

ARTICLES

ABSTRACT

The aim is to explore the conception of human development found in the educational theories of Plato and Rousseau. It is found that the nature of childhood in Rousseau's *Emile* so resembles the account of child development in Plato's *Laws* that one may claim that the ideas on human development which they hold in common are so compelling that the differences between them are differences of degree, rather than of kind.

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Human Development in Plato and Rousseau: "Training From Childhood in Goodness"

Jean-Jacques Rousseau is well known for the conception of childhood set forth in his *Émile*. The influence of Plato on Rousseau is well known also: In his *Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality in Mankind* Rousseau takes the figure of the sea-god Glaucus from Plato's *Republic* as suggestive of the human soul disfigured by the ravages of time.¹ And early in his *Émile*, Rousseau says that Plato's *Republic* is "the finest treatise on education ever written."² Peter Gay calls Rousseau "one of the few philosophers who appreciated Plato."³

What is not well known, however, is the striking resemblance between Rousseau's conception of childhood and the account of child development that is sketched in Plato's *Republic* and worked out in greater detail in his *Laws*.⁴ Rousseau appreciated Plato's general educational theory and discussed *Émile*'s development in ways that read as if he had Plato's ideas on child development very much in mind.

The aim of the present essay is to discuss the conceptions of human development in Plato and Rousseau in the context of their educational theories. The main subject matter to be explored is found in the continuity between the thinking of Plato and Rousseau. This is not to claim that there are no differences between them. It is to say, instead, that the ideas on human development which they hold in common are so compelling that the differences between them are differences of degree, rather than of kind.

H. I. Marrou characterizes the attitude toward childhood which prevailed in Greek antiquity as follows:

The Ancients — who were not interested in the child as such, being concerned only with the ultimate ends of education — took little interest in this first stage (up to seven years of age), and in fact they did not look upon it as part of *paideia* in the proper sense of the word at all.⁵

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The aim of education was the formation of adults, not the development of the child, which accounts for the lack of interest in child psychology in Greek antiquity.⁶ Yet there were exceptions to the prevailing attitude, as Marrou points out: Plato, along with Aristotle and Chrysippus, was concerned with children losing time in their early years.⁷ Marrou does not discuss the question whether or not any of them spelled out a conception of childhood. What he does suggest, however, is the possibility that the Greeks were wiser than they knew — or, perhaps, wiser than they pretended to know about the nature of children: “In a culture as refined as theirs, and which in so many other fields has given so much evidence of great creative genius, such apparent ignorance must be regarded as deliberate, the expression of an implicit, perhaps, but nevertheless a quite definite rejection of what it did not include.”⁸ Thus Marrou directs our attention to three points: (1) For the most part, ancient Greek education looked “for the man in the child, without considering what he is before he becomes a man,” to use Rousseau’s way of putting it;⁹ (2) even so, this lack of attention to child development may be attributed to a rejection of the idea of childhood, rather than to ignorance of it; (3) a few Greek thinkers expressed concern with the characteristic practices, which did not take education seriously in the early years.

In Plato, we do find certain ideas of human development worked out in the context of his educational theory. Indeed, one might say that his conception of human development *is* an educational theory. Whether or not we are entitled to say that Plato had a “conception of childhood” can be determined only by examining his ideas of human development. This suggestion by Werner Jaeger is a helpful point of departure: “It is because Plato thought that all education was molding the soul that he was the first to establish an educational system for early childhood.”¹⁰ In the *Republic*, Plato emphasizes music in the education of children, “because more than anything else rhythm and harmony find their way to the inmost soul and take strongest hold upon it.”¹¹ He wants children at play to be imbued with the spirit of law and order;¹² and insists that children come to believe that what they have to do is what is best for the state.¹³ Yet, for the most part, these are general recommendations which are directed toward education of the young, following this maxim: “Do you not know, then, that the beginning in every task is the chief thing, especially for any creature that is young and tender? For it is then that it is best molded and takes the impression that one wishes to stamp upon it.”¹⁴ Plato’s general recommendations are most fully articulated with the detailed analysis of child nature and its meanings for education in the *Laws*.

There he argues that anyone who is going to be good at a pursuit must practice it from infancy, which leads him to insist that educators should use play in trying to turn children’s tastes and desires toward the ultimate aim of education. “First and foremost, education . . . consists in that right nurture which most strongly draws the soul of the child when at play to a love for that pursuit of which, when he becomes a man, he must possess a perfect mastery.”¹⁵ Plato is not concerned with trades or skills, but with the sort of education which is “training from childhood in goodness.”¹⁶ Thus the idea that the souls of children are to be shaped in their development is no merely “psychological” undertaking, but one involving all the dimensions of human experience which are to be active in the life of the community: the education which “trains the child in goodness” aims to make him eager to become a citizen, one who understands how to rule and to be ruled righteously.¹⁷

Plato’s conception of human development is both “social” and “psychologi-

cal". His "social psychology" firmly asserts the belief that men can rule and be ruled righteously as citizens only if they have learned how to rule themselves. Put in terms of learning how to rule themselves — of developing — children's souls are shaped "internally," but the shaping takes place in an "external" social situation. The developing soul must internalize, but it is affected by that which is external to it: men cannot escape from the necessity of being "political animals," but they can strive to determine the sort of political animals they will become.

This striving, treated as the task of educating oneself, to which each of us, "so long as he lives, must address himself with all his might,"¹⁸ is characterized by Plato in the following way. He assumes that each of us possesses "within himself" two antagonistic counselors — pleasure and pain — and that each has its corresponding expectations. The expectation presiding pleasure is "confidence," that preceding pain is "fear." In addition, each of us has the power of "calculation," determining which expectation is good and which is bad. Now "calculation," when it is external to us, "when it has become the public decree of the State, is named 'law'."¹⁹ Thus our internal calculator, which determines the nature of our expectations, has its external counterpart in the state. For Plato, striving to educate ourselves in goodness is inseparable from human development: it simply *is* a striving for a certain kind of development. Educating ourselves "in goodness" and "to goodness" means right development.

Plato continues his characterization by likening human beings to puppets of the gods.²⁰ Like puppets, we are being pulled in different ways by the "cords" of our counselors. The "golden" cord, which we should learn to follow, is "calculation," or, more particularly, that calculator which distinguishes the true expectation from the others. Learning to distinguish the true expectation from the others is the way we learn to live in accord with its principles; and when that way of living has become formalized in the laws of the state and practiced there, we may say that we are living in harmony with the golden cord of the gods-puppeteers.

Training from childhood in goodness, conceived as a unified experience, may be considered from two perspectives: (1) that of the counselors within us, who must learn to live in accord with the golden cord of the gods-puppeteers, which directs us toward goodness; (2) that of the counselors outside us, who also must make the laws of the state in accord with the golden cord, and thereby help us live a life of goodness. Following our earlier distinctions, the first is internal and psychological, the second is external and social. Yet Plato wants to be sure that such distinctions in thought do not refer to a divisive educational experience in the developing human being. The golden cord of the gods-puppeteers is that which will guide us rightly, if it is the standard followed by both our internal and external counselors. Education, in its most profound sense, consists of both: learning to live in accord with the golden cord is an experience in which we are trained, first, to sense, and later, to know, that what we want to do is what we should do. The experience is to be one in which the internal and external counselors are working in harmony, not at odds with one another. Plato puts it in this way:

In children the first childish sensations are pleasure and pain, and . . . it is in these first that goodness and badness come to the soul; but as to wisdom and settled true opinions, a man is lucky if they come to him even in old age; and he that is possessed of these blessings, and all that they comprise, is indeed a perfect man. I term, then, the goodness that first comes to children 'education.' When pleasure and love, and pain and hatred, spring up rightly in the souls of those who are unable as yet to grasp a rational account; and when, after grasping the rational account, they consent thereunto through having been rightly trained in fitting practices: this consent, viewed as a whole, is goodness, while the part of it that is rightly trained in respect of pleasures and pains, so as to hate

what ought to be hated, right from the beginning up to the very end, and to love what ought to be loved, if you were to mark this part off in your definition and call it 'education,' you would be giving it, in my opinion, its right name.²¹

The aim is to educate *for* goodness by educating *in* goodness. Here Plato explicitly departs from the prevailing attitude toward childhood education found in Greek antiquity — that the aim of education is not the development of the child but the formation of adults — and insists that the right development of the child is essential to the right formation of adults. The child and the adult may be conceived as earlier and later parts of a developing continuum. The nature of goodness develops in the child and is grasped by the reason of the adult; this nature makes up the substance of the continuum. Thus there is no difficulty in the assertion that goodness comes, first, to children who cannot understand and, later, to adults who have grasped a rational account of it. The goodness which “springs up rightly in the souls” of children is not understood by them in the way in which they will understand it later, “after grasping the rational account” of it. The “goodness of childhood” has its own nature, the “goodness of man” has another. They are different but not opposed to one another; the earlier, in its own way, is a condition of the later, in its own way.

When Plato writes, “Education is the process of drawing and guiding children towards that principle which is pronounced right by the law and confirmed as truly right by the experience of the oldest and the most just,”²² the emphasis is not merely upon the ultimate end — the true principle — but also upon the process of guiding children towards that end. Immediately following this statement, Plato insists that the soul of the child should become habituated to having pleasures and pains in conformity with those who obey the law: the child is to be “pleased and pained at the same things as the old man.”²³ He goes on to add that the plays and chants used in the education of the young, whose souls “are unable to endure serious study,”²⁴ should be especially designed for them. In speaking of reason, Plato says:

No creature is ever born in possession of that reason, or that amount of reason, which properly belongs to it when fully developed; consequently, every creature, during the period when it is still lacking in its proper intelligence, continues all in a frenzy, crying out wildly, and, as soon as it can get on its feet, leaping wildly.²⁵

The natural tendency of young creatures to move about, to dance, and to enjoy games is an opportunity to be taken for choir training. Embracing both dancing and singing, this training teaches children to sing well and dance well, by which Plato means “singing good songs and dancing good dances.”²⁶ Teachers have to “track down, like hounds on the trail . . . goodness of posture and tunes in relation to song and dance.”²⁷ Children, then, are not to be taught to dance and sing because they are naturally active creatures; this natural activity makes it possible for them to learn those pleasures and pains which are in conformity with the rational account of goodness that, later, they can come to understand. Good songs and dances enable the right pleasures and pains to spring up in children’s souls, and so their education in goodness begins. Plato, true to the conventional wisdom of his time, did educate children for adulthood. Yet his insistence upon the sort of activities which take advantages of children’s nature shows us clearly that children are not merely small adults; they have a nature which requires its own kind of “goodness” — its own curriculum.

To impose goodness in its “adult forms” on children is to act against their nature, and to fail to seek the forms of goodness natural to children. For Plato, to suppose that it is natural for children to become adults, means that it is natural for

their earlier forms of goodness to take on later forms of goodness. There exists a natural order of development; the aim is to understand what it is and to act in conformity with it. When Plato writes, "Choristry as a whole is identical with education as a whole,"²⁸ he means to identify the rhythm learned in choristry with the order that our soul first senses and later comes to know through calculating rightly which of our expectations are the ones to follow. To say that a soul has the right rhythm is to say that it has learned to follow its internal and external counselors in sensing and knowing the truth whose principles alone are worth following.

In holding that, "in our eyes God 'will be the measure of all things' in the highest degree — a degree much higher than is any 'man' they talk of,"²⁹ he is countering the famous statement of Protagoras, that "man is the measure of all things." The principles giving expression to the forms of goodness by which we are to be educated do not originate in man, but in a higher source. Further in the *Laws*, Plato says that "we should live out our lives playing at certain pastimes — sacrificing, singing, and dancing — so as to be able to win Heaven's favor and to repel our foes and vanquish them in fight."³⁰ He goes on to say that the educational procedures outlined in the *Laws* were in accord with these words from the *Odyssey*:

Telemachus, thine own wit will in part
Instruct thee, and the rest will Heaven supply;
For to the will of Heaven thou owest birth
And all thy nurture, I would fain believe,³¹

At this point in the *Laws*, Plato returns to his earlier figure, saying that human beings may be likened to puppets, "for the most part." Here he asks human beings to believe "that the heavenly powers will suggest to them all else that concerns sacrifice and the dance — in honor of what gods and at what seasons respectively they are to play and win their favor, and thus mold their lives according to the shape of their nature."³² "For the most part," then, we are playthings of the gods, living out our lives as puppets, learning to respond to the golden cord by which we are manipulated internally (in our souls) and externally (in our society).

Yet perhaps there is a deliberate over-statement in Plato's figure of gods-puppeteers and human puppets, despite the all-too-serious air of the *Laws* and the almost religious awe by which the other characters defer to the wisdom of Plato's spokesman. The figure is an over-statement if one thinks of human beings as puppets only — as passively manipulated by the gods-puppeteers. But remember that Plato says that we are puppets "for the most part," and his continuing interest in the internal and external counselors shows us that we are "active" puppets: human beings must learn to counsel themselves as a condition of being qualified to counsel others and to be counseled by them. "What the heavenly powers suggest" must be actively learned; it cannot be passively received. We are responsible for finding the golden cord, even if its origin is beyond our powers. The nature of the golden cord needs to be sensed and known; we must work to know our nature even though the gods have made its "shape." It is as if we are to complete making the nature whose shaping the gods have begun. Although we cannot make the limits of our nature, we can work out the ways by which we take the shape as we come to know it and live according to it. Coming to know our true nature and learning how to live according to it is the very development which is human, though the gods have sanctioned it.

It is sometimes said that Plato's *Republic* is a utopia, as contrasted with the *Laws*, in which he deals with the actual world of human beings and their institutions. Yet this distinction is a misleading one. The *Laws* is no less a utopia than the *Republic*.

The difference lies in the kind of utopia which each suggests: in the state described in the *Republic*, where justice exists, no laws are needed because the reader is to imagine that gods have come down to dwell among men, or that men have become gods. Where justice exists, no laws are needed because by definition each individual in the state is doing what he should do according to his nature, and does not interfere with the activities of others. But in the state described in the *Laws*, where justice does not exist, the principle which children are to learn is the one "which is pronounced right by the law and confirmed as truly right by the experience of the most just."³³ A state in which the "experience of the most just" is taken as confirmation of the highest principles of nature, while, different from the state in the *Republic*, is no less utopian. It is one in which allegedly wise leaders act as if what they know confirms the highest principles of goodness, and as if the songs and dances they prescribe for children are the ones that will best enable them to develop in the right ways. And when the children become adults, they in turn will act as if what they know is in accord with the highest principles of nature. Plato himself, in the *Laws*, calls the state described there "second-best," and refers to the one described in the *Republic* as best.³⁴ Each state is a creation of Plato's imagination, and in imagining the different possibilities in each, Plato's thinking was hounded by his figure of the sea-god Glaucus, characterized in the *Republic* as follows:

Well, then, that the soul is immortal our recent argument and our other proofs would constrain us to admit. But to know its true nature we must view it not marred by communion with the body and other miseries as we now contemplate it, but consider adequately in the light of reason what it is when it is purified, and then you will find it to be a far more beautiful thing . . . its condition as we have now contemplated it resembles that of the sea god Glaucus whose first nature can hardly be made out by those who catch glimpses of him, because the original members of his body are broken off and mutilated and crushed and in every way marred by the waves, and other parts have attached themselves to him, accretions of shells and seaweed and rocks, so that he is more like any wild creature than what he was by nature.³⁵

The marred and mutilated appearance of the sea-god gets in our way of understanding his true nature. To find his true nature, we must look

to its love of wisdom. And we must note the things of which it has apprehensions, and the associations for which it yearns, as being itself akin to the divine and the immortal and to eternal being, and so consider what it might be if it followed the gleam unreservedly and were raised by this impulse out of the depths of this sea in which it is now sunk, and were cleansed and scraped free of the rocks and barnacles which, because it now feasts on earth, cling to it in wild profusion of earthy and stony accretion by reason of these feasting that are accounted happy. And then one might see whether in its real nature it is manifold or single in its simplicity, or what is the truth about it and how.³⁶

The *Laws* stands as a work whose author knows that the soul's love of wisdom has not penetrated its early accretions to its real nature. Instead, in the second-best state, wise and experienced counselors act as if they know the soul's real nature, and create a system of education with the aim of developing the souls of the young so that they acquire the principles held by the counselors. Plato admits that this education is not the best for men, but only the best which he could determine, acting in accord with the second-best knowledge-claims he had.

While the *Émile* is the central work for studying Rousseau's conception of human development, the *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* provides a useful perspective for showing that Rousseau's educational theory and his conception of human nature are parts of the same reality. Rousseau's educational theory is a conception of human nature. And, as in Plato, his educational theory and his conception of human nature are concerned with origins and with the destiny of that which originated — in short, with development.

As Plato had employed the figure of the sea-god Glaucus to stand for his "vision of the soul marred by countless evils," Rousseau used the same figure to stand for the soul of man so disfigured "in society by the perpetual succession of a thousand causes" that it is "scarcely distinguishable," and,

as every advance made by the human species serves only to remove it still further from its primitive condition, the more we accumulate new knowledge, the more we deprive ourselves of the means of acquiring the most important of all; and it is, in a manner, by the mere dint of studying man that we have lost the power of knowing him.³⁷

There is a striking parallel between Rousseau's search for the nature of man in the *Origin* and his search for the nature of man in the *Émile*. In the first, the methods by which we study men get in the way of understanding their true nature, and in the second, the ways children and adults are treated obscure our understanding of their nature. In each, Rousseau portrays a development in which the original nature needs to be understood for its own sake as well as for the sake of later natures which grow out of it. Thus, the nature of original man needs to be understood in itself and as a means to what it will become; and *Emile* needs to be understood for what he is as a child and as a means to the kind of man he will become.

Peter Gay's assertion is a useful point of departure: "The key to *Émile* is the Stoic injunction that we must live according to nature; it was Rousseau's genius to harness this idea, derived from Seneca, to the idea of human development."³⁸ To recast somewhat the key elements in Rousseau's thinking — human nature and human development — we can see that living according to nature, most simply put, is the right way of human development. Yet it is extremely difficult to be successful in education, Rousseau warns us, inasmuch as the modes of education that we can control must follow the lead of nature, "which is beyond our control."³⁹ Here we are reminded of the golden cord, whose nature Plato's counselors cannot determine, but which they must try to understand in order to educate themselves. While we may not be able to determine nature's limits, we may learn to "follow its lead," just as Plato's counselors were able to shape the souls of the young according to the nature of the golden cord of the gods-puppeteers, even as the latter were manipulating them.

The *Émile* may be taken as an account of what it would be like to follow nature's lead. If we are to do this, we would act on the belief that "Mankind has its place in the sequence of things; childhood has its place in the sequence of human life; the man must be treated as a man and the child as a child."⁴⁰ And, "Nature would have them children before they are men."⁴¹ Rousseau argues that children are incapable of judging; for example, in studying geometry, their minds retain certain impressions and terms of demonstrations exactly, but "they cannot meet the slightest new objection; if the figure is reversed they can do nothing."⁴² Yet, Rousseau adds,

I am far from thinking, however, that children have no sort of reason. On the contrary, I think they reason very well with regard to things that affect their actual and sensible well-being. But people are mistaken as to the extent of their information, and they attribute to them knowledge they do not possess, and make them reason about things they cannot understand.⁴³

We see two kinds of reason exemplified here — a reason of childhood and a reason of adulthood. Each is an expression of the nature of the human being at the point reached in its development; in Rousseau's earlier figure, each is a different way of following nature's lead. Not to follow nature's lead is to expect children to reason as adults are capable of doing rather than as children are capable of doing.

So far Rousseau's conception of development reads like Plato's. We must come closer to the way in which Rousseau emphasizes (and at times exaggerates) the meaning of child nature. Gay appears to have this emphasized meaning in mind when he writes:

No one before Rousseau had drawn the consequences implicit in the idea of human development. The child, Rousseau forcefully argues, is not an imperfect or incomplete adult; he is a full human being with his own capacities and limitations. This is why Rousseau demands that the intellect be cultivated last — not from some innate hostility to reason, but from his estimate of the place of reason in the rhythm of human growth.⁴⁴

Gay is correct: it is true that Rousseau's emphasis on a "reason of childhood" is fundamental to his conception of human nature and development, and it is also true that Rousseau believes that there is a "reason of adulthood" that is no less fundamental.

Yet some qualification of Gay's statement is needed. In one sense, the child *Émile* is an incomplete adult; in possessing "child reason" he lacks "adult reason"; and for Rousseau, we must recognize this if we are to understand *Émile*'s developing nature. Rousseau does not wait until *Émile* is an adult to cultivate his intellect; he cultivates it all along, even though education, in the early years, "consists, not in teaching virtue or truth, but in preserving the heart from vice and from the spirit of error."⁴⁵ He is cultivating him as a child differently from the way he will cultivate him later on. In a sense, then, *Émile* is to be first a "full child" with his own capacities and limitations; he will not be a "full human being" until he has learned to follow nature's lead and becomes an adult with different capacities and limitations. Rousseau insists that we have different limitations and capacities as our nature develops; or, rather, the limitations and capacities that we possess differently are our natures.

Later, when *Émile* is verging on adulthood, Rousseau writes, "I have convinced him that all wholesome ideas, ideas which are really useful to mankind, were among the earliest known."⁴⁶ *Émile* is capable of being convinced of this, according to the canons of adult reason, only when he has become an adult. Yet, in another and equally fundamental sense, the tutor has been convincing *Émile* of this throughout the course of his development. By learning to have an integrity that was appropriate to his developing nature all along the way, *Émile* enjoyed his earliest nature as "wholesome": it was good in itself, and proved its potentiality for further good by growing into a different nature which was good in itself. Thus, like Plato's young creatures, *Émile* learned to know without knowing what he was doing by engaging in activities which were both good in themselves and good for learning to know. "By nature," Rousseau writes, "man thinks but seldom. He learns to think as he acquires the other arts, but with even greater difficulty."⁴⁷ As Plato's young creatures were to learn to like and dislike the same things as adults do, but without first knowing that this is what they were doing, so *Émile* is to become capable "of doing all that he wills when his will is formed."⁴⁸ Until he becomes an adult, *Émile* is both an incomplete human being and a human being with different kinds of integrity, each having its own nature.

Rousseau puts it in this way "Every age, every station in life, has a perfection, a ripeness of its own. We have often heard the phrase 'a grown man'; but we will consider 'a grown child'.⁴⁹ *Émile*, who has "lived the life of a child," has reached "the perfection of childhood" and has acquired "the wisdom of a child."⁵⁰ Although we do not find expressions like "a grown child" or "the perfection of childhood" in Plato's rhetoric, our earlier discussion shows us that he does

write of a "training from childhood in goodness." There, like Rousseau, he clearly emphasizes the idea that children should be allowed to have lives of their own. His insistence that the first sensations of childhood are good in themselves, understood in the context of Plato's developmental conception of education, means that having the sensations is a sort of childish wisdom. If properly nurtured by teachers-puppeteers, such sensations will grow into a different sort of goodness, the way of life lived by wise old men. For Plato, no less than for Rousseau, there is a wisdom of childhood and a wisdom of adulthood.

While urging his readers to respect childhood, Rousseau says: "Plato, in his *Republic*, which is considered so stern, teaches the children only through festivals, games songs, and amusements. It seems as if he had accomplished his purpose when he had taught them to be happy."⁵¹ Even without referring to the *Laws*, where childhood activities become choric training, Rousseau found a kinship between Plato's and his own sensitivity to the value of childhood activity. There is a double meaning in Rousseau's assertion that "childhood is the sleep of reason."⁵² It is both a sleep in which the child's potential powers are "resting" and a sleep in which the child's actual powers are living a life of their own. Again, the actual powers have both a wisdom of their own and a potentiality for the wisdom of adulthood. The counterpart of Rousseau's assertion in Plato is "training from childhood in goodness," in which childhood goodness has both a life of its own and is a condition of later goodness.

Yet we must not lose sight of the place of Rousseau's respect for childhood in his overall conception of development and its aims. It should be emphasized that Rousseau, like Plato, was not advocating that children be "let alone" in their development; in the minds of both thinkers, the ultimate end of development is always kept in mind while each proximate kind of wisdom is respected. Again, we are put in mind of Plato's internal and external counselors when Rousseau writes,

Are you not master of his whole environment so far as it affects him? Cannot you make of him what you please? His work and play, his pleasure and pain, are they not, unknown to him, under your control? No doubt he ought only to do what he wants, but he ought to want to do nothing but what you want him to do.⁵³

And near the end of the work, when the "grown-up" *Émile* says to his tutor, "You have made me free by teaching me to yield to necessity. Let her come when she will, I follow her without compulsion,"⁵⁴ we understand that *Émile* has both an internal and an external necessity. Or, rather, there is a necessity of things which has made captive *Émile*'s will; at the same time, he has reached the "age of reason": what *Émile* wants to do is that which his reason shows him is what he must do. The "grown child" has become a "grown man."

Hence Rousseau's political-moral truism that "society must be studied in the individual and the individual in society"⁵⁵ expresses itself in a particularly striking way when *Émile* becomes a grown man. The concordance between Plato's internal and external counselors is echoed in Rousseau's notion that in the right kind of society the sovereign acts through the general will — which wants what its reason shows is good for it — and the individual acts through its particular will — which also wants what its reason shows is good for it. This works if the sovereign truly expresses the general will and if individuals know what the general will wants and have learned how to live according to its terms. Thus,

Individuals having only submitted themselves to the sovereign, and the sovereign power being only the general will, we shall see that every man in obeying the sovereign only obeys himself, and how much freer are we under the social part than in the state of nature.⁵⁶

Further, Rousseau writes that the laws give *Émile* the courage to be just and have taught him to rule himself.⁵⁷ Rousseau's education according to nature has turned out to be a social education no less than was Plato's. It is in our nature to become social just as it is in our nature to become moral and rational; and as our discussion of *Émile*'s reason of childhood has shown about the child's rational powers, we may now say that *Émile* was learning to be social throughout his development at the time: he was social in different ways at different times in his development, and each of these ways is to be respected in itself and for the kind of social being *Émile* can become when he will learn how to rule himself. It may be said truly that childhood is the "sleep of social existence" and the "sleep of morality" as well as the "sleep of reason."

Near the end of the book, *Émile* says that he has decided to be what his tutor made him.⁵⁸ In this there is a certain truism and a certain irony. If the development has taken place naturally *Émile* cannot be other than what his tutor made him. *Émile* has been learning all along to want what his tutor wants for him; his tutor has led him to believe that no other decision is possible. As *Émile* was both "reasoning" and "learning to be rational" throughout his development he must tell us at the end that he has decided to be what he was deciding all along: this is what it means to yield to necessity. At the end he simply knows in one way what he was knowing in different ways all along.

Rousseau's "necessity" is of the same order of things which Plato's gods-puppeteers were manipulating. Although we cannot alter the necessity, we can be "made free" by learning to yield to it just as Plato's young creatures learned to live in accord with the manipulations of the gods-puppeteers by finding that the goodness which they had first sensed was the goodness which they later knew. In retrospect, they can know this; but in prospect, they can only be what they are capable of becoming, which includes and inability to *know* what they can become. If we now consider Rousseau's admonition to "fix your heart on the beauty that is eternal"⁵⁹ and his assertion, "the eternal laws of nature and of order exist,"⁶⁰ in the context of his conception of development, the concordance with Plato is inescapable.

The more we emphasize Plato's idea that "molding the soul" is a development in which later outcomes are a consequence of earlier conditions, the closer we come to Rousseau's ideas of development. And the more we emphasize Rousseau's idea that, unless conditions are created which respect the wisdom of children, and further conditions are created which enable that wisdom to grow into the wisdom of adults, the closer we come to Plato's idea of molding the soul.

The eternal beauty and eternal laws of nature and order are sought by both Plato and Rousseau, but as in the sea-god Glaucus, what is eternal is obscured by its actual conditions. Whether we look to its love of wisdom — as in Plato — or to its origin — as in Rousseau — we are compelled to believe in the existence of a true nature, which is revealed to human beings in their development. And this development is understood as the way in which human beings come to know their nature; but what is more, what it means to know our nature truly is to live in a certain way. For both Plato and Rousseau, then, knowing is *virtue*: we know truly and live in goodness only when we know what is good for us and live according to the knowledge. In truth, to live in goodness is to know truly the eternal laws of nature and order.

The question thrusts itself upon us, as it did in reading Plato: what claims does

the author make to knowing eternal beauty and the eternal laws of nature and order? And the reply is like that of Plato. Rousseau's *Émile* is a work of the imagination, in which *Émile*'s tutor — like Plato's wise counselors — acts as if he knows what is good for *Émile*. In a note which reveals much about the sort of work he considers *Émile* to be, Rousseau writes:

We dream and the dreams of a bad night are given to us as philosophy. You will say I too am a dreamer; I admit it, but I do what the others fail to do, I give my dreams as dreams, and leave the reader to discover whether there is anything in them which prove useful to those who are awake.⁶¹

Thus Rousseau warns us that the account of *Émile*'s development is an author's dream. The world we live in is not known in a way such that the tutor really knows what *Émile*'s nature is. Instead, we live in a world in which philosophers' dreams set forth their accounts — hypotheses at best — which fall short of true knowledge. As in Plato's account of human development in the *Laws*, so in Rousseau's account in the *Émile*: we are forced — by the gods-puppeteers in the former, and by the necessity of things in the latter — to acknowledge our lack of the knowledge that is needed to enable us to live wisely and to educate others in the light of that wisdom.

Resume

L'objectif de cet article est d'examiner la conception du développement humain présentée dans les théories éducationnelles de Platon et de Rousseau. On se rend compte que l'enfance, telle que conçue par Rousseau dans son *Émile*, et le développement de l'enfant, expliquée par Platon dans *Les Lois*, se ressemblent beaucoup. D'ailleurs, la similarité frappante d'idées sur le développement humain, épousées par ces deux auteurs, permet la conclusion que les différences sont de degré plutôt que de type.

Notes

¹Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality Among Mankind*, ed. Lester G. Crocker (New York: Washington Square Press, 1967), pp. 167-68.

²Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Émile*, tr. Barbara Foxley (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1911), p. 8.

³*The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, Vol. 1 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), p. 196.

⁴Rousseau acknowledges the influence of Plato's *Republic* on his thinking in the *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, *Émile*, and other writings. Yet his few brief references to Plato's *Laws* do not constitute compelling evidence in support of the claim that Rousseau had a substantial knowledge of that work. In *Lettre A. M. D'Alembert*, in *Oeuvres Complètes de J. J. Rousseau* (Paris: Baudouin Frères, Libraires, 1826), Vol. 2, p. 167, note 1, Rousseau refers to Plato's discussion of wine-drinking in Book 11 of the *Laws*. And in his Preface to *De L'imitation Théâtrale, Essai Tiré des Dialogues de Platon*, in *Oeuvres Complètes de J. J. Rousseau* (Paris: Librairie, Hachette, 1865), Vol. 1, p. 358, he again directs the reader to Book 11 of the *Laws*, this time for Plato's consideration of theatrical imitation. Even though Plato's discussion of education is substantial in Book II of the *Laws*, particularly in matters bearing on child development, Rousseau does not make explicit any connection between *Laws*, Book II, and his own elaboration of child development. Inasmuch as Rousseau's conception of development is striking for its resemblance to Plato's it is likely that he would have noted the similarity, had he enjoyed the sort of familiarity with the *Laws* as he had with the *Republic*. Thus we do not have sufficient evidence to claim that Rousseau's ideas on child development came from Plato's *Laws*. A more plausible explanation is that Rousseau was made captive by Plato's arguments in the *Republic*, or found confirmation there for his own thinking; it was only natural, then, for *Émile*'s development to be like that of the children in Plato's *Laws*. Plato's conception of development was so much a part of Rousseau that Rousseau's account of *Émile*'s development reads like a deliberate effort to educate him to take his place in the state described in Plato's *Laws*.

- ⁵*A History of Education in Antiquity* (New York: Mentor Book 1964), p. 147.
- ⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 297-98.
- ⁷*Ibid.*, p. 200
- ⁸*Ibid.*, p. 298.
- ⁹*Émile*, p. 1.
- ¹⁰*Paideia: the Ideals of Greek Culture*, Vol. III, tr. Gilbert Highet (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1944), p. 247.
- ¹¹*Republic*, III, 401 d-e, tr. Paul Shorey, in *Plato: The Collected Dialogues*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1961).
- ¹²*Republic*, IV, 424 e -425 a.
- ¹³*Republic*, III, 413 c.
- ¹⁴*Republic*, II, 377 a-b.
- ¹⁵*Laws*, I, 643 c-d, tr. R. G. Bury, in *The Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U. Press, 1952).
- ¹⁶*Laws*, I, 643 e.
- ¹⁷*Laws*, I, 643 e.
- ¹⁸*Laws*, I, 644 b.
- ¹⁹*Laws*, I, 644 c - d.
- ²⁰*Laws*, I, 644 d.
- ²¹*Laws*, II, 653 a - c.
- ²²*Laws*, II, 659 d.
- ²³*Laws*, II, 659 d.
- ²⁴*Laws*, II, 659 e.
- ²⁵*Laws*, II, 672 b - c.
- ²⁶*Laws*, II, 654 b - c.
- ²⁷*Laws*, II, 654 e.
- ²⁸*Laws*, II, 672 e.
- ²⁹*Laws*, IV, 716 c.
- ³⁰*Laws*, VII, 803 d - e.
- ³¹*Laws*, VII, 804 a.
- ³²*Laws*, VII, 804 a - b.
- ³³*Laws*, II, 659 d.
- ³⁴*Laws*, V, 739 b - e.
- ³⁵*Republic*, X, 611 b -d.
- ³⁶*Republic*, X, 611 e -612 a.
- ³⁷*Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality of Mankind*, ed. Lester G. Crocker, pp. 167-68.
- ³⁸*The Enlightenment*, Vol. 2 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), p. 542.
- ³⁹*Émile*, p. 6.
- ⁴⁰*Émile*, p. 44.
- ⁴¹*Émile*, p. 54.
- ⁴²*Émile*, p. 72.
- ⁴³*Émile*, p. 72.

⁴⁴*The Enlightenment*, Vol. 2, p. 543.

⁴⁵*Émile*, p. 57.

⁴⁶*Émile*, p. 304.

⁴⁷*Émile*, p. 371.

⁴⁸*Émile*, p. 30.

⁴⁹*Émile*, p. 122.

⁵⁰*Émile*, p. 126.

⁵¹*Émile*, p. 71.

⁵²*Émile*, p. 71.

⁵³*Émile*, pp. 84-85.

⁵⁴*Émile*, p. 436.

⁵⁵*Émile*, p. 197.

⁵⁶*Émile*, p. 425.

⁵⁷*Émile*, p. 437.

⁵⁸*Émile*, p. 435.

⁵⁹*Émile*, p. 410.

⁶⁰*Émile*, p. 437.

⁶¹*Émile*, p. 76 n.