* (aware). Used as a motto, these potential meanings would define the poet’s individual (elegial) assignment: the emanation of vision and grief.⁸ Vicariously, the quotation insinuates the end of the novel (Julie’s death); hence it might be seen as a narrative technique, a ‘jump-cut’ which the letters, as such, cannot allow in the first place. If the reader grasps Rousseau’s play on words, various possibilities of ascription arise.⁹ Yet, the crucial difference between the quotation on the title page and the citations in the novel itself is made by the (slightly abbreviated) naming of the originator: “Petrarc.”. Rousseau does not put the words into somebody’s mouth, nor does he leave it up to the reader to search for the author. Thus the configuration of the paratext is dialogical; its formal structure enlightens its meaning. *Julie* is allied to *Héloïse*; *Héloïse* and (the absent) *Abélard* are to be seen in association with the letters as being the lovers’ conversation.¹⁰ At the same time, the subtitle classifies the literary genre (*lettres*); genuineness or fiction are deliberately open to question. The little town in which these lovers live is in contact with the nature (*Alpes*), although – the mixed metaphor (*au pied*) emphasizes it – beneath it. Through the letters, the town and the nature, Rousseau is drawing a communicative line to Petrarca and his *Canzoniere* (as well as, implicitly, to his *Ascent of Mont Ventoux*); simultaneously, he is causing a confrontation between Petrarca and Rey (and maybe Amsterdam, too) that could be interpreted as an answer to the question of the absent original motto. In addition to this, Italian and French are facing each other, just like in the novel in which Italian and French music stand opposite.¹¹ Beyond that, the first verse can be understood as a reference to the prologue of the Gospel according to John:

⁸ Regarding the function of tears: see for example PROAL, *La psychologie de J.-J. Rousseau*, p. 49-57.

⁹ Cf. GENETTE, *Seuils*, p. 174.

¹⁰ In fact, the subtitle inception *Lettres de deux amans* is the precise French translation of the *Epistolae duorum amantium*, ascribed to Peter Abelard and Heloïse.

¹¹ Cf. II:1340: “L’Italie est le pays des sentiments vrais, de la passion pure et de la beauté. Il [Rousseau] l’oppose en cela à la France, royaume de la vanité.” Cf. also STAROBINSKI, *La transparence et l’obstacle*, p. 408.

“He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.” (Jn I:10).¹² This context is bringing the Petrarchan line in connection with (the trinitary) God and the sign of love as which Jesus appears on earth.¹³ By referring the verse to Laura (*la*), the lyrical self (*io*) is creating a coalescence with the divine. In Rousseau, Julie is achieving a comparable apotheosis at the end of the novel. The commemoration of death and the memorialization of the object of love, closely attached to the lyrical tradition of Petrarca (and, through him, of Dante), would thence be the renewal of an acquaintance with “a new, innovative approach to love poetry that equated love with mystical and spiritual revelation”.¹⁴

In essence, these intertexts, as parts of the dialogical paratext, reflect the conceptual closeness of the new 18th century literature with selected literary role models of the Middle Ages and, moreover, the Bible. From the very beginning, Rousseau opens up his text in the extreme by adding the function of a dynamic, interscholastic communication to the medium. He invites authors and readers to be his desired dialogue partners and witnesses. The narrator and the figures will substantiate this claim at a later time, and will enunciate reading rules.¹⁵ Basically, the title page reflects the genre of the epistolary novel in itself, since its figures are always (present) writers and (absent) readers. It can also be read as a figurative representation of the postal structure of love (as a code) which is calling on presence and absence to be the guiding (melancholic) principle. This semantic structure is postulated in the novel as a literary heritage, but by overcoming certain inherited obstacles, it is sublimated at the same time. Thereby, the dialogue partners of the title gain an allegorical quality: that of dynamic and repetition. They represent special configurations of love talking about love – through time.

¹² Cf. II:1339: “Cette citation est pourtant significative, tant par son contenu qui évoque les derniers mots du prologue de l’Évangile de saint Jean (I, 10) que par l’affirmation explicite, dès la première page, du parrainage réclamé par l’auteur moderne au plus illustre des chantres du pur amour.”

¹³ See BIBLE, Phil 2:6-7: “[Jesus] Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.”

¹⁴ LEITCH, *Norton Anthology*, p. 247.

¹⁵ Cf. LUHMANN, *Liebe als Passion*, p. 21f.: “Für alle Kommunikationsmedien wird man unterstellen können, daß die Anforderungen im Laufe der gesellschaftlichen Evolution steigen. Wenn das Gesellschaftssystem und die für es mögliche Umwelt komplexer werden, nimmt auch die Selektivität aller Festlegungen zu. Was immer mitgeteilt werden muß, wird zur Auswahl aus mehreren anderen Möglichkeiten. Dadurch wird die Motivation zur Übertragung und Annahme von Selektionsleistungen unwahrscheinlicher. Also wird es schwieriger, durch die Art der Selektion zur Annahme zu motivieren. Genau dies ist aber die Funktion der Kommunikationsmedien.”

The three prologues continue to deal with the cut and thrust of truth versus fiction on a personally reduced level by bringing up the metaphors of *Tableau* and *Portrait*, and the conflict of authorship versus publishing. As the prequel shows, Rousseau's provisional idea of releasing the letters without prefaces is giving cause for the conjecture that he was considering a special way of manipulating his prospective readership. Most likely, without prefaces and even without the title add-in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, the letters automatically would have been associated with the famous letter collections *Epistolae duorum amantium* and *Lettres de la religieuse portugaise*. Both works, regarded as genuine, had known a considerable success ever since their simultaneous launch in 1697; all the more, as the *Epistolae* had been celebrated once again in the new edition of the *Roman de la rose* in 1735.¹⁶ Despite all differences, the epistolary style and the topic of love would have been enough to assume the authenticity of the *Lettres de deux amans, habitans d'une petite ville au pied des Alpes*. The author's former plan clearly reflected a wishful thinking that became paradoxically true after the publication. For all that he did bring out the prefaces including the narrator's statement about having never heard "neither of M. d'Étange nor of his daughter nor of M. d'Orbe nor of Lord Eduard Bomston nor of M. de Wolmar", many readers took the genuineness of the letters for granted: they presumed them to be written by real people, sighted and commented by Rousseau.¹⁷ The addition *Recueillies et publiées par...*, taken in the literal sense of the word, had its effect. Inevitably, the meaning of the prefaces was restricted by such a read.

From another group of readers, a merely verbatim interpretation was not to be expected. Those who had knowledge of Rousseau's private writing circumstances and love life did not believe in real writers but in living models for the novel characters: the poet himself, Madame de Warens, Madame d'Épinay, the countess d'Houdetot and others.¹⁸ This supposition was confusingly encouraged by the author's finesse in remodelling Thérèse Levasseur's butter episode in Letter V/7 or using the name of his real life rival in the triangle of Chambéry, Claude Anet, for a supporting character. Certainly, this sort of misreading was conducive to the initiates' interest in the novel. Once set, the naïve wish of reading a roman-à-clef gained a dynamics that could not be

¹⁶ Cf. II:1337f. Cf. also CHARRIER, *Héloïse dans l'histoire et dans la légende*, p. 475-477.

¹⁷ Cf. the entry "Vevey/Montreux" in: TROUSSON/EIGELDINGER, *Dictionnaire de J.-J. Rousseau*, p. 918.

¹⁸ Cf. HOLMSTEN, *J.-J. Rousseau*, p. 95.

stemmed. Rousseau indulgently admitted the advantages of such a misapprehension, yet insisted upon the impossibility of approaching the “vérité” by searching for its correspondents in reality, as witnesses a late passage in the eleventh book of the *Confessions* (I:547f.).

There was also a third reading; it was the one intended by the author, which shows Robert Darnton who dealt in detail with the contemporaries’ written reactions on the novel. Letter statements like “Your book produced in me the effects that you had foreseen in your preface” confirm this.¹⁹ The real reader became the implied reader.²⁰

Rousseau repeatedly stressed the “différence”, “unicité” and “irréductible particularité” of his creativeness.²¹ It takes some time to understand that this claimed singularity, combined with the poet’s reactions on external world representatives and his constant dialogue with literary tradition, is not contradictory in terms. The prefaces are not only to be seen as a dedicated apologia of an author who is trying to defend his work against a supposedly sceptical readership. The defensive aspect is clearly given, and it must be taken just as seriously as the one in the narrator’s introduction of the *Roman de la rose* by Guillaume de Lorris where the secular dream (as the new gate to truth) had to be established.²² Much deeper is the insight that the inner truth he strives to discover and transmit can be accessed only through figurative language and allegorical veil. The prefaces attempt to give an explanation for the particular productive process so hard to describe for the artist himself, so hard to retrace for the reader. They try to enlighten it without demystifying it. At the same time, they stipulate conditions that are required for the productivity of the reading process and the growth of the textual effects. And they negotiate on the problems which originate from the divergence of the author’s manipulative purport and the loss of control over his own text. Those texts, being some of the most exciting and challenging of Rousseau’s work, are written on a highly

¹⁹ DARNTON, *The great cat massacre*, p. 248.

²⁰ QUINN, *Dictionary of Literary and Thematic Terms*, p. 209: “The ‘implied’ reader, a term first used by Wolfgang Iser, [...] is the ideal hypothetical reader who enters into a partnership with the implied author in order to complete the work – that is, to read and understand it.”

²¹ See BERCHTOLD/ROSSET, *Annales*, vol. 44, p. 11f.

²² Cf. PARMAN, *Dream and culture*, p. 57: “Although Dante’s *Divine Comedy* is usually thought of as the epitome of the allegorical dream vision of the Middle Ages, it was preceded by *The Romance of the Rose*, the most widely read and influential vernacular poems of the Middle Ages. The intellectual context in which it was published and the controversy that surrounded it over the centuries provide an effective forum for discussing Western culture, as seen through the dream, in the High Middle Ages and after.”

sophisticated and dialectical level. Even if we dare to go along with the dialectics, we have to admit stepping into the very pitfall kept at hand by the text, while regulating the misreading in a next step. We begin to think like N., but are being corrected by R.; we presume to understand R., yet notice that we agree with N. as well. The obstacles of argumentation are not easy to overcome. To make the reasoning behind the dialogue understandable, the text offers a particular rhetorical device: the double voice of the narrator.

R. and N. are commonly read as two different figures in a fictive, but imaginable person-to-person talk. It seems to be easy to identify R. (“*Jean-Jacques Rousseau en toutes lettres*”) with the *homme de lettres* (who then would be the author’s voice), N. with the *éditeur* (who could be vaguely equated with any enlightened contemporary).²³ Yet, it could be interesting to see them as one: as the twofold (lyrical) embodiment of a soliloquizing speaker who alternately represents one or another.²⁴ It would be the creative splitting of one’s mind, put down in writing, sung in two parts, willing to uncover the truth by veiling it in figurative speech. Through this speaker, other voices can be enunciated as well. The reader has to invert the order and presuppose a synthesis so that speech and counter-speech, or rather speech and ‘other speech’, can be conceptualized as the two sides of the truth, as Ego and Alter Ego of the narrator who is acting as a mediator. Through this double representation, the dialogism is made legible and formally visible. As such, the *Dialogue ou Entretien supposé* could be called a dialogical monologue (in the sense of Bakhtin).²⁵

N. is the voice of critical reason and also the voice of the artist’s self-doubt. R. is the voice of creative inspiration and also the voice of the conquest of self-doubt. The roles – *éditeur* and *homme de lettres* – cannot be allocated as clearly as thought, inasmuch as they can be exchanged at times. Both belong to the same figure: the two-part narrator who is communicating fiction (in the literary and the philosophical sense of the word).²⁶ By doing that, he is creating the conditions for the intentional textual

²³ De Man, for example, is proposing Jean-François Marmontel to be a conceivable real life model for N. (see *Allegories of reading*, p. 197).

²⁴ On a diverse but comparable level, this technique is known from Kierkegaard’s *Either / Or*. Cf. *ibid.*, *Preface*, p. 13: “In my continual preoccupation with these papers, it dawned on me that they might take on a new aspect if they were regarded as belonging to one person.”

²⁵ Cf. BACHTIN, *Die Ästhetik des Wortes*, p. 232-238, and KRISTEVA, *Desire in Language*, p. 66.

²⁶ Fiction can be an idea or invention, but also (in a philosophical sense) a (deliberately taken) contradictory or false supposition which serves to be the catalyst for the solution of a problem.

effect. Literary studies which, at the most, interpret poetry as a reaction on reality, are presupposing such reality, yet acknowledge that literary texts do not copy it but rather fictionalize it in a figurative way.²⁷ The *Préface dialoguée* is trying to deal with this insight through an apparently metalinguistic differentiation, although in the end, it is not possible for the lyrical self to give a clear answer.

Of course, the (real) author knows about his authorship; there is no doubt about it, as long as the act of writing (that presupposes an act of reading) can be remembered. But it is hard to describe how ideas and schemata were transformed into words that could be transmitted to the outside world through a medium. The question is: does he even wish to give an explanation on that? In a way, he is playing with his readership by letting the narrator act ignorant, just to keep the composition secret. Nonetheless, the second preface, being an ambivalent dialogical monologue, has to be regarded as an approximation to the inner truth. Rousseau's text builds up a conflict comparable to the thoughts and utterances of the Ovidean *Pygmalion*. The sculptor's tools and materials are perfectly described; but a considerable difference has to be made between his talent (the motor skill to build a statue that looks strikingly real) and his emotional desire to raise the ideal figure ("qua femina nulla potest"), the simulacrum ("simulati corporis"), from the dead material.²⁸ With the help of the divine (Aphrodite), the metamorphosis comes to a happy ending. From the Middle Ages on, especially since Jean de Meun, the complementary (interpretative) combination of Pygmalion and Narcissus has led to a significant turn: in Ovid, gloominess is entirely missing, whereas in medieval literature, Pygmalion's passionate desire is depicted as an ambiguous mixture of almost selfish hope and bitter despair.²⁹ Henceforth, this particular passion is closely associated not only with self-doubt and folly, but also with perversion. The statue is considered to be the sculptor's fetish, as subsequent book illustrations show.

Giorgio Agamben's *Stanza* is raising essential questions concerning the lover's destiny which could be, in my opinion, applied to *Julie ou La Nouvelle Héloïse*. How to recover from *amor hereos* without crossing the phantasmatic circle? How to take possession of the object of love (the phantasm) without sharing the same fate as Narcissus (who is falling victim to an *ymage*) or Pygmalion (who is in love with a

²⁷ Cf. ISER, *Die Appellstruktur der Texte*, p. 8.

²⁸ OVID, *Metamorphoseon* Liber X, v. 248 and v. 253.

²⁹ See AGAMBEN, *Stanzien*, p. 110.

lifeless thing)? How to create space for Eros among Narcissus and Pygmalion?³⁰ And, moreover, how to finally stand the trial of Eros and replace passion by virtuous devotion? Does the dialogue of R. and N. (as well as the inner struggles of St. Preux) become readable in the tense atmosphere of this conflict? If the last question can be answered in the affirmative: how did Rousseau manage to create the perfect illusion of genuineness with pure language, and how could this illusion possibly have a real effect? Apparently, this demand could only be fulfilled by means of figurative writing.

R.: L'amour n'est qu'illusion; il se fait, pour ainsi dire, un autre Univers; il s'entoure d'objets qui ne sont point, ou auxquels lui seul a donné l'être; et comme il rend tous ses sentiments en images, son langage est toujours figuré. [...] L'enthousiasme est le dernier degré de la passion. Quand elle est à son comble, elle voit son objet parfait; elle en fait alors son idole; elle le place dans le Ciel; [...]. Que parlez-vous de Lettres, de style épistolaire? En écrivant à ce qu'on aime, il est bien question de cela! Ce ne sont plus des Lettres que l'on écrit, ce sont des Hymnes. (II:15 f.)

C'est une longue romance dont les couplets pris à part n'ont rien qui touche, mais dont la suite produit à la fin son effet. (II:18)

Yet, it is not a proper lie to leave authorship and editorship undecided. The ambiguity rather illustrates the author's deep insight in the problematics of writing an allegorical text (the novel) and trying to read and explain it later on (in the prefaces). Thus the prefaces become allegorical themselves, as the images of 'authorship' and 'editorship' verbalize the two phases of the creative process.³¹ But what is the reader supposed to make of the preface of a romantic novel that is warning of romantic novels?

Jamais fille chaste n'a lu de Romans; et j'ai mis à celui-ci un titre assés décidé pour qu'en l'ouvrant on sut à quoi s'en tenir. Celle qui, malgré ce titre, on osera lire une seule page, est une fille perdue: mais qu'elle n'impute point sa perte à ce livre; le mal étoit fait d'avance. Puisqu'elle a commencé, qu'elle achève de lire: elle n'a plus rien à risquer. (II:6)

Does the title really include such a blunt warning? Then the reader would have to gather it from the topic areas of *Héloïse – Lettres – (deux) amans – ville – mondo – pianger*, being the field of literature and love, of the Middle Ages and the age of Enlightenment,

³⁰ Ibid., p. 195.

³¹ Cf. KURZ, *Metapher, Allegorie, Symbol*, p. 46: "Die Allegorie hat daher auch eine didaktische Funktion. Sie vermittelt Wissen und Einsicht. Von Anfang an begleitet die Allegorie der didaktische Topos, daß gerade die Schwierigkeit des Verständnisses schließlich einen Lustgewinn verschaffe. Diese Schwierigkeit verbürgt den Wahrheitswert der Allegorie." Cf. also Abbé Mallet's critical article (in: DIDEROT, *Encyclopédie*, vol. 1, p. 280) which gives a brief information of the status of the allegory among many philosophers of the Enlightenment.

of city and nature, of individual and society. Is it possible to think of the title page allegories as disputants? Indeed, the epistolary novel is discussing a specific type of love whose dark side must not be neglected. On the contrary, its dangers become the focus of attention, especially as being associated with the literary formation that is defining love within the (unsolved) suspense of yearning and impossibility of performance, desire and sense of honor, passion and virtue. Thus *Héloïse* does not only serve as a role model, but as a warning. At the same time, the solution to the problem is given by the epitheton ornans which complements Julie's alias: *nouvelle*. *Nouvelle* can refer to reincarnation, overcoming, novelty, modernity.³² *Nouvelle* symbolizes the very concept of the novel. Intertextuality functions not only in order to establish a common ground, but to explain differences. Instead of adapting a textual system to another, Rousseau is transforming it. We know about this technique from the *Roman de la rose*: "La Matire en est bone et nueve." (v. 39). Here and there, it is important for the establishment of a new genre, a new style, a new language. Tradition is respected, yet varied and overcome. The name (*Héloïse*) epitomizes the transference, the epithet (*nouvelle*) indicates the change.

R. and N. are particularizing the problem of a love story that starts with a fall. The prefaces clearly do not deviate from the author's criticism of contemporary civilization, known from texts as the *Discours*. Yet, to give reason for the structure of the novel, R. is drawing a comparison that leads back to early modern times, and from here back to the Middle Ages and Roman antiquity: literature as remedy. The question arising is: how can literature have a curative effect? Is it possible to think of a gradual concept: first, the letters work like a magic potion, then like medicine? R. says:

Pour en rendre utile ce qu'on veut dire, il faut d'abord se faire écouter de ceux qui doivent en faire usage. J'ai changé de moyen, mais non pas d'objet. Quand j'ai tâché de parler aux hommes on ne m'a point entendu; peut-être en parlant aux enfans me ferai-je mieux entendre; et les enfans ne goûtent pas mieux la raison nue que les remedes mal deguisés. (II:17)

Directly attached is an Italian citation. Literary studies have found out that it is taken from Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*:

Così all'egro fanciul porgiamo aspersi

³² Although Rousseau strictly called his novel "la Julie" ou "ma Julie", the appendix *La moderne Héloïse* was his actual alternative. See II :1336, HOLMSTEN, *J.-J. Rousseau*, p. 95, and TROUSSON/EIGELDINGER, *Dictionnaire de J.-J. Rousseau*, p. 466.

Di soave licor gl'orli de vaso;
 Succhi amari ingannato in tanto ei breve,
 E dall'inganno suo vita riceve.³³

Due to his talent, self-awareness and inner conflicts, Tasso served as a role model for the authors of the preromantic period, including Rousseau.³⁴ In Letter I/12 of the novel, the private tutor claims him to be one of the few poets who find their way into Julie's new syllabus. According to the *Confessions*, Tasso, Ovid and Anachreon inspired Rousseau to compose *Les Muses galantes*; he even confessed the desire of slipping into Tasso's (imaginary) identity, in order to realize this project.³⁵ The interesting thing about the citation in the second preface is that its source and naming are completely missing.

The Renaissance poet himself deliberately borrowed the foregoing verses from Lucretius' epic poem *De rerum natura*.³⁶ In the setting of this context, the comparison of literature and remedy brings us to the subject of a magic action. According to the interpretation spread by Saint Jerome, Lucretius became mentally insane after taking a love potion (*amatorio poculo*). He died, suspected of having committed suicide. In accordance with Jerome, pagan magic and Christian creed clearly cannot be conciled. Petrarca's *De Remediis* include a word-for-word transcript of the apologist's interpretation, when remembering the death of Lucretius: "amatorio poculo accepto in morbum rabiemque compulsus gladio ad postremum pro remedio usus est."³⁷ The topos of the love potion is also known from Gottfried von Straßburg's epic *Tristan und Isolde*, where it is complicated by the fact that the protagonists hastily mistake the potion (*philtre*) for a thirst-quenching drink, without knowing that it is magic and, moreover, made for Isolde's future husband. Inevitably, these (forbidden) actions always lead to mental derangement, sometimes to death. So how could the intertext inserted in the

³³ See II :1349 : "C'est ainsi que pour faire prendre une médecine à un enfant qui se trouve mal, l'on a coutume de lui frotter le bord de la coupe de quelque douce liqueur. Lui cependant avale cet amer breuvage et reçoit sa guérison de la tromperie qu'on lui a fait." [Translated by J. Baudoin (17th century).]

³⁴ See ROUSSEAU, *Julie oder die Neue Héloïse*, p. 838, note 14. Cf. also I:1386: "Rousseau a toujours eu une prédilection pour Le Tasse, le poète fou. [...] A Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, il faisait encore l'éloge du Tasse, dont il cite des vers dans la *Julie*. Corancez rapporte ce trait: "Savez-vous, me dit [Rousseau], pourquoi je donne au Tasse une préférence si marquée?... Sachez qu'il a prédit mes malheurs... Je fis un mouvement, il m'arrêta. Je vous entends, dit-il, le Tasse est venu avant moi; comment a-t-il eu connaissance de mes malheurs? Je n'en sais rien, et probablement il n'en savoit rien lui-même; mais enfin il les a prédits [...]."

³⁵ See ROUSSEAU, *Confessions* Livre septième (I:295).

³⁶ See I:1349.

³⁷ PETRARCA, *De Remediis* II, 121. See also ALFONSI, p. 307.

Préface dialoguée be interpreted? In any case, its meaning is ambivalent. It illustrates the concept of the letters: at first, there is the fall (the kiss and the momentous physical act of love), then there is reformation and conversion. The erotic side of love is constantly brought in association with illness and relapse. St. Preux is torn between yearning and despair; several times, he is at risk of suicide. Julie seems to slowly recover from temptation; yet, what about the circumstances of her death?³⁸

The novel takes up the medieval idea of love as a pathological state: folly. This illness can be well caused by a potion, but cannot be healed by any plant-based drug. To regain his health, the love fool needs to follow Christian virtue and reason. So folly is half of a binary image in which its great opposite is wisdom. In Guillaume de Lorris, the lover imagines love within the setting of pain, madness and risk of death; Amor's salves, dripped into the symbolic wounds, alleviate the pain for a very short time (vv. 1721-1726, v. 2179). Against the backdrop of his precursor, Jean de Meun is protesting, as shown by the remodelling of the Narcissus episode (vv. 20335-20595). Both parts of the *Roman de la rose* refer to Ovid's *Remedia amoris*, but seem to doubt its medical aspects, which were indeed the center of natural-scientific interest during the Middle Ages.³⁹ As for Petrarca, the poetic subject of the *Canzoniere* differs strikingly from *De Remediis utriusque fortunae*. The latter discusses, among other items, the benefit of literature, and enunciates rules of conduct which are supposed to lead man towards a fulfilled life without melancholy and self-destruction.⁴⁰ Thus, on the one hand, the literary formations themselves spread the conceptional idea of love; by reading, this pattern is transferred and, as a consequence, mirrored in imitation or refusal. On the other hand, the same formations create manuals with contrary operating instructions. Their main subject is the coding of preventative or curative measures against love sickness.

Rousseau is resuming this literary tradition, yet changing an integral part of the item. R. reminds N. of the vain attempt at talking decently to adults: "Quand j'ai tâché de parler aux hommes on ne m'a point entendu." He uses the verses of Tasso in order to particularize the idea according to which adult patients must be treated like children:

³⁸ Regarding the circumstances of Julie's death, cf. for example STAROBINSKI, *La transparence et l'obstacle*, p. 141, and WEBB, "Julie d'Étange and the lac(s) d'amour", p. 345.

³⁹ See OVID, *Ars amatoria*, epilogue, p. 225.

⁴⁰ See PETRARCA, *De Remediis*, for example the dialogue Pleasure – Reason (p. 70-169), or the dialogue Pain – Reason (p. 241-285).

“Ils sont enfans, penseront-ils en hommes?”⁴¹ Their resistance to reason must be defeated with a trick: the *soave licor* that covers the bitter taste of the medicine. Taken literally, this comparison makes little sense. Taken as a conceptional idea, it is highly relevant. The crucial sentence is: “J’ai changé de moyen, mais non pas d’objet.” It implicitly repeats the *nouvelle* of the title page, as it simultaneously signifies resumption and change.⁴² The romantic novel itself is to be the manual:

Si les Romans n’offroient à leurs Lecteurs que des tableaux d’objets qui les environnent, que des devoirs qu’ils peuvent remplir, que des plaisirs de leur condition, les Romans ne les rendroient point fous, ils les rendroient sages. (II:21 f.)⁴³

In a free play on words, it could be said that *Julie* is a double effective literary *julep*.⁴⁴ As a bittersweet love potion (*philtre d’amour*), it is pathogen (in fact, the letters themselves cause the inflammation; they do not report an oral confession, or any other performative act, in retrospect). But then it becomes the bittersweet medicine that is made to cure the disease. In other words: Poison (*philtre*) and antidote (*remède, contrepoison*) are made of the same substance: language. Rousseau gradually transforms the consistency of the substance: by transmission, he changes solid (the recipe), that was supposed to become liquid (the potion), into something ethereal (the idea). Through figural language, he changes the idea back into solid (the letters). Through the reading process, solid becomes ethereal again. Thus the method of treatment has changed; the pharmacopoeia has gone through metamorphosis. The object

⁴¹ In the letters, the youth of the protagonists within the period of their fall is constantly stressed. ‘Youth’ must be read as a symbol that refers back until the Bible. Cf. RYKEN, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, p. 976: “In the realm of more overtly symbolic meanings, three uses can be discerned. One category treats youthfulness as a time of promise – early adulthood at its most pristine, just waiting for fulfillment. [...] A second, contrasting motif pictures youth as a time (or a segment of the population) characterized by waywardness of one sort or another, along the lines of our proverb ‘misspent youth’. Here youth is a time when people do things that they regret later in life, [...]. Third, with the image of misspent youth serving as a foil, youth is also treated as the time of establishing a positive pattern for life.”

⁴² Cf. also STAROBINSKI, *La transparence et l’obstacle*, p. 406.

⁴³ Cf. Letter II/21: “Les Romans sont peut-être la dernière instruction qu’il reste à donner à un peuple assés corrompu pour que toute autre lui soit inutile.” (II:277) Cf. STAROBINSKI, p. 411: “Si *La Nouvelle Héloïse* tente de séduire les Parisiens, ce n’est pas pour leur procurer le plaisir pernicieux de la fiction, mais pour les guérir de ce qu’ils sont, pour insinuer dans le plaisir de la lecture une sorte de remède héroïque, de thérapeutique désespérée.”

⁴⁴ See LE NOUVEAU PETIT ROBERT (2009): “JULEP – XIV^e; *gulbe* v. 1300 <potion> espagnol *julepe*, arabe *djulâb*, persan *goulab* <eau de rose>; Pharm. Vieilli: Potion à base d’eau et de sucre, aromatisé à l’aide d’une essence végétale, servant de véhicule à divers médicaments.” Cf. DIDEROT, *Encyclopédie*, vol. 9, p. 54: “JULEP, en latin *julepus* & *julapium*, (Pharmacie, Thérapeutique) espece de remede magistral, qui est une liqueur composée, diaphane, d’un goût agréable, d’une odeur ou sans odeur, que le medecin prescrit ordinairement pour plusieurs doses [...]”

of treatment remains the same. Yet, to have an effect, the textual remedy needs to be read as a whole: “tout entier” (II:6 and II:11). Just like real medicine that needs to be entirely consumed, just like a recipe that must be written down completely.

The riddle

In his novel, Rousseau depicts the idea of love in detail. Amazingly enough, he stays as succinct as possible when it comes to the graphicness of his main characters. A certain beauty catalog is added to the figure of Julie. Perhaps it is not by pure chance that this typification is mostly to be found in close vicinity of medieval intertexts. Julie’s stigmata, the scars, do not function as mere personal distinguishing marks; they are symbols of guilt and emotional injury, but also of release and bravery. The description of Claire’s features, in combination with the topos of the blonde and the brunette, mainly serves to distinguish her character from Julie’s character. The physical appearance of St. Preux is almost completely left to the reader’s imagination. The commentaries on the copperplate engravings (*Sujets d’estampes*) were planned to compensate this lack, yet remain vague. The *Préfaces* mention the technique of omission by drawing a distinction between *portrait* and *tableau*. A *portrait* always requires an ‘original’, a single human being whom it has to resemble, whereas a *tableau* (a painting created from pure imagination) needs to unite the features of man(kind). It is the very passages that surround the quintessential question:

N.: Mais sûrement ce n’est qu’une fiction.

R.: Supposez.

N.: En ce cas, je ne connois rien de si maussade: Ces Lettres ne sont point des Lettres; ce Roman n’est point un Roman; les personnages sont des gens de l’autre monde.

R.: J’en suis fâché pour celui-ci.

N.: Consolerez-vous; les foux n’y manquent pas non plus; mais les vôtres ne sont pas dans la nature.

R.: [...] Savez vous jusqu’où les Hommes différent les uns des autres? Combien les caracteres sont opposés? Combien les mœurs, les préjugés varient selon les temps, les lieux, les âges? *Qui est-ce qui ose assigner des bornes précises à la Nature, et dire: Voilà jusqu’où l’Homme peut aller, et pas au-delà?*

N.: [...] Je le répète, dans les Tableaux de l’humanité chacun doit reconnoître l’Homme.

R.: J’en conviens, pourvu qu’on sache aussi discerner ce qui fait les variétés de ce qui est essentiel à l’espece. Que diriez-vous de ceux qui ne reconnoîtront le nôtre que dans un habit à la Française?

N.: Que diriez-vous de celui qui, sans exprimer ni traits ni taille, voudroit peindre une figure humaine, avec un voile pour vêtement? N’auroit-on pas droit de lui demander où est *l’homme*?

R.: Ni traits, ni taille? Etes-vous juste? Point de gens parfaits; voilà la chimere. [...]

(II:12; my italics)

A fundamental distinction is made between *l'homme* and *l'Homme*. With respect to Clemens Lugowski, it is to be asked: What is the meaning of a *man*'s appearance in a novel, a drama etc., his claim for being a concrete individual and, as such, being distinguished from all the other appearing *man*?⁴⁵ If we apply this question to Rousseau's novel, then it is to be asked: What does it mean that the man (*l'homme*), who is claimed to be an individual, is also claimed to be representative of mankind (*l'Homme; l'essenciel de l'espece*)?

Paul de Man remarks: "The fallacy of realistic fiction seems to have blinded us to the figural abstraction invited by the neo-medieval title, although it should be obvious in a work in which 'characters' have little more human individuality than the theological virtues, the five senses, or the parts of the body."⁴⁶ He concludes: "[I]f the work indeed represents objects 'qui ne sont point', then it is the 'portrait' of a subject's initiation to this knowledge. But only this subject can be the author of the text, since Julie, the emblem of love, is par excellence the object that does not exist. Rousseau is then the author of what turns out to be the portrait of an impossible 'tableau'."⁴⁷ Yet, is it possible to reverse this argument? Could the novel be read as a *tableau* that provides its readership (including the author) with an insight into the impossibility of a *portrait*?

In the novel, the stereotypical description of the figures is intentional. It is not about naturalism in detail, although the seeming 'everyday character' of the letters may suggest realism in style and language in the first place. The method is comparable to the technique of the *Roman de la rose* in which figural reduction and cataloging provide the reader's access to understanding and (wishful) identification. In Rousseau, on a more complex and refined level, the omission of individual features emphasizes the (inner) qualities which characterize man the most. On a generic level, the method is giving shape to the concept of sentimentalism (*sensibilité*). The contradictory affective elements of love are no longer personified as isolated phenomenons, but are clustered.

The letters which review Julie's miniature (*portrait*) show the fatal repercussions that can result from a mixing of abstractness and definiteness. Julie sends her portrait, "the most similar of the three", to Paris, where it is supposed to be used as a *talisman*

⁴⁵ Cf. LUGOWSKI, p. 9.

⁴⁶ MAN, *Allegories of reading*, p. 189.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

with magic qualities. In amorous despair, she invokes the phantasm: “Ô douces illusions! ô chimeres, dernieres ressources des malheureux! Ah, s’il se peut, tenez-nous lieu de réalité!” (II:289). But what causes blind delight in the first place, soon turns out to be an insuperable obstacle. St. Preux complains:

La premiere chose que je lui reproche est de te ressembler et de n’être pas toi, d’avoir ta figure et d’être insensible. Vainement le peintre a cru rendre exactement tes yeux et tes traits; il n’a point rendu ce doux sentiment qui les vivifie, et sans lequel, tout charmans qu’ils sont, ils ne seroient rien. C’est dans ton cœur, ma Julie, qu’est le fard de ton visage et celui-là ne s’imite point. Ceci tient, je l’avoue, à l’insuffisance de l’art; mais c’est au moins la faute de l’artiste de n’avoir pas été exact en tout ce qui dépendoit de lui. (II:291)

The more the portrait is meant to look like the original and thus to be fotorealistic, the more it proves to be insufficient. In the letter, St. Preux’s dissatisfaction, his futile suggestions for improvement and his final failure symbolize the (human) inadequacy in imitating nature by naturalistic technique. Moreover, the portrait cannot be a substitute, as it is always lacking the essence. As such, it is useless. This concrete example stands for the whole idea: only a *tableau*, drawn in allegorical veil, can claim absoluteness.⁴⁸ Yet, the *tableau* is not only to be found in the prose of the letters, but also, and maybe most of all, in the poetry of the names.

Whoever starts reading the epistolary novel will be surprised by the fact that the name of the male protagonist is entirely missing. Eventually, one will get used to call

⁴⁸ Cf. QUINN, *Dictionary of literary and thematic terms*, p.1f.: “G.W.F. Hegel maintained “the Absolute is spirit; this is the highest definition of the absolute.” For Hegel, the role of great art – for example, Greek tragedy – was to provide the average person with an approach to the Absolute that was more accessible than philosophy. [...] Jacques Derrida criticized Western thought for operating on the basis of logocentrism, the belief that there exists an Absolute, a ‘logos’ that transcends the limitations of language.” Yet, Rousseau definitely claimed absoluteness and tried to pass on his belief through figurative writing: “Love is a mere illusion: it fashions, so to speak, another Universe for itself; it surrounds itself with objects that do not exist or that have received their being from love alone; and since it states all its feelings by means of images, its language is always figural.” (II:15) Cf. POPPENBERG, “Vom Pathos zum Logos”, p.184: “Wenn der Sinn der Wahrheit einer Identitätsaussage das Wiedererkennen von Bekanntem ist, wird die Wahrheit der Trope eine andere Verfassung der Bedeutung haben und einen anderen Sinn freisetzen. Die Wahrheit der Trope ist der absolute Sinn. Die Trope als Figur der Wahrheit gibt die Bedeutung als absolute, nämlich vom Ursprung abgelöste. Sie geht aus vom Nicht-Wissen des Körpers und verwandelt ihn in Bedeutung, deren absoluter Sinn mit dem zu benennen wäre, was die Tradition Weisheit genannt hat. [...] Vor diesem Hintergrund wird die postmoderne Lust am Spiel des Signifikanten etc., die Fragen von Sinn und Bedeutung glaubt zur Disposition stellen zu können, ebenfalls als Widerstand gegen das figurative Denken und als letzte Konsequenz der ästhetischen Reduktion erkennbar.”

him St. Preux, in accordance to Letter IV/5.⁴⁹ The linguistic focus is pointed at the name of the female protagonist; the writing perspective, however, works like a mirror image. The love letters are headed with the allocation *à Julie* or *de Julie*, written by or dedicated to a reflexive, yet nameless writer who thus, on a whole new level, can be taken for an illusory being. This principle is applied to the letters written by the supporting characters: different from a *Lettre de Claire à Julie*, a *Lettre de Claire* is addressed to the anonymous. Within this private correspondence, polite phrases, as such, are lacking. The tutor is called “Vous” or “tu”, rarely “Monsieur”, more often “Ami”. Towards Lord Eduard, Julie once calls him “un amant aimé, ... maître de mon cœur” (I:58). In his own letters, the “roturier” does not divulge the secret, nor does he mention the name of his father or mother. In contrast to the correspondence, the annotated table of contents functions according to a more complex principle. Until the end of part II, the letter headings withhold the designation, while the short descriptions (*Contenues de la Nouvelle Héloïse*) call him “son Maître d’études” (I/1), “son Amant” (I/3), varied by “l’Amant (de Julie)”. From part III on, the headings occasionally identify him as “Amant de Julie” before officially entitling him as “St. Preux”. Behind this pattern, there is method and meaning.

The professional title “Maître d’études” alludes to Abélard. But the allusion is deceptive: it attracts the reader, then leads him astray. The teacher’s initiation rite takes place in Letter I/3. By making a confession that is at the same time a declaration of love and a profession of faith, he turns into a lover. As such, he is trying to distance himself from Abélard in Letter I/24:

Quand les lettres d’Héloïse et d’Abélard tombèrent entre vos mains, vous savez ce que je vous dis de cette Lecture et de la conduite du théologien. J’ai toujours plaint Héloïse; elle avait un cœur fait pour aimer: mais Abélard ne m’a jamais paru qu’un misérable digne de son sort, et connoissant aussi peu l’amour que la vertu. Après l’avoir jugé, faudra-t-il que je l’imite? (II:85)⁵⁰

The term “Amant” recalls the very novel that, in succeeding Ovid, made it famous: the *Roman de la rose*. It could well be that Rousseau modelled his main character on his medieval predecessor.

⁴⁹ As for the lyrical self (“Marcel”?) in Proust’s *A la recherche du temps perdu*, this technique of omission is performed in the extreme.

⁵⁰ The narrator’s sophisticated comment on Letter VI/7, however, will bring him back in association with Abélard: “Notre galant philosophe après avoir imité la conduite d’Abélard semble en vouloir prendre aussi la doctrine.”(II:684)

Li Romanz de la Rose, as well as the following *Mirouer aus amoreus*, constantly avoid revealing the identity of the dream protagonist, being one of the various lyrical selves. He has no name and no individual features; his social background is shrouded in mystery. In a fictive reflection, the first narrator's lyrical self describes himself as being young, whereas the exact age is not only to be taken literal, but functions as a symbol ("Ou vintieme an de mon aage, / Ou point qu'Amors prent le paage / Des jeunes genz").⁵¹ But when leaving his bed, the young man has already entered the 'other space': the exclusive space of the dream world, detached from reality. The reader has to follow the lyrical self through the dream gate, in order to understand the truth within, the open and the hidden intentions.⁵²

In the garden, according to his calling, the arrival is given a new identity: from a mere stroller, he turns into a lover. The first initiation rite is performed by the lover's look into the transposed "fontaine au bel Narcisus" (v. 1513). Interestingly enough, the crystals at the bottom of the water are called a truthful mirror before being called a dangerous mirror (vv. 1555-1574). Much to the reader's surprise, the man is not confronted with his external mirror image, but is setting eyes on his innermost desire, embodied in the rose. Nevertheless, he is afraid of suffering the same fate as Narcissus, in particular: of falling in love with an image.⁵³ The ideal can possibly turn out to be an object of projection.

For the moment, this love at first sight remains unrequited, as he sees and loves before being seen and loved likewise. Thus the scene not only recalls the Ovidian Narcissus, but also reverses essential elements of the First Epistle of Paul:

⁵¹ OTT (and LECOY), v. 21f. All following references to the *Roman de la rose* are to OTT.

⁵² Cf. KURZ and his thoughts on "Allegorese" (p. 49f.): "Der Traumerzählung folgt die Deutung. Träume und Visionen sind mit der Allegorie aufs engste verbunden. [...] Der Rosenroman beginnt nun als Traumerzählung, in der die «ganze Liebeskunst» aufgezeigt wird. Der Leser muß das Traumgeschehen auf die verborgene Wahrheit hin verstehen. [...] Natürlich ist auch Freud nicht zu vergessen. Seine *Traumdeutung* (1900) deutet den Traum nach dem Muster der Allegorese. Im Traum äußern sich zwei Reden: eine manifeste (der «Trauminhalt») und eine latente (der «Traumgedanke»)."

⁵³ His fear is not unfounded, as shows the retrospective interposition: "Las! tant en ai puis sospiré! Cil miroers m'a deceü." (v. 1608f.). As such, it simultaneously emphasizes and relativizes the poet's original assignment: "Ce est li Romanz de la Rose, / Ou l'Art d'Amors est toute enclose. / La matire en est bone e nueve; / Or doint Deus qu'en gré le reçeve / Cele por cui je l'ai empris; C'est cele qui tant a de pris / E tant est dine d'estre amee / Qu'ele doit estre Rose clamee." (vv. 37-44)

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.⁵⁴

It is precisely this concept of love that caused annoyance to Jean de Meun later on.

The naming itself is indicated long before the initiation. It is subtly hidden in a single verse and can only be discovered by interpretation: “A li se tint de l’autre part / Li deus d’Amors, cil qui depart / Amorettes a sa devise. / C’est cil qui *les amanz* jostise,” (vv.866-868; my italics). The man is a believer as soon as he is given access to the earthly paradise (*paravis terrestre*, v.636). Therefore, the inhabitants of the garden frequently call him *vassaus* or *ami*. In this context, the designation *amant* functions as an entitlement. It is remarkable that verse 868 does not characterize a single person, but speaks in the plural. The dreaming lyrical self appears as an individual, but at the same time represents each (fine) lover. Appropriately enough, the designation recurs when the god Amor spreads a soothing ointment on the lover’s wounds: “C’est Biaus Semblanz, qui ne consens / A nul *amant* qu’il se repente.” (v.1842 f.); “Amors l’avoit fait a ses mains, / Por *les fins amanz* conforter, / E por lor maus miauz deporter.” (vv.1854-1856)

Readers of the *Roman de la rose* have generally got into the habit of calling the young anonymous *amant*.⁵⁵ It is highly likely that Rousseau took over the expression in order to concentrate the state of mind of his protagonist, being the self who does not reveal his name, in a borrowed name. His *amant* is the lyrical self who views an individual perspective and signs an individual contract, but at the same time represents (all) the lover(s) as such. The youth belonging to both *amants* symbolizes the first stage of development. Individual features are not needed because every male reader is meant to identify himself with the main character that functions as an allegory, and every female reader is supposed to add what is missing: the features of her own lover.

Yet, in Rousseau, the loving self has to develop further than the fictive addressee of Ovid’s *Ars amatoria* (*Tu*) or the lyrical self of the *Roman de la rose* (*Je*), and therefore

⁵⁴ 1 Cor 13:12-13. Cf. RYKEN, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, p. 560: “Now we see but a poor reflection [Greek *ainigma* “riddle”, “intimation”] as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face” (New International Version). [...] Paul asserts that the Christian can only see and understand God through secondary means. In the heavenly state intermediary means, such as human expressions of love, will not be necessary, for we shall see God “face to face”. Paul further enhances the mirror metaphor by comparing partial and full knowledge. God already fully knows the Christian, but Christians do not know God in full. One day all believers accepted in the heavenly kingdom will have their knowledge completed. Until that day, mirror reflections of reality are an imperfect means of understanding the riddle (*ainigma*) of life.”

⁵⁵ Cf. for example KÖHLER, *Vorlesungen Mittelalter II*, p. 132.

needs to receive a new name. This name prematurely announces itself in the final words of Letter I/12, as if it was to result from the new syllabus:

C'est pour cela qu'on dit que l'amour faisoit des Héros. Heureux celui que le sort eut placé pour le devenir, et qui auroit Julie pour amante! (II:61)

The term "Héros", which connotes the hopeful thought of 'omnia vincit amor', prefigures the future alias: St. Preux.⁵⁶ The protagonist himself is introducing it. Nevertheless, the reconstruction of the precise naming process is posing another riddle. From Letter IV/6 on, the appendices suddenly identify the lover with "St. Preux". Did the baptism take place in the foregoing letter? In here, Claire invokes:

BIEN arrivé! Cent fois le bien arrivé, cher St. Preux; car je prétends que ce nom* vous demeure, au moins dans notre société. C'est, je crois, vous dire assés qu'on n'entend pas vous en exclurre, à moins que cette exclusion ne vienne de vous. (II:417)

The narrator's comment, marked with a star, says that "*C'est celui qu'elle lui avoit donné devant ses gens à son précédent voyage. Voyez 3^e partie, Lettre XIV." Did the reader overlook something? In the aforementioned letter, Claire is initiating Julie into the secrets of her fevered dream. We find her saying:

M. d'Orbe fut d'avis de chercher les moyens de le satisfaire, pour le pouvoir renvoyer avant que son retour fut découvert; car il n'étoit connu dans la maison que du seul Hanz dont j'étois sûre, et nous l'avions appelé devant nos gens d'un autre nom que le sien*. (II:332).

The footnote refers forward again: "*On voit dans la quatrieme partie que ce nom substitué étoit celui de St. Preux." Claire's letter suggests that his real name is known by her and her husband, by Julie and Hanz, the gardener's son and courier, a Cupid figure. St. Preux is a substitute name, given by the Orbes to protect the lover from gossip. Moreover, it is aptly suited to its owner. Thus the baptism must have something to do

⁵⁶ Cf. Bernard Guyon's annotations (II:1586 f.) which concern Letter IV/5 and the naming of the hero: note (a) "Tout ce début, y compris la note, a été ajouté en marge dans C.F. (f° 26). Le nom a donc été très tardivement inventé."; note (1) "Le nom du personnage principal est prononcé pour la première fois! Quelle confirmation du caractère «poétique» de cette œuvre, née d'un rêve et qui n'en sort pas. Lorsque enfin le nom est donné, c'est un pseudonyme. Et quel pseudonyme! Dans ces deux adjectifs, Rousseau nous livre l'aveu de ses deux aspirations les plus hautes: devenir un héros et un saint!" It is not inconceivable that Rousseau decided to insert the definitive pseudonyme only late in Letter IV/5. Nonetheless, Guyon's helpfull reconstruction of the textual genesis is not contradictory to the finding that the name is prepared early in the text (Letter I/12), since the alias can well be understood as a logical consequence of the book's content. About Rousseau's real-life pseudonyms: cf. TROUSSON/EIGELDINGER, *Dictionnaire de J.-J. Rousseau*, p. 771-773, and STAROBINSKI, *La transparence et l'obstacle*, p. 77-83.

with the “inoculation de l’amour”, being a religious act. Yet, was his ‘real’ name mentioned before? In fact, the young man enclosed a note (*billet*) in Letter III/11:

Je rends à Julie d’Etange le droit de disposer d’elle-même, et de donner sa main sans consulter son cœur. *S.G.* (II:327)⁵⁷

It is the answer to Julie’s renouncement (*billet*, II:325). For a brief moment, the act of rescission is bringing back the memory of his former identity, but only in fragments. It seems as if the *senhal*, the taboo of the name with which this gender-troubled troubador of sentimentalism is marked, had irrevocable consequences.⁵⁸ It is certainly no coincidence that Rousseau left the trace in the (almost arithmetic) center of his novel, at the point where, according to classical drama, the plot thickens and the protagonists head for disaster.⁵⁹ In Julie’s case, it is the impending (arranged) marriage to Wolmar. However, the appendices alternately pronounce the young man “amant” or “ami” until the end of his circumnavigation of the world, being another initiation rite in order to prepare his return.

After seven years of silence, Madame de Wolmar is sending an invitation to her former lover with a view to proposing him a marriage with her widowed cousin Claire (VI/6). She calls him St. Preux three times. In response to the letter, he writes:

Quoi? vous vous souvenez de mon nom? vous le savez encore écrire?... en formant ce nom* votre main n’a t-elle point tremblé?... Je m’égare, et c’est votre faute. La forme, le pli, le cachet, l’adresse, tout dans cette lettre m’en rappelle de trop différentes. Le cœur et la main semblent se contredire. Ah! deviez-vous employer la même écriture pour tracer d’autres sentiments? (II:674)

The annotator adds: “*On a dit que *St. Preux* étoit un nom controuvé. Peut-être le véritable étoit il sur l’adresse.” The remark is confusing and finally insoluble, as the

⁵⁷ Cf. II:1530, note (a): “On trouve un premier état de ce billet: *Je rends à Julie d’Orsinge le droit de disposer de sa personne sans consulter son cœur.* [...] Dans le manuscrit Houdetot, Julie s’appelle Julie d’Orsinge et non Julie d’Etange. Le billet n’est pas signé. [...] Dans C.L. le billet est signé C.G. et dans le manuscrit Rey il est paraphé S.G., ce qui témoigne de l’hésitation de Rousseau sur l’identité de Saint-Preux. On verra (lettre 14) apparaître pour la première fois le nom de Saint-Preux, qui est un pseudonyme. Mais pourquoi Rousseau a-t-il refusé de donner à son héros un nom et même un prénom au risque de mille difficultés? C’est un des mystères de ce livre.”

⁵⁸ Cf. Letter III/5: “Que mes yeux ne vous voyent plus; que je n’entende plus prononcer votre nom; que votre souvenir ne vienne plus agiter mon cœur.” (II:316)

⁵⁹ The appendices count out the letters per book, yet leave the notes (*billets* etc.) uncounted. It could well be that the system is not only meant to serve as an aid of orientation but furthermore functions according to a (still unexplored) numerological principle.

taboo is not to be broken. The significance of the riddle (*S.G.*) does not consist in its solution but in its pure existence.

The pseudonym St. Preux, for its part, is holding various possibilities of significance.⁶⁰ As an anagram, it mirrors the Passion and perfection of the hero. Due to its tonal affinity with Saint-Esprit, another association arises: St. Preux as the kindred spirit who, being part of the Trinity of Clarens, is meant to fulfill his vocation after Julie's death. Etymologically, 'preux' derives from the Latin verb 'prodesse'.⁶¹ Saint symbolizes the highest stage of development. Thus the name crystallizes the meaning of the figure: it is (absolutely) needed.

If there was a lack as to the name of the hero, the names of the heroine, in return, are given in abundance. The pattern is enigmatic, inasmuch as the focal point of its schema needs to be taken to pieces before it can be seen as a whole. Therefore, it may be advisable to examine the names in their order of appearance.

At first, there is *Julie*, a frenchified girl's name. Etymologically, it can be traced back to Julius Caesar and the Iulii (gens Julia) whose name is said to derive from the legendary ancestor Iulus, a distant relative of the goddess Venus.⁶² The belated attempt of bringing the first name in association with a literary role model, such as Shakespeare's Juliet, is rather speculative, yet innocuous. The thought of interpreting it as an allusion to the pagan Yule feast which was replaced by the Christian festival of Christmas, or to the visionary Sainte Julienne de Liège who inspired the Catholic church during the office of Pope Urban IV to introduce the Eucharist, must remain (my own) wishful thinking, although certain letter passages in part VI of the novel would coincide with it. The initial letter *J*, as the Kabbalistic sign of the ancient name of God and the sign of the number one, could possibly lead us to the Tanakh, to the Old

⁶⁰ Rousseau's technique of using significant place names is shown one more time. "P. Sage dans sa thèse sur le «Prêtre» dans la littérature française (Genève, 1951), signale au passage [IV/5] l'origine probable de ce nom: Saint-Prex est un village des bords du Léman entre Rolle et Morges. Admirable rencontre de la mémoire affective, de la géographie sentimentale, et de l'onomastique symboliste." (II:1587). Sage's finding is not contradictory at all to the remarks above, but emphasizes the figurative purpose.

⁶¹ See LE NOUVEAU PETIT ROBERT (2009): PREUX, adjectif et nom masculin (*Prod*, 1080; *preu*, XIIe; bas latin *prode*, de *prodesse* <être utile>. Vx (Dans la langue de la chevalerie). Brave, vaillant.

⁶² Cf. OVID, *Metamorphoseon*, Liber XIV, v. 583; Liber XV, vv. 446-449 and vv. 840-851. Cf. also DIDEROT, *Encyclopédie*, vol. 9, p. 55.

Testament and to Dante's *Divina Commedia*.⁶³ Furthermore, regarding the initial and the number of letters, the name Julie could be a tribute to Jesus.⁶⁴

Héloïse appears to be promising, too, especially in view of the intertextual relationship with *Le Roman de la rose*. Jean de Meun, the translator of the *Epistolae duorum amantium*, was the first to appreciate Héloïse and to belittle Abélard. Héloïse is praised for being one of the few, if not the only one to bring honor to her gender, whereas, according to part II, she should have never entered wedlock (vv. 8759-8832). It seems reasonable to suppose that Rousseau, in creating his very own (new) Héloïse, got his inspiration from Jean de Meun.⁶⁵ However, the fact of the matter is that, within the correspondence, the (warning) name Héloïse neither serves as an alias nor as a term of endearment. Julie calls herself and is called “prêcheuse” instead. Yet, a certain (literal) parallel could be drawn between Héloïse and the Elisée, Julie's future garden.

The narrator of the prefaces did not lie when asserting about having never heard of the *d'Etange*; at least, there is no noble family to which it belongs in reality.⁶⁶ Most likely, the last name is an aptronym, combining ‘étang’ and ‘ange’. As such, it would have to be considered as an indication of Julie's angelic nature and an advance notice of her death and apotheosis. Thus it would tally with the Petrarcan lines on the title page. Claire mentions the surname for the first time in Letter I/7:

⁶³ DANTE, *Paradiso*, Canto XXVI, vv. 134-142: “Pria ch'io scendessi all'infernale ambascia, / I s'appellava in terra il sommo bene / onde vien la letizia che mi fascia; / EL si chiamò da poi; e ciò conviene, / ch'è l'uso de' mortali è come fronda / in ramo, che sen va e altra viene. / Nel monte che si leva più dall'onda, / fu'io prim'ora a quella che seconda, / come 'l sol muta quadra, l'ora sesta.” (my italics) Cf. *ibid.*, p. LXVIII, annotation 134. Cf. also HEIN, *Énigmatisme et messianisme dans la Divine Comédie*, p. 559. Regarding the letters J and EL in the Tanakh: see for example BERTAU, *Schrift – Macht – Heiligkeit*, p. 27 and 104. Regarding the number 1: see for example BISCHOFF, *Mystik und Magie der Zahlen*, p.192. Cf. also the entry “Cabale” (in: DIDEROT, *Encyclopédie*, vol.2, p. 475-486) which closes with d'Alembert's devastating words: “Voilà bien des chimères: mais l'histoire de la Philosophie, c'est-à-dire des extravagances d'un grand nombre de savans, entre dans le plan de notre ouvrage; & nous croyons que ce peut être pour les Philosophes même un spectacle assez curieux & assez intéressant, que celui des rêveries de leurs semblables. On peut bien dire qu'il n'y a point de folies qui n'ayent passé par la tête des hommes, & même des sages; & Dieu merci, nous ne sommes pas sans doute encore au bout. Ces Cabalistes qui découvrent tant de mystères en transportant des lettres; [...] toutes ces visions sont à-peu-près sur la même ligne: & après avoir lû cet article & plusieurs autres, on pourra dire ce vers des *Plaideurs*: *Que de fous! je ne fus jamais à telle fête.*”

⁶⁴ About the representation of Jesus Christ in the work of Rousseau: see for example the summary in TROUSSON/EIGELDINGER, *Dictionnaire de J.-J. Rousseau*, p. 459-461.

⁶⁵ Cf. the Letters I/12, I/24 and II/18. Cf. also II:1606, and MAN, *Blindness and insight*, p. 98.

⁶⁶ Cf. on the other hand the similar surname “de l'Étang” (ROUSSEAU, *Épître à M. de l'Étang, vicaire de Marcoussis*, II:1150-1153)

[...] car si tu crains le danger, il n'est pas tout à fait chimerique. [...] le Baron d'Etange consentir à donner sa fille, son enfant unique, à un petit bourgeois sans fortune! L'espères-tu? (II:45)

In combination with “baron”, the last name “d'Etange” sounds rather dark. Thus it is affine to “danger”. And indeed, the essential features of Julie’s father seem to be modelled on the personified “Dangier”, being the lover’s main adversary in the *Roman de la rose*. He is more of a stereotype than an individual character. As such, his recognition factor, based on the particular sense of honor, is within reach for the 18th century readers.

Only once, in Letter II/18, is Julie herself inventing a pseudonym. In anticipation of the sacrament of Claire’s wedding, she describes her moral scruples concerning the modality of the current postal delivery. But as she does not wish to end the secret correspondence, she is thinking up a new trick:

A l'égard de l'adresse à substituer à la sienne, [...] j'ai imaginé un autre expédient beaucoup moins sûr, à la vérité, mais aussi moins répréhensible, en ce qu'il ne compromet personne et ne nous donne aucun confident; *c'est de m'écrire sous un nom en l'air*, comme par exemple, *M. du Bosquet*, et de mettre une enveloppe adressée à Régianino que j'aurai soin de prévenir. (II:258, my italics)⁶⁷

Interestingly, the wording is ambiguous. The question about who is supposed to bear the pseudonym cannot be answered clearly.⁶⁸ Julie creates a name which deliberately alludes to the kiss in the copse (Letter I/14). If it was her plan to be called “M. du Bosquet”, then she would display being the initiator of the kiss while playing with her gender role; at the same time, the name could function as a prefiguration of her future quality as mistress of the garden. If the lover was meant to use it, it would protect him instead of her. Thus the alias would denote the preliminary stage of “St. Preux”. However we turn it, the name clearly speaks the (metaphorical) language of (erotic) relapse. But as it does not turn up again, the conundrum cannot be solved.

Finally, the surname “de Wolmar” is added by marriage.⁶⁹ Wolmar is the Swiss-German name of the former Russian city of Valmiera; thus it could function as a mark of origin. It could also be read as an anagram puzzle for “moral(e)” or “l'amo(u)r” in

⁶⁷ Rousseau’s ingenuity goes into the greatest detail, as “Reggianino” is the name of a carrier pigeon race.

⁶⁸ Gellius and Leube, for example, translate: “daß Du nämlich an einen erdichteten Namen schreibst, zum Beispiel an einen Herrn du Bosquet.” (See ROUSSEAU, *Julie oder Die Neue Héloïse*, p. 265).

⁶⁹ In the *Confessions*, Rousseau uses the spelling *Volmar*.

the sense of “l’autre amour”, “l’amour conjugale”. Moreover, it creates the association of “vol” and “[cauche]mar”, naming the one who, by wedding her, took away Julie’s nightmare about having caused her mother’s death, just to give her back in spirit to the one who still loves her. A rather free association, arisen from Julie’s last will:

Vous le savez, il existe un homme digne du bonheur auquel il ne sait pas aspirer. Cet homme est votre libérateur, le mari de l’amie qu’il vous a rendue. [...] Vous lui devez les soins qu’il a pris de vous, et vous le savez ce qui peut les rendre utile. [...] Que rien de ce qui m’aima ne le quitte. Il vous a rendu le goût de la vertu, montrez-lui-en l’objet et le prix. (II:742)

By calling M. de Wolmar his father and benefactor, St. Preux has already given the answer to her demand. In the end, the heroic and the virtuous are reconciled, while on another level, through Julie, two points of view (the Christian and the philosophical) are brought into line with each other.⁷⁰

Naturally, all these meanings are optional. Yet, what if Rousseau had created a real riddle by hiding a figural name within the girl’s name, a name just as beautiful as the name of the rose? In fact, his technique was so elaborate that the reader’s eye failed to recognize the emblem for a long time.⁷¹

Almost literally embedded in *Julie d’Etange* is *lis d’étang*, the water lily.⁷² As to its sound, the name is homonymic with *lit d’étang*, an expression that does not exist, yet

⁷⁰ About the genesis of the subject and the allegorical purpose, cf. ROUSSEAU, *Confessions* Livre neuvième: “Outre cet objet de mœurs et d’honnêteté conjugale, qui tient radicalement à tout l’ordre social, je m’en fis un plus secret de concorde et de paix publique, objet plus grand, plus important peut-être en lui-même, et du moins pour le moment où l’on se trouvoit. L’orage excité par l’Encyclopédie, loin de se calmer étoit alors dans sa plus grande force. Les deux partis déchaînés l’un contre l’autre avec la dernière fureur, ressembloient plutôt à des Loups enragés, acharnés à s’entredéchirer qu’à des Chrétiens et des philosophes qui veulent réciproquement s’éclairer, se convaincre, et se ramener dans la voye de la vérité. [...] Je m’avisai d’un autre expédient qui dans ma simplicité me parut admirable: c’étoit d’adoucir leur haine réciproque en détruisant leurs préjugés, et de montrer à chaque parti le mérite et la vertu dans l’autre, [...] En attendant que l’expérience m’eût fait sentir ma folie, je m’y livrai, j’ose le dire, avec un zèle digne du motif qui me l’inspiroit, et je dessinai les deux caractères de *Volmar* et de *Julie* dans un ravissement qui me faisoit espérer de parvenir à les rendre aimables tous les deux et, qui plus est, l’un par l’autre.” (I:435f.; my italics)

⁷¹ Maybe Balzac, the author of *Le Lys dans la vallée*, knew the answer to the riddle.

⁷² If we compare the name Ju[lie d’Etang]e with Rousseau’s variant Ju[lie d’Or]singe (see II:1530), it turns out that the pattern remains the same, but the meaning is different: in the latter, “lis d’or” is combined with “singe”, a drawing instrument. Cf. DIDEROT, *Encyclopédie*, vol. 15, p. 210 f.: “SINGE, terme de Perspective, c’est un instrument de perspective qui sert à copier des tableaux & à les réduire du grand au petit pié, ou du petit pié au grand, dans la proportion requise, mais le vrai mot est *pantographe*.”

is giving a further idea of Julie's death.⁷³ Moreover, *lis* turns up completely in *Elisée*. It seems almost impossible to perceive all different shades of meaning; even the *Lettres sur la botanique* appear in a different light. "Prenez un lis." (IV:1154). We follow Rousseau's advice and take the lily first.

The lily recalls the Old Testament, in particular the Song of Songs in which flower imagery is associated with both the male and female lovers.⁷⁴ It recalls the *Mishlé Shlomoh* (Proverbs of Solomon), the "lilies of the field" in the Gospel of Matthew (6:28), and Maria immaculata who is compared to the rose and the lily. In Ovid, the white lily is the attribute of Hera (Juno), the protectress of marriage. It is also the flower picked by Proserpina (Persephone) before she falls victim to Pluto.⁷⁵ In Dante, the scent of lilies leads to the heavenly rose, the apex of his dream vision.⁷⁶ European baroque made an almost inflationary use of both, the lily and the rose.⁷⁷ Poetically, the lily creates images of beauty and love, purity and innocence, it also by its

⁷³ Claire's remark in Letter VI/5 ("Ils [les Gênois] semblent lire en parlant, [...] par tout les s finales") implies that the residents of Vevey did not necessarily pronounce the final 's'.

The poetic of Arthur Rimbaud is deliberately playing with homonyms, associations and prefigurations. Among others, *Le dormeur du val* and *Ophélie* are perfect examples of this technique.

⁷⁴ Cf. FERBER, *Dictionary of literary symbols*, p. 117: "Both "rose" and "lily" are unlikely translations of the Hebrew term ("lotus" would be better for the latter, *shoshannah*), but they have entered the European languages and shaped Christian allegorizings of the Song." Cf. also RYKEN, p. 806: "The metaphors of the book consistently draw upon nature, but it is important to realize that the correspondence is not primarily based on visual similarity. The point of the comparisons is instead the *value* that the speaker finds in his or her beloved. The lovers and their love are compared to *the best things* in nature. The poetic mode of the Songs is not pictorial but emotional and sensuous in nonvisual ways (including tactile and olfactory). More than anything else, images of nature portray the *quality* of the beloved, and here we can see evidence of the Hebrew fondness for structure and how things are formed."

⁷⁵ OVID, *Metamorphoseon* Liber V, vv. 392, 505, 554, 570. Cf. LALLEMAND, "L'imaginaire des parfums dans la littérature antique, d'Homère à Ovide", p. 39f.: "Le pouvoir de séduction attribué aux parfums leur confère une certaine ambivalence. L'attrait de l'odeur suave des fleurs au printemps peut être dangereux, c'est l'atmosphère idéale pour le rapt des jeunes filles dans les prairies couvertes de fleurs de cette saison. [...] Ce parfum merveilleux (roses, crocus, violettes, iris, jacinthes, narcisse) n'était que ruse pour attirer la jeune Perséphone. Surgit avec ses chevaux immortels le puissant dieu des Enfers qui la ravit malgré ses pleurs. Une douleur déchirante s'empare de sa mère Déméter qui ne veut plus goûter à l'ambrosie ni au nectar. Ce mythe, lié aux mystères d'Éleusis, illustre le renouvellement annuel des saisons."

Another interesting hint is given in Rousseau's *Dictionnaire de Musique*: "JULE, s. f.: Nom d'une sorte d'Hymne ou Chanson parmi les Grecs; en l'honneur de Cérès ou de Proserpine." (V:872)

⁷⁶ Cf. Beatrice's speech in DANTE, *Divina Commedia: Paradiso*, Canto XXIII, vv. 70-74: "Perchè la faccia mia si t'innamora, / che tu non ti rivolgi al bel giardino / che sotto i raggi di Cristo s'infiora? / Quivi è la rosa in che il Verbo divino / carne si fece; quivi son li gigli / al cui odor si prese il buon cammino." Regarding the exegesis of the scent of lilies: see BAMBECK, *Studien zu Dantes Paradiso*, p.124-132. Cf. also PARMAN, *Dream and Culture*, p. 67.

⁷⁷ Cf. DIDEROT, *Encyclopédie*, vol. 14, p. 364: "ROSE, (Poésie, Mythol. Littér.) cette fleur étoit consacrée à Venus. Tous nos poètes la célèbrent à l'imitation des Grecs & des Latins, [...]. Nos vieux poètes employent toujours la *rose* dans leurs vers. Aujourd'hui les comparaisons tirées de cette fleur ont été si souvent répétées, qu'on n'en sauroit user trop sobrement."

nature suggests fragility, transience and sudden decay after a brief moment of splendor. Figuratively, it can point to the heavenly beyond or to the underworld. Thus the imagery is symbolic rather than pictorial, figurative rather than literal.

The water lily is a less frequent symbol in European literature; maybe it is best known from fairy tales and legends in which it is brought in association with nymphs and water sprites. Greek mythology relates the lily to the narcissus (*leirion*), being transferred to Liriope and her son.⁷⁸ The same is all the more true for the water lily, including its botanical name *nymphaea* which is alluded to the nymphs.⁷⁹ The spectrum of its tender heart-shaped flower reaches from pure white to pink, yellow and light blue. Like the lily, although botanically not related, the water lily is toxic but can be used as an antipyretic agent and as an anaphrodisiac.⁸⁰ Picking is dangerous, owing to the plant's growth in water and the long roots floating underneath the surface. In literature, the flower's attributes of beauty, unfathomable depth and danger can be set as symbols of dreaminess, mystery and death.⁸¹

Especially in the first book, roses and lilies are attributed to Julie sometimes:

la rose qui vient de l'éclorre n'est plus fraîche que vous (I/8) ;
 ta bouche de roses ... la bouche de Julie" (I/12) ;
 Dieux! quel ravissant spectacle ou plutôt quelle extase, de voir deux Beautés si touchantes s'embrasser tendrement, [...] et baigner ce sein charmant comme la rosée du Ciel humecte un lis fraîchement éclos! [...] Je trouve la campagne plus riante, la verdure plus fraîche et plus vive, l'air plus pur, le Ciel plus serain; le chant des oiseaux semble avoir plus de tendresse et de volupté; le murmure des eaux inspire une langueur plus amoureuse; la vigne en fleurs exhale au loin de plus doux parfums; un charme secret embellit tous les objets ou fascine mes sens, on diroit que la terre se pare pour former à ton heureux amant un lit nuptial digne de la beauté qu'il adore et du feu qui le consume. (I/38)
 Je ne sais quel parfum presque insensible, plus doux que la rose, plus léger que l'iris s'exhale ici de toutes parts. (I/54)

At first, this is the typical language of love, evoking pastoral scenes. The semantic turn is indicated in the letters about the miniature portrait. According to her lover, Julie is to go without any floral decoration. All of a sudden, flowers are depicted as disruptive elements, as a distortion of the truth.

⁷⁸ Cf. GRAVES, *Greek myths*, p. 287, note 1 and 2.

⁷⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 127-129. About the nymphs: see DIDEROT, *Encyclopédie*, vol. 11, p. 292 f.

⁸⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 571 and vol. 11, p. 91 f.

⁸¹ Cf. BUTZER / JACOB, *Lexikon literarischer Symbole*, p. 346.

[...] on me dira qu'il n'y a que des fleurs: Hé bien ces fleurs sont de trop. [...] c'est l'or de tes cheveux qui doit parer ton visage, et non cette rose qui les cache et que ton teint flétrit. Dis à la Cousine, car je reconnois ses soins et son choix, que ces fleurs don't elle a couvert et profané ta chevelure, ne sont pas de meilleur goût que celles qu'elle recueille dans l'*Adone*, et qu'on peut leur passer de suppléer à la beauté, mais non de la cacher. (II:292)

In the novel, a crucial distinction has to be made between the hereditary flowery style which initiates the textual effect before adulterating it, and the particular figurative writing.⁸² The specific performances of imagery – symbol, metaphor and allegory – may overlap sometimes. Yet, it could be a reduction of the textual significance to just say that the flower is the girl.⁸³ Julie is not only a character in the novel but, vicariously, the novel itself that configures the very nature of Rousseau's idea of absolute love.⁸⁴ Love and (water) lilies, as such, do not seem to have anything in common, but the latter can represent the former by means of allegory.

Allegory is not only to be discovered in the name of Julie, but also in the name of her garden. The *Elisée* can well be read as an anagram of the much cited *azile*, being an exclusive space.⁸⁵ It explicitly refers to the Greek *Elysium*, the final resting place of the souls of the heroic and the virtuous. It reminds of Dante's *Empyreum*, the place of light.⁸⁶ Furthermore, it mirrors Julie's *kalokagathia*. Even its perfume has gone through changes.⁸⁷ The texture of the allegory is brilliantly visible within the sheer word: like in

⁸² This might be one of the reasons why Rousseau strictly ignored French Petrarcist poets.

⁸³ Cf. FERBER, *Dictionary of Literary Symbols*, p. 75: "Flowers, first of all, are girls. Their beauty's brevity, their vulnerability to males who wish to pluck them – these features and others have made flowers, in many cultures, symbolic of maidens, at least to the males who have set those cultures' terms. The most obvious evidence is girls' names." Cf. for example Capulet's cry over the young Juliet, apparently dead: "Death lies on her like an untimely frost / Upon the sweetest flower of all the field." (v. 55f.); "See, there she lies, / Flower as she was, deflowerèd by him." (v. 63f.) In: SHAKESPEARE, *Romeo and Juliet*, act 4, scene 2, p.395.

⁸⁴ Cf. ROUSSEAU, *Confessions*, Livre neuvième: "Content [...] résultèrent les deux premières Parties de la Julie, que je fis et mis au net durant cet hiver avec un plaisir inexprimable, employant pour cela le plus beau papier doré, de la poudre d'azur et d'argent pour secher l'écriture, de la nom pareille bleue pour coudre mes cahiers, enfin en trouvant rien d'assez galant, rien d'assez mignon pour les charmantes filles dont je raffolois comme un autre Pigmalion." (I:436) Cf. also PROAL, *La psychologie de J.-J. Rousseau*, p. 47.

⁸⁵ Cf. Letter IV/11 (II:487): "Il n'y avoit pas jusqu'à ce nom d'Elisée qui ne rectifiât en moi les écarts de l'imagination, et ne portât dans mon âme un calme préférable au trouble des passions les plus séduisantes. Il me peignoit en quelque sorte l'intérieur de celle qui l'avoit trouvé; je pensois qu'avec une conscience agitée on n'auroit jamais choisi ce nom-là. Je me disois: la paix regne au fond de son cœur comme dans l'azile qu'elle a nommé."

⁸⁶ DANTE, *Divina Commedia: Paradiso*, Canto I, v. 4.

⁸⁷ Cf. BRUYN, "Du parfum de plaisir à l'odeur de vertu", p. 333: "Une lecture attentive des descriptions littéraires de jardins a révélé que les parfums remplissaient plusieurs fonctions au sein de ces espaces. Ils pouvaient tout d'abord être source de plaisance et d'agrément. [...] Quoi de plus doux que de respirer des senteurs de fleurs au cours d'une promenade ou de lire couché sur un gazon odoriférant (Pline le Jeune,

Ju[lie d'Etang]e, the flower's name is framed in *E[lis]ée*. The initials, repeating *El*, the Hebrew name of God, function as its border. It is the picture of an enclosed garden that does not only recall the biblical *hortus conclusus*, but also, on a new level, the *vergier* of the *Roman de la rose*. The picture is getting smaller and smaller until it is finally crystallized in one word.

Moreover, the letter *e* could possibly lead us to Plutarch and the Pythian dialogs. The link might be indicated in Julie's question and St. Preux' answer: "Hé bien, que vous en semble, me dit-elle en nous en retournant. Etes-vous encore au bout du monde? Non, dis-je, m'en voici tout-à-fait dehors, et vous m'avez en effet transporté dans l'Elisée. (II:478) The Ansonian "end of the world" might refer to Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*.⁸⁸ But it might also refer to Plutarch's history of the origins of the Delphic oracle, especially as Wolmar and St. Preux arrive in Clarens after being at "the end of the world" as well.⁸⁹ In Plutarch, the Delphic *E* is finally identified as *εἶ* ("You are"), being the answer to the divine hail.⁹⁰ The Delphic "Know thyself" (*γνωθι σαυτόν*),

Julien, Libanius, Venance Fortunat)? Ils pouvaient ensuite inciter au plaisir sensuel. Les parfums des jardins étaient indéniablement liés à l'amour et à l'univers aphrodisiaque [...]. Avec la propagation des idées chrétiennes, un changement se manifesta dans la perception des parfums du jardin. Deux attitudes nouvelles virent le jour: d'une part, le rejet de la dimension olfactive et sensuelle du jardin – celle-ci étant considérée comme un obstacle à l'élévation de l'âme vers Dieu – au profit des aspects rudes, sauvages et désertiques du paysage; d'autre part, une transposition des parfums du registre naturaliste dans l'ordre du symbole et de l'allégorie, l'odeur devenant dès lors signe de sainteté et de vertu."

⁸⁸ Cf. II:471 and II:1609f. Cf. also MAN, *Blindness and insight*, p. 205-210.

⁸⁹ Cf. WENDT, *Gerichtshandeln Gottes*, p. 257: "Der Mythos der zwei Adler, die von den Enden der Erde auf Delphi zufliegen, wird mit dem Weg zweier 'heiliger Männer' parallelisiert, die sich ebenfalls von den Enden der Welt aufmachen und in Delphi eintreffen. [...] Die Heiligkeit dieser Männer, so kann man schließen, beruht Plutarch zufolge auf ihrem Erkenntnisdrang und ihrer ökonomischen Freiheit zum Wissenserwerb, die mit materieller Bescheidenheit einhergeht. All das gesammelte Wissen dient als Basis für eine Philosophie, deren Endziel Theologie – als Wissen um Gott – ist. Delphi versteht Plutarch somit in erster Linie als Ort der Transformation philosophischen Wissens in theologisches Wissen. Hier werden die Erfahrungen der Orakelbefragenden in einen letztgültigen – und normativen – Rahmen gestellt. [...] Die Frage, welche Wissenschaft sich der Deutungsautorität des höchsten Gottes bedienen darf – die Mathematik, die Astronomie, die Grammatik oder die Theologie –, die Frage der Vermittlung theologischer Weltdeutung – in Versen oder in Prosa –, und schließlich die Frage nach dem gesamtgesellschaftlichen Rang der Orakelaussagen: In der Schrift *De E apud Delphos* wird deutlich, in welchem Maße schwer deutbare Zeichen Fragen der Orakelbesucher aufwerfen und ihre Phantasie anregen."

⁹⁰ Cf. Plutarque, "Sur l'E de Delphes / ΠΕΡΙ ΤΟΥ Ε ΤΟΥ ΕΝ ΔΕΛΦΟΙΣ", chap. 17, p. 29f.: "À mon avis, ce n'est ni un nombre ni un rang dans une série, ni une conjonction, ni aucune partie du discours de sens incomplet, que désigne cette lettre; non, elle est une manière d'interpeller et de saluer le dieu, qui se suffit à elle-même et qui donne à celui qui prononce ce mot, au moment même où il le fait, l'intelligence de l'essence divine. En effet, au moment où chacun de nous approche d'ici, le dieu lui adresse, comme pour l'accueillir, la maxime 'Connais-toi toi-même', qui vaut bien sans doute la formule de salutation 'Réjouis-toi'. Et nous, en retour, nous disons au dieu: 'Tu es', lui donnant ainsi une appellation exacte et véridique, la seule qui ne convienne qu'à lui seul, et qui consiste à déclarer qu'il existe."

prefiguring the Augustinian *Nosce te ipsum*, represents the exact opposite of the oracle given to Narcissus' mother Liriope: *Si se non noverit*.⁹¹ Thus, on another level, the *Elisée* would provide its readers with an approach to wisdom.

One name remains to be analyzed: *Claire d'Orbe*. Literally, *Claire* means "clear, light, transparent".⁹² According to her essential function as a friend, consultant, announcer and spiritual successor of Julie, Claire can well be called clairvoyant. Figuratively, her married name completes her natural abilities. Just like Étang and Chaillot⁹³, Wolmar and St. Pre(u)x, it appears to be a place name first, in particular: Orbe, a municipality in the canton of Vaud. Yet, *orbe* derives from the Latin noun *orbis*; it refers not only to the orbit, as such, but metaphorizes a sphere of activity and a predetermined path. This is Claire's vocation: she is the first moon to follow Julie's sun, guiding all the others to follow her path.⁹⁴

About Rousseau's deep knowledge of Plutarch: see for example TROUSSON/EIGELDINGER, *Dictionnaire de J.-J. Rousseau*, p. 729f.

⁹¹ OVID, *Metamorphoseon* Liber III, v. 348.

Regarding the Delphic $\epsilon\lambda\lambda$, cf. Pygmalion's final words in Rousseau's lyrical scene: "Oui, cher et charmant objet : oui, digne chef-d'œuvre des mes mains, de mon cœur et des Dieux... c'est toi, c'est toi seule: je t'ai donné tout mon être ; je ne vivai plus que par toi." (I :1231)

Cf. also St. Preux' confession in Letter IV/11: "pour la première fois depuis mon retour j'ai vu Julie en son absence, non telle qu'elle fut pour moi et que j'aime encore à me la représenter, mais telle qu'elle se montre à mes yeux tous les jours." (II :486) ; "j'ai trouvé qu'il y a dans la méditation des pensées honnêtes une sorte de bien être que les méchants n'ont jamais connu ; c'est celui de se plaire avec soi-même." (II :487)

⁹² Cf. STAROBINSKI, *La transparence et l'obstacle*, p. 105: "*La Nouvelle Héloïse*, dans son ensemble nous apparaît comme un rêve éveillé, où Rousseau cède à l'appel imaginaire de la limpidité qu'il ne trouve plus dans le monde réel et dans la société des hommes: un ciel plus pur, des cœurs plus ouverts, un univers à la fois plus intense et plus diaphane. *Si j'imagine bien les cœurs de Julie et de Claire, ils étaient transparents l'un par l'autre.* (À Mme de la Tour, 29 mai 1762) [...] Le thème des "deux charmantes amies" (donnée première d'où l'imagination romanesque de Rousseau a pris son essor) constitue pour ainsi dire la zone de transparence centrale autour de laquelle viendra peu à peu se cristalliser une "société très intime". Les indices nous en sont donnés dès les premières pages du livre: ces noms symboliques de Claire et de Clarens, ce lac pris pour décor ("il me fallait cependant un lac", *Confessions*, Livre neuvième, I:431)." Cf. also the description of the manor house and the estate in Letter IV, 10 (II:441).

⁹³ La Chaillot was Julie's and Claire's former nursemaid and educator. In Letter I/6, Julie disapproves of her method of education: "Mais conviens aussi que la bonne femme étoit peu prudente avec nous, qu'elle nous faisoit sans nécessité les plus indiscrettes, qu'elle nous entretenoit sans cesse des maximes de la galanterie, des aventures de sa jeunesse, du manège des amans, et que pour nous garantir des pièges des hommes, si elle ne nous apprenoit pas à leur en tendre, elle nous instruisoit au moins de mille choses que de jeunes filles se passeroient bien de savoir." (II:43) It is certainly no coincidence that Rousseau chose the name of a municipality near the old town of Paris (the place of sin) for this character. In the novel, she serves as a warning example of education.

Regarding the role of the nursemaid: cf. ROUSSEAU, *Julie oder Die neue Héloïse*, p. 840, note 43.

⁹⁴ Cf. the *Divine comedy*'s final verse: "l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle" (DANTE, *Divina Commedia: Paradiso*, Canto XXXIII, v. 145).

With respect to Walter Benjamin, we may conclude that ideas do not contain phenomena, as such, but reach them through representation. Thus ideas are to things as constellations are to stars: they virtually arrange and objectively interpret the phenomenon.⁹⁵ In Proust, flower-shaped memories will arise from a cup of tea. The nature of Rousseau's ideas arises freely from the very names.

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⁹⁵ Cf. BENJAMIN, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*, p. 16 f.

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The translation of the quotation used as a motto on top of the essay is my own. In the original, Hamann says: “Die Natur ist ein Buch, ein Brief, eine Fabel (im philosophischen Verstande) oder wie sie es nennen wollen. Gesetzt wir kennen alle Buchstaben darin so gut wie möglich, wir können alle Wörter syllabieren und aussprechen, wir wissen sogar die Sprache in der es geschrieben ist – ist das alles schon genug ein Buch zu verstehen, darüber zu urteilen, einen Charakter davon oder einen Auszug zu machen. Es gehört also mehr dazu als Physick um die Natur auszulegen.” The excerpt is taken from a letter that Hamann wrote to Kant in 1759, being part of *Fünf Hirtenbriefe das Schuldrama betreffend*. It is printed in: Hans Blumenberg, *Die Lesbarkeit der Welt*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981, p. 190.