

"O homme de quelque contrée que tu sois" : resuming Rousseau

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Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Outlines**

Band (Jahr): **2 (2004)**

PDF erstellt am: **10.08.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-872226>

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CECILIA HURLEY

'O homme de quelque contrée que tu sois'

Resuming Rousseau

Scarcely three weeks after the death of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, René-Louis, marquis de Girardin, wrote to Pierre-Alexandre Du Peyrou in Neuchâtel and Paul Moultoy in Geneva. The first part of his letter contained an account of the last moments of the 'philosophe', whilst the second addressed a pressing question, that of his literary heritage. Apart from their friendship with Rousseau, one further factor united these three men, and that was that each of them had, at one time, been entrusted with the safe-keeping of a certain number of the author's manuscripts. Over the course of the next few months and a lengthy epistolary exchange, the plan for a new edition of the works of Rousseau gradually took shape. It was soon decided, for a number of reasons, that the edition should be published in Geneva. The financial terms offered by the editors there were reasonable and a clear advantage was that the two Swiss associates, and more especially Moultoy, would be able to oversee the work in all its stages. Equally important, as each of the men was to observe at different stages of the project, was the symbolism inherent in the choice of this city: there was, after all, a certain poetic justice in the fact that the definitive edition at that time of Rousseau's works was to be published in his home town, which had served him so badly throughout much of his life. Moultoy thus saw it as a 'Sorte de réparation aux manes de R.', whilst Du Peyrou summed it up as being at one and the same time 'la plus belle apologie pour l'auteur et la Satyre la plus Sanglante de sa Patrie ingrate.'¹

A wish to avenge the memory of his friend was expressed very clearly in Girardin's ambitions for the edition when he stated that this work should honour a man 'que doit respecter a jamais L'univers, Comme le meilleur des Philosophes, et des écrivains, et des hommes.'² The figure of Rousseau presented in this work should thus be one that can be understood and appreciated by readers in all countries and throughout the generations to come: this is to be a cosmopolitan Rousseau, acknowledged as a philosopher, an author, in short, as a universal man. In order better to achieve these aims, an ambitious editorial and marketing policy was developed for a work which was to be exemplary both in terms of its textual flawlessness and its typographical perfection, including a carefully chosen iconographical programme. The book was to be issued simultaneously in two

formats, in-quarto and in-octavo, with an in-12 edition kept in reserve, ready to be put on the market if rival editors attempted to undercut them with a cheaper pirated edition. High standards of accuracy were intended from the very beginning, and it was felt that since the three associates either owned the manuscripts or, if not, at least knew where to obtain the missing pieces, the edition would be unlikely to be plagued by errors.³ The subsequent problems which plagued the preparation of this edition, centring mainly on the *Confessions*, the supposedly lost manuscripts which were actually in the possession of two of the three associates (Moultou and Girardin) and the troubled question of whether or not Rousseau wished to see this part of his work published so soon after his death have already been examined.⁴ The question to be examined here is that of the illustration of the planned edition, and more particularly the debate occasioned by one plate, the frontispiece.

A good and accurate edition, free from faults and incorporating the best possible readings of each of Rousseau's texts, was not sufficient to satisfy the ambitions of Du Peyrou who stated that an edition 'fait[e] pour les Bibliothèques, doit être décorée de tout le luxe typographique'.⁵ Given that the inclusion of plates would necessarily entail a more costly work, he was, over the course of the next few months, to revise his initial opinion and decide that only the in-quarto should be illustrated. In order to placate those potential purchasers who would balk at the increased price, he was prepared to compromise yet further, suggesting that two versions of the in-quarto should be offered, one with and the other without plates.⁶ He could also envisage cutting corners, as he was to propose that, rather than commissioning an entirely fresh set of plates, it would be possible to copy those used by Boubers for his 1770s edition, albeit with a number of slight alterations: 'choisir les mieux traitées, indiquer celles qui doivent être changées, ou ajoutées, et charger M^r de G.[irardin] d'en traiter avec d'habiles graveurs'.⁷ Amongst the possible additions were to be three plates that he considered as being essential, namely 'un Frontispice, Le Portrait de Rousseau, et son tombeau'. Respectful of his former friend's wishes, and doubtless mindful of the problems encountered in earlier attempts to produce illustrations for the works, Du Peyrou felt that the ideal artist to supervise the production of the engravings would be Claude-Henri Watelet, the engraver whom Rousseau himself had invited to carry out a similar task when planning an edition of his works during the 1760s. When Du Peyrou communicated his thoughts on this matter to Girardin, the French nobleman was to raise only one objection. Girardin certainly wished to see plates produced for the edition, but he evidently did not want the work to be entrusted to Watelet. In his view, there was one ideal candidate for the job – himself. Artistic ability was here to be subordinated to passion and enthusiasm: 'M. Watelet [...] auroit sans doute plus de Capacité, mais je suis sur qu'il ne pouroit avoir plus de Zele et

d'attention que je n'en apporterai'.⁸ Certainly, Watelet's reputation of being a man who was generally far more likely to begin a project than he was to bring it to fruition was scarcely likely to endear him to someone with the exacting standards and entrepreneurial spirit of Girardin.⁹

The question of who was or was not going to design and direct the plates was soon, however, to become a largely academic one. Moulou, aware that the inclusion of any illustrations would not only increase the cost of the work but would also most probably delay its publication, proposed an alternative solution. He suggested that a consortium of Parisian artists should be invited to produce a set of plates that could be sold separately and could also be offered to the purchasers of the Geneva edition. Thus there would be no obligation to buy them, the cost of the work could be kept down, and, most importantly, the editors in Geneva would not be forced to delay publication of the edition because the illustrations were not yet ready. Du Peyrou had, from the very beginning of the project, been aware of the potential delays that could be incurred by waiting for the artists to complete their work; for that reason he had repeatedly urged his associates to deal with the question as soon as possible. But his pleas had fallen on deaf ears, and the result was that it now seemed impossible to guarantee sufficiently rapid work.

Moulou's suggestion was, to say the least, not entirely to the liking of his associates. Over the next few weeks both factions devoted much time to defending their position. One of the most telling arguments advanced by the advocates of an illustrated edition was that even the cheapest versions of the works not only of Rousseau but also of other authors appeared with plates. Therefore, without this accompanying material, the edition could scarcely be considered as a fitting tribute to the memory of the 'philosophe'. But eventually, and despite a considerable amount of reluctance on the part of both Du Peyrou and Girardin, the highly pragmatic and economically-founded arguments of Moulou prevailed. Pierre-Philippe Choffard (a contributor to the Boubers edition) was to direct the production of the plates which would be entrusted to reputed engravers after Charles-Nicolas Cochin had produced the initial designs.

The choice of Cochin was a good one. In effect, it is surprising that Du Peyrou, who was usually remarkably sensitive to the wishes of his late friend, should even have flirted with the idea of borrowing the illustrations from the Boubers edition. These plates, drawn by Jean-Michel Moreau le Jeune, may well have reflected the taste prevalent at the time, but they were certainly very far removed from the programme that the author himself had established for the illustration of his works. A clear example of this comes in the plates accompanying the *Emile*. Rousseau had stipulated that five scenes were to be reproduced, and he gave very clear instructions on the episodes drawn from classical mythology that were to be employed (fig. 1).¹⁰ Moreau, however, refusing to have his

EXPLICATIONS

DES FIGURES.

I. La Figure qui se rapporte au premier Livre & sert de Frontispice à l'Ouvrage, représente Thétis plongeant son Fils dans le Styx, pour le rendre invulnérable. Voyez Partie I. p. 1.

II. La Figure qui est à la tête du Livre second, représente Chiron exerçant le petit Achille à la Course. P. I. p. 244.

III. La Figure qui est à la tête du troisième Livre & de la seconde Partie, représente Hermès gravant sur des colonnes les éléments des Sciences. Voyez P. II. p. 299.

IV. La Figure qui appartient au Livre quatre, & qui est à la tête de la troisième partie, représente Orphée enseignant aux hommes le culte des Dieux. Voyez Partie III. p. 1.

V. La Figure qui est à la tête du cinquième Livre & de la quatrième Partie, représente Circé se donnant à Ulysse, qu'elle n'a pu transformer. Voyez P. IV. p. 221.



Chacun respecte le travail des autres, afin que le sien soit en sûreté.

1 'Explications des figures', *Collection complète des œuvres de J. J. Rousseau avec Figures en taille-douce* (Neuchâtel: de l'Imprimerie de Samuel Fauche, 1775), vol. 7 (1775), p. [xi], preface to *Emile, ou de l'éducation*

2 'Chacun respecte le travail des autres, afin que le sien soit en sûreté' [J. M. Moreau le Jeune inv. 1777, P. P. Choffard sculp. 1779], in *Collection complète des œuvres de J. J. Rousseau* (Londres [Bruxelles]: [Boubers], 1774-1783), vol. 3 (1774), *Emile, ou de l'éducation*

artistic licence curtailed by any slavish obedience to the wishes of the author, chose to develop his own programme for the illustration of the educational treatise. He multiplied the scenes, decided to illustrate different moments of the work, and abandoned any reference to classical mythology. The central figure is now Emile himself. Over a series of nine plates, the reader sees him as a young boy, an adolescent and a young man receiving his education in the ways of the world through a number of episodes; in each case the scene is very clearly set in the closing decades of the eighteenth century, as much in terms of its content as of its form. It is the world dear to Greuze which is here used as the setting for the *Emile*, a world which by its very simplicity and familiarity could appeal to a contemporary reader (fig. 2).

Cochin, when asked to illustrate the same text, reverted to a style which was much more faithful to Rousseau's original prescriptions. He retained the classical themes used in the earliest editions, refining the occasionally clumsy rendering which had marred Eisen's designs (fig. 3). Only one significant innovation was introduced, since Hermes

Tom. I. Frontispice



Thetis Liv. I.

3 'Thetis', in *Emile, ou de l'éducation* (Amsterdam: chez Jean Néaulme, 1763), frontispiece



4 'Hermès gravant sur des colonnes les éléments des sciences' [C.-N. Cochin inv., B.-L. Prévost and I.-S. Helman sc.], plate for *Collection complète des œuvres de J. J. Rousseau* (Genève: Société typographique, 1780-2), vol. 4 (1780), *Emile, ou de l'éducation*, preceding p. 306

was clothed in Egyptian dress to be presented as Thot (fig. 4).¹¹ The set of references chosen by Cochin for his illustrations was an international and universal one, which was as recognizable to a reader in England, in Germany or in Italy as to one in France, and which should remain familiar to future generations.

Despite the decision to entrust the plates to a consortium of artists, and not to insist on their inclusion in the work, there was, nonetheless, one point on which the associates remained absolutely intransigent. They wished to place a frontispiece at the head of the first volume. Henceforth the question that was to provoke a considerable amount of discussion was that of which image should be produced as a frontispiece. The debate occasioned by this one plate reveals much about the aims of the associates, and more

especially their vision of the projected audience for the work and the presentation of Rousseau as a universal figure.

The major question was that of the function of the frontispiece. What exactly was expected of this plate, situated at such a strategic point in the book? During the early 1770s, Charles-Antoine Jombert had published a work in which he made the following observations: 'Le frontispice est une estampe qui se place à la tête d'un livre, vis-à-vis le titre, & qui est au moins de la grandeur d'une des pages du volume, souvent même on lui donne quelque chose de plus en hauteur & en largeur, afin de se procurer plus d'espace pour le sujet qu'on veut y représenter.'¹² Unfortunately, whilst this provides details regarding the physical form of the plate, it does not cast much light on its function. If the image chosen was to complement the title-page, providing an ornate entrance to the book, then the frontispiece should not amount to nothing more than a decorative image, a scene picked from the pages that follow.¹³ In brief, it should not just be one of the series of plates designed to illustrate the work which has been displaced and made to stand at the beginning of the book. It should be differentiated from the main sequence of plates inasmuch as its role is not to illustrate one moment of the text but rather to resume the work, the works or the edition as a whole. Such was certainly the view of the associates, given Girardin's comment that: 'il paroît en general [...] qu'on desireroit que Le frontispice ne se borne pas à ne présenter que L'idée d'un seul des ouvrages de Rousseau quoique le plus important de tous, mais qu'il offrît L'idée du mérite general de tous les ouvrages et des sentiments de Leur respectable auteur.'¹⁴

A suitable subject for this capital illustration still needed to be identified. Unfortunately for those planning the Geneva edition, it was not possible to have recourse to the ideas of Rousseau himself. When planning an edition of his collected works during the mid 1760s, inspired largely by the hope that he would be able to live off the proceeds for the rest of his life, Rousseau had invited Watelet to supervise the preparation and production of the illustrations. Honoured by the invitation, the artist had replied that he would willingly be associated with such an enterprise. Although this edition was never actually to appear, a number of letters exchanged by the two men on the subject of the work that needed to be done have survived. Over the course of this correspondence there is only one plate that is discussed in any detail, and that is the frontispiece. Unusually for an author who could be counted on to provide detailed, often dogmatic, instructions on the choice, the artistic conception and the presentation of the illustrations for his work, on this one occasion Rousseau found himself at a complete loss as to what to suggest: 'J'ai médité longtemps et inutilement sur le sujet d'un frontispice. Tout ce qui me vient est trop vain, trop modeste, ou trop chargé. Je voudrois un sujet allégorique et simple qui se rapportât à ma devise et qui ne fut ni fier ni rampant mais vrai. Je ne trouve rien.'¹⁵

Clearly the problem was not going to be easy to solve, since Watelet replied that he too was unable for the moment to find inspiration. The great strategic importance of this one illustration within a book is also made very clear, given Watelet's insistence on the fact that he wished to reserve this one plate for himself: 'J'ai déjà pensé et je penserai encore au frontispice dont vous me parlés, mais par la raison que vous êtes dans une classe particulière, il est difficile de trouver précisément ce qui vous convient. On le sent, la difficulté consiste à l'exprimer convenablement pour vous et pour le public. S'il me vient quelque chose je vous le manderai et qui plus est je retiens la préférence pour le graver. Car je serai enchanté de rendre par ce petit embellissement un hommage public aux qualités de votre esprit.'¹⁶

This episode reveals the difficulties inherent in the choice of a suitable image. As both Rousseau and Watelet were to realize, the plate chosen to open the work is of the utmost importance and should serve some emblematic function. It should manage to encapsulate within one image the essential elements not only of the author's personality but also of the works presented over the following pages. The very diversity of Rousseau's *œuvre* did not facilitate the task of the artist to whom such a commission had been entrusted. Interestingly enough, neither the author himself nor the artist had chosen what might be described as the standard illustration which often stood at the head of a collected edition at this time, that is a portrait of Rousseau. Both men had seemed to feel that an image of this type would not be sufficient to express all that needed to be conveyed. Yet a reference to the author did have to be placed there for all to see – hence Rousseau's suggestion that the frontispiece could be an allegorical working of his motto.

When the three associates addressed the question of the frontispiece for the Geneva edition of Rousseau's works, they did at first consider that the best possible solution would be that of the portrait. In this they may well have been inspired by the choice that had been made for the edition of the music that was currently being published, and with which Girardin was very closely associated. For this work it had been decided that the book would be 'orné d'un frontispice analogue à la mémoire de l'auteur, avec son portrait très ressemblant.'¹⁷ Other issues were also contributory factors in this decision. Du Peyrou had wished to see both a portrait and an illustration of Rousseau's tomb accompanying the frontispiece. The need to issue the work within a relatively short space of time, coupled with economic worries, meant that a portrait which doubled as a frontispiece provided a remarkably attractive solution.

Thus it was decided that the central feature of the image used as the frontispiece should be a representation of Rousseau. Several questions still remained unanswered, nonetheless, since it was not certain that a mere portrait of Rousseau would fulfil all of the demands made by the associates. A more attractive solution was deemed to be the

incorporation of Rousseau's portrait into a scene that would also refer to and resume his philosophical and his literary output. Further voices were to join the debate, since two other correspondents, Henri Laliaud and Jacques Argand, also commented on a design proposed by Cochin and suggested modifications or alternatives.

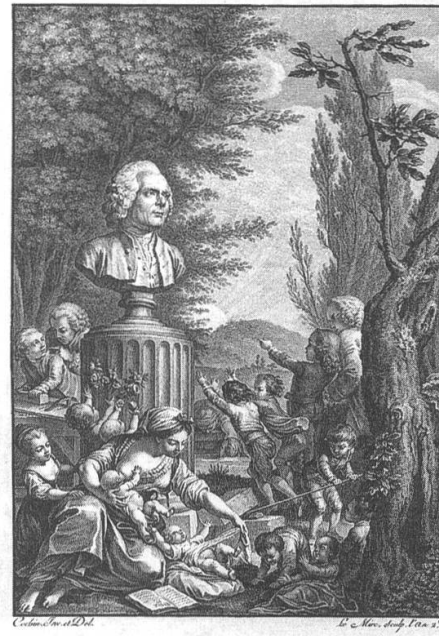
Henri Laliaud was originally contacted by Girardin with a request to make available for the edition the copies of letters from Rousseau that he had in his possession. Laliaud agreed, and in a subsequent letter he offered Girardin his opinion on the type of image that he felt should stand at the head of the edition. He favoured the traditional choice of a portrait of the author, and his concerns were restricted to the one that should be used. An entirely faithful representation of the author's features was clearly necessary, but strict accuracy should not, in Laliaud's view, entail the sacrifice of certain stylistic considerations. He felt that the Rousseau who should preside over this edition of his collected works should not be tied by style or by costume to the period in which he had lived: for this reason he observed that it would scarcely be fitting to honour the memory of Rousseau by means of a portrait such as that produced by Quentin de Latour which Laliaud believed to be 'trop manieré, ce Sont les efforts d'un homme d'Esprit, c'est le Stille, et le defaut du Siecle'.¹⁸ Greatly superior, in his opinion, was the portrait bust by Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne which he described as being 'l'ouvrage de l'homme de Genie, c'est une imitation parfaite de l'antique, genre absolument inconnu de nos artistes modernes.' From very early in the debate, therefore, a classicizing style was judged indispensable for the presentation of Rousseau.

Girardin shared Laliaud's convictions that the portrait by Latour was not ideal, but for different reasons. He, sensitive to the connotations of the frontispiece, judged that more was required than merely an accurate depiction of the facial features of his former friend. No doubt informed of the theories of Lavater which were reaching an ever-wider audience, largely thanks to several editions and translations of this celebrated physiognomic text, Girardin was persuaded that the image chosen must present Rousseau's character, must express the philosophe's 'âme'. Only thus could a reader hope to appreciate the forces that had motivated Rousseau, and then approach his writings with an increased understanding of his thoughts and ideas. Such at least is what Girardin attempted to explain to Choffard when, after having quoted Pliny's *Natural History* and more particularly the phrase 'Zeuxis fecit Penelopem in qua Pinxisse mores videbatur', he continued by observing that 'ce Sufrage [...] prouve [que] Pour peindre un homme ordinaire il ne faut que bien dessiner son effigie, mais Pour peindre un grand homme il faut peindre son ame, car une ame active trace necessairment sur le visage Les sillons de ses pensées.'¹⁹ This aspiration to represent the genius, the thoughts of his former friend, was sufficiently strong to allow Girardin to forego all aesthetic considerations; he could

even find virtue in a lack of conformity with the accepted canon of human beauty. He thus contrasted the face of an ‘homme d’esprit’ characterized as ‘telle Laide telle ignoble même qu’elle put être dans sa forme matérielle’ with the ‘figures qu’on appelle Bellatres’ and which were, in his eyes, no more or less than ‘plates Lourdes sans Caractere et sans phisionomie’.²⁰ Justifying his decision by the arguments outlined here, Girardin determined that the portrait of Rousseau included in the new edition of the works must be the bust executed by Jean-Antoine Houdon which, as he said, was the one that offered a ‘si prodigieuse ressemblance’ and was so full of life that the subject ‘semble prêt à parler’.²¹

It was this sculpture by Houdon that formed the centre-piece of the first scene proposed as the frontispiece, executed by Cochin in 1779. The bust of Rousseau, standing on a pedestal in a woodland clearing, presides over a scene highly charged with references to the *Emile*. In the foreground a mother suckles her baby; to one side is an open copy of Rousseau’s pedagogic treatise whilst around her are a number of other children, some of whom are attempting to decorate the bust of the ‘philosophe’ with garlands composed of flowers gathered in the surrounding fields (fig. 5).²²

On completion of the drawing, Cochin showed it to Girardin who confessed that he was greatly impressed by the quality of the work that he had seen, describing it as ‘d’une beauté de stile, et d’une perfection de deissein qui n’appartient qu’à vous’; he did, nevertheless, question its suitability as the frontispiece for the collected works of Rousseau. A frontispiece was intended to encapsulate, as Girardin had already explained, the essence of the author’s entire *œuvre*. Even Girardin, who had been such an adept of the ideas expressed in the *Emile* that he had educated his sons according to the pedagogic principles preached by Rousseau, and had dressed them in clothes inspired by the work, could not help but feel that the ‘idée générale’ of Jean-Jacques could not be adequately expressed by reference to only one of his works. He thus proposed an idea that he had had for an image that would represent a more universal image of the works of his former friend: ‘Voici une Idée qui m’est venue à cet égard, ce seroit de Presenter La figure de Rousseau bien Costumé et couronné de La Couronne Civique, tenant d’une main La Religion et La nature étroitement unies, et montrant de L’autre dans Le Lointain des groupes de figures de toutes Les nations réunies avec les signes de la Concorde et de La



5 ‘L’éducation de l’homme commence à sa naissance’ [C.-N. Cochin inv., R. Delaunay sc.], plate intended as frontispiece for *Collection complète des œuvres de J. J. Rousseau* (Genève: Société typographique, 1780–2), subsequently as frontispiece for vol. 4 (1780), *Emile, ou de l’éducation*

fraternité dans Les campagnes de L'âge d'or. Si cette Intention vous agréée, Monsieur, ce seroit a votre genie a La Developper et a votre talent a la Composer.²³

Girardin's reserves about the drawing submitted by Cochin were soon to be echoed by Laliaud, and later by Jacques Argand. Both of these men had seen the drawing and feared that, beautiful as it was, it presented a dangerously narrow vision of Rousseau's works. Laliaud expressed his feelings in a letter to Girardin and explained that he had already invited an artist to draw up a proposed alternative, described in the following terms:

'La Statue de M. Rousseau paroît dans une espece d'extase, tenant d'une main le flambeau de la verité et de l'autre, Elle est appuyée avec force Sur un livre qui est Sensé etre Son ouvrage.

Le Genie de la Tolerance la couronne de Laurier avec l'expression de la bonté et de la reconnoissance; pour caracteriser la Tolerance, on a mis Sous Ses pieds l'ignorance renversée, la Tirannie qui ne peut en Soutenir la vue, & le fanatisme un poignard d'une main, un livre dans l'autre, recule avec effroi melé de rage. Ces Trois figures doivent etre traitées legerement & doivent paroître comme un peu couvertes de la vapeur du nuage qui Soutient la Tolerance.

La Theologie appuyée d'un genoux Sur une marche, le Burin a la main, paroît avoir gravé la devise de Rousseau, & regardant hors du Tableau, elle doit avoir un air de Satisfaction de ce qu'elle a fait.

Dans la place publique, on voit une figure a l'antique coëffée d'un casque, representant le Politique, a coté déla est un magistrat caracterisé par un livre, & un glaive Sous le bras, un Philosophe, est une foule de peuple en diverses attitudes qui doivent exprimer l'admiration. On observera d'élever davantage l'architecture qui doit paroître un Palais dans une place Sur lequel il y auroit les armes de Geneve. Cet edifice Sur le même ton, plus Elevé, paroitra plus éloigné, on laisse a l'intelligence et au talent de l'artiste qui dirigerait, le Soins de corriger les autres fautes de negligence.²⁴

It is clear that this proposed image could be claimed to summarize many of the themes to be found in Rousseau's works. The central figure is the author himself, holding a copy of a book, intended to represent his literary corpus. Around him are to be found the representations of such allegorical figures as Theology, Politics, Philosophy, Justice, Tolerance and Religion. The errors which Rousseau decried throughout his lifetime, Ignorance, Tyranny and Fanaticism, are to be found laid prostrate at his feet. The universal appeal of the author is conveyed by the presence of an admiring crowd. And all this is to be found in a classical scene. A problem of the scene is, however, one that

could easily occur in a frontispiece which is meant to resume the works of an author such as Rousseau who had dealt with numerous and universal themes. All of these elements had to be incorporated into one plate without giving the impression of an overly charged scene, one which would hence suffer from considerable difficulties of legibility.

A second solution was to be sent to Girardin only a few days later. Jacques Argand, a jeweller and horologer from Geneva had also seen the drawing by Cochin which was available for viewing at the editors' establishment. Argand also reproached Cochin for having paid too much attention to the *Emile*, and suggested the following scheme:

'La figure entierre et debout de M^r. Rousseau sous le Costume grec ou antique representée dans le Lycée d'Athenes, ou sous un portique ancien, instruisant le Genre humain, dans une attitude Noble et hardie. Sous le meme portique seroient assises les figures des anciens Philosophe, ou Seulement des livres Sur lesquels seroient ecrits les Noms de Xenocrate, Platon, etc. etc., Sans oublier son bon Plutarque. Sur le devant seroit representée Sans Confusion une Multitude d'hommes qui se perdroit dans le lointain, on distingueroit Sensiblement parmi eux des Rois, des héros des Republics qu'on sait qui ce representent avec des figures de femmes et des tours sur la tete, celle de Geneve devoit etre apperçue. Mais Monsieur il faudroit que son attitude tint un peu d'humiliation et du regret, qu'elle eût un bras pendant et un mouchoir dans Sa main, l'autre main sur les yeux. Remarquez Monsieur, que je lui fais Mettre la main sur ses yeux et non le Mouchoir parceque Cela me semble mieux exprimer une legere honte. Le Mouchoir exprimeroit de L'affliction et il ne faut pas aller trop loin. La figure de l'himen doit y être attentive, en General toutes ces figures doivent exprimer une tranquille attention a la principale, qui seule doit paroître animer tout le tableau. Il faut dans un Coin la Superstition dans une attitude lâche et foible Laisant tomber un poignard de Sa main. Et je mettrai pour inscription au bas de l'estampe

O homme de quelque contrée que tu sois
 quellesque soient tes Opinions, Ecoute.²²⁵

This image, much like that envisaged by Laliaud, would have been highly charged with figures and potentially confused by the addition of the two mythological figures with the personification of the town of Geneva, striking a pose of 'mea culpa'. A classicizing style is again favoured. Of particular interest here is Argand's insistence on the universality of Rousseau's appeal, represented by the inclusion of various republics, and reinforced by the inscription at the foot of the engraving. This reference to an international, cosmopolitan audience was fully in accordance with the ideas of both Girardin and Du Peyrou.



6 [Rousseau dans le lycée d'Athènes], [C.-N. Cochin f. del., Triere sculp.], plate standing at the beginning of the *Discours sur l'origine et les fondemens de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*, in *Œuvres de J. J. Rousseau, [...] édition ornée de superbes figures* (Paris: chez Defer de Maisonneuve, 1793–1800), vol. 1 (1793), *Politique*

The latter once complained that Moultois was concentrating on producing an edition aimed at an almost exclusively Parisian market. Du Peyrou, however, was thinking in much wider terms, since as he said, ‘Vous ne voyés Monsieur, que les souscripteurs de Paris, moi je considere ceux de l’Europe entière.’²⁶

Quite what Girardin made of Argand’s suggestion is less than clear as no reply to this letter survives. Nor is it known whether or not Cochin was informed of the contents of this letter. What is, however, certain is that one design by Cochin for Rousseau’s works corresponds in an almost uncanny way to a number of the elements that Argand had suggested. The plate, which was not issued during the 1780s, is to be found in the 1793 Parisian edition.²⁷ Placed in the first volume, at the head of the political discourses and more specifically as the plate illustrating the *Discours sur l’origine de l’inégalité*, it shows Rousseau before a classical stoa (identified as the Lyceum in Athens) instructing a group of philosophers (fig. 6). The image is clearly reminiscent of that proposed by Argand, and there is a further detail that would tend to strengthen the hypothesis that Cochin had received a copy of the text quoted above. Each volume of this series contains a description of the plates included, and the engraving for the

Discours sur l’origine de l’inégalité is explained in the following words: ‘Rousseau dans le lycée d’Athènes répétant les leçons de ses maîtres. Platon, Xénocrate, et plusieurs autres philosophes l’écotent. On voit derrière une foule d’auditeurs.’²⁸

These debates about the image that would best serve for the frontispiece to the Geneva edition of the complete works of Rousseau were in the end not to bear fruit, since the edition that appeared was never to contain any such image. Of the set of thirty engravings plus one portrait that had been promised as a supplement to the edition, only one instalment of six plates appeared, those destined for the *Emile*.²⁹ In 1787 Samuel de Tourneux explained why it was that neither the other illustrations nor even the portrait of Rousseau had ever been issued. According to him, the Société typographique had requested that Choffard should guarantee the production of a portrait of Rousseau for both the in-quarto and the in-octavo editions. These engravings were to be ready at the same time as the second part of the text was issued or, at worst, at the moment when the third was ready for publication. Unfortunately Choffard reneged on this agreement and the

Société typographique decided that, rather than waiting any longer, it would be better to reimburse the purchasers of the text for the price of the engraving.³⁰

Even so, the debate occasioned by this plate is important for a number of reasons. It casts new light on the role of a frontispiece. More importantly, it allows us better to understand one aspect of the marketing of an edition of Rousseau's works at this time, the iconography, and more particularly the presentation of the author himself. Rather than being seen as a man of his times, presented in eighteenth-century costume and in typically French and bourgeois iconography, he was to be portrayed as a universal figure. To tie his iconography too closely to one country or to one period would not have satisfied the aims which his friends had for this edition. Thus it was that they tended towards a more general frame of references: a Rousseau presented in classicizing dress and surrounded by figures, imagery and scenes from the classical and mythological worlds. In this way the 'citoyen de Genève' could become, as Girardin wished, a cosmopolitan author 'que doit respecter a jamais L'univers'.³¹

- 1 Moultou to Girardin, Geneva, December 9 1778: *Correspondance complète de Jean Jacques Rousseau*, R. A. Leigh ed., 52 vols., Geneva and Oxford, 1965–98 [=CC], vol. 42 (1984), no. 7390, pp. 206–212, pp. 207–8; Du Peyrou to Girardin, Neuchâtel, December 1 1778: CC, vol. 42 (1984), no. 7381, pp. 182–6, p. 182. Girardin felt that the city 'ne peut assés noblement et assés authentiquement Chercher a réparer Les torts pour un Citoyen dont Le nom doit L'illustrer a jamais': Girardin to Du Peyrou, Paris, February 3 1779, CC, vol. 43 (1984), no. 7453, pp. 80–4, p. 81.
- 2 Girardin to Du Peyrou, Ermenonville, October 4 1778: CC, vol. 42 (1984), no. 7313, pp. 4–22, p. 5.
- 3 'Mais elle [l'édition Boubers de Bruxelles] doit avoir le même défaut de toutes les autres, qui contiennent des pieces tronquées faites Sur des Copies furtives': Du Peyrou to Girardin, Neuchâtel, October 29 1778: CC, vol. 42 (1984), no. 7334, pp. 64–9, p. 65.
- 4 Raymond Birn, 'Pour le bien-être de la veuve et l'honneur de la mémoire de notre ami': la *Collection complète des Œuvres de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, in F. Barbier, S. Juratic, D. Varry, eds., *L'Europe et le livre: réseaux pratiques du négoce de librairie*, Paris, 1996, pp. 383–98; Bernard Gagnebin, 'L'héritage littéraire de Rousseau', in R. A. Leigh, ed., *Rousseau after two hundred years*, Cambridge, 1982, pp. 153–84.
- 5 Du Peyrou to Moultou, Neuchâtel, September 28 1778: CC, vol. 42 (1984), no. 7376, pp. 168–72, p. 168.
- 6 Du Peyrou to Moultou, Neuchâtel, January 2 1779: CC, vol. 43 (1984), no. 7427, pp. 3–5, pp. 3–4.
- 7 Du Peyrou to Moultou, Neuchâtel, January 9 1779: CC, vol. 43 (1984), no. 7430, pp. 9–11, p. 10.
- 8 Girardin to Moultou, Ermenonville, January 25 1779: CC, vol. 43 (1984), no. 7448, pp. 63–9, p. 65.
- 9 For example, the *Dictionnaire des Beaux-Arts* which was left incomplete at the time of Watelet's death and then had to be finished by Pierre-Charles Levesque and various other authors.
- 10 Rousseau, *Œuvres complètes*, édition Pléiade, 5 vols., Paris, 1959–1995, vol. 4 (1969), p. 869. The mythological figures selected by Rousseau were Thetis, Achilles, Hermes, Orpheus and Circe.
- 11 And even this was not so far removed from Rousseau's ideas: That was after all the Egyptian version of the Greek divinity

- Hermes, and Rousseau often referred to him instead of his Greek equivalent: see *Jean-Jacques Rousseau face aux arts visuels*, ed. Cecilia Hurley, exh. cat., Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire, Neuchâtel, 2001, pp. 102–5.
- 12 Charles-Antoine Jombert, *Catalogue raisonné de l'œuvre de Sébastien Leclerc*, Paris, 1774, I, p. xxviii; Margaret M. Smith, *The title-page: its early development 1460–1510*, London and New Castle (DE), 2000, pp. 12–15.
 - 13 For a theory of the introductory pages of a book, cf. Gérard Genette, *Seuils*, Paris, 1987.
 - 14 Girardin to Cochin, Ermenonville, [end of May 1779]: *CC*, vol. 43 (1984), no. 7551, pp. 301–2.
 - 15 Rousseau to Watelet, November 18 1764: *CC*, vol. 22 (1974), no. 3657, pp. 78–80, p. 79.
 - 16 Watelet to Rousseau, December 10 1764: *CC*, vol. 22 (1974), no. 3729, pp. 205–6, p. 206.
 - 17 Pierre-Antoine Benoît to Du Peyrou, Paris, December 21 1778: *CC*, vol. 42 (1984), no. 7407, pp. 251–2, p. 251.
 - 18 Laliaud to Girardin, Nîmes, April 24 1779: *CC*, vol. 43 (1984), no. 7517, pp. 228–30, p. 229.
 - 19 Girardin to Choffard, [November 20 1779]: *CC*, vol. 44 (1985), no. 7644, pp. 89–95, p. 90.
 - 20 *Idem*, p. 91.
 - 21 *Idem*, p. 90.
 - 22 Girardin to Laliaud, Ermenonville, May 9 1779: *CC*, vol. 43 (1984), no. 7531, pp. 257–60, p. 258.
 - 23 Girardin to Cochin, Ermenonville, [end of May 1779]: *CC*, vol. 43 (1984), no. 7551, pp. 301–2, p. 302.
 - 24 Laliaud to Girardin, Nîmes, July 12 1779: *CC*, vol. 43 (1984), no. 7577, pp. 354–6, p. 355.
 - 25 Argand to Girardin, Geneva, July 30 1779: *CC*, vol. 43 (1984), no. 7594, pp. 388–90, pp. 388–9.
 - 26 Du Peyrou to Moulto, Neuchâtel, June 28 1779: *CC*, vol. 43 (1984), no. 7568, pp. 334–7, p. 334.
 - 27 *Œuvres de J. J. Rousseau*, 18 vols. (Paris, 1793–an vii [1799]), begun by André Defer de Maisonneuve and completed by Jacques Edme Gabriel Dufour.
 - 28 *Œuvres de J. J. Rousseau* (see note 27), vol. 1 (1793), p. [5]. Cf. Christian Michel, *Charles-Nicolas Cochin et le livre illustré au XVIII^e siècle*, Genève, 1987, p. 352.
 - 29 Certainly eight other plates had already been designed, since only a decade later they were to be used in the Defer de Maisonneuve edition: see Michel 1987 (see note 28), pp. 351–4.
 - 30 Samuel de Tournes to Du Peyrou, Geneva, February 2 1787: *CC*, vol. 45 (1986), no. 7914, pp. 356–63, pp. 356–7.
 - 31 See note 2.

SUMMARY

Within a few weeks of the death of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in 1778, three of his friends, the marquis de Girardin, Pierre-Alexandre Du Peyrou and Paul Moulto, had decided to undertake the definitive edition of the philosophe's works. The work, to be published in Geneva, was intended to combine textual exactitude with typographical perfection and was to represent the ideal form of monument to the memory of Rousseau. In Girardin's words, this edition should be one that would ensure that the writer would be respected eternally and throughout the world ('que doit respecter a jamais L'univers, Comme le meilleur des Philosophes, et des écrivains, et des hommes.') In order to render the book more attractive and worthier of a place in all the best libraries, an ambitious programme for the illustrations was also devised.

This essay concentrates on one of the planned plates – the frontispiece. This engraving, standing at the head of the work, was meant to assume a symbolic, emblematic and recapitulatory, summarizing role. Within one image, an artist was expected to be able to provide visual indications which, when correctly read or decoded, could present the reader with a recognizable, exemplary figure of Rousseau. The various contributions to the debate generated by this plate are here discussed. According to the commentators of the time, a truly cosmopolitan and a-temporal figure of Rousseau could only be achieved by stripping him of his eighteenth-century costume and representing him in a classicizing scene.