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Openings

Great are you, O Lord, and surpassingly worthy of praise. Great is your goodness, and your wisdom is incalculable. And humanity, which is but a part of your creation, wants to praise you; even though humanity bears everywhere its own mortality, and bears everywhere the evidence of its own sin and the evidence that you resist the proud. And even so humanity, which is but a part of your creation, longs to praise you, for you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you…. Yet how can anyone invoke you without knowing you?... How will they invoke one in whom they have not believed? …Those who seek the Lord will praise him: those who search, find him; and when they have found him they will praise him. So let me seek you, Lord, while I invoke you in prayer; and let me invoke you while I believe in you…What place is there in me where my God may enter in, where that same God who made heaven and earth may enter into me?[1]

– Augustine, *Confessions*

[1] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb, 3 – 5.

This is the only portrait of a man, painted exactly according to nature and in all its truth, that exists and will probably ever exist. Whoever you may be, whom destiny or my trust has made the arbiter of the fate of these notebooks, I entreat you, in the name of my misfortunes, of your compassion, and of all human kind, not to destroy a unique and useful work, which may serve as a first point of comparison in the study of man that certainly is yet to be begun, and not to take away from the honour of my memory the only sure monument to my character that has not been disfigured by my enemies. Finally, were you yourself to be one of those implacable enemies, cease to be so towards my ashes, and do not pursue your cruel injustice beyond the term both of my life and yours so that you might do yourself the credit of having been, once at least, generous and good, when you might have been wicked and vindictive; if, that is, the evil directed at a man who has never himself done nor wanted to do any could properly bear the name of vengeance.

I am resolved on an undertaking that has no model and will have no imitator. I want to show my fellow-men a man in all the truth of nature; and this man is to be myself.

Myself alone. I feel my heart and I know men. I am not made like any that I have seen; I venture to believe that I was not made like any that exist. If I am not more deserving, at least I am different. As to whether nature did well or ill to break the mould in which I was cast, that is something no one can judge until after they have read me.

Let the trumpet of judgment sound when it will, I will present myself with this book in my hand before the Supreme Judge. I will say boldly: 'Here is what I have done, what I have thought, what I was. I have told the good and the bad with equal frankness. I have concealed nothing that was ill, added nothing that was good, and if I have sometimes used some indifferent ornamentation, this has only ever been to fill a void occasioned by my lack of memory; I may have supposed to be true what I knew could have been so, never what I knew to be false. I have shown myself as I was, contemptible and vile when that is how I was, good, generous, sublime, when that is how I was; I have disclosed my innermost self as you alone know it to be. Assemble about me, Eternal being, the numberless host of my fellow-men; let them hear my confessions, let them groan at my unworthiness, let them blush at my wretchedness. Let each of them, here on the steps of your throne, in turn reveal his heart with the same sincerity; and then let one of them say to you, if he dares: *I was better than that man.*[2]

– Rousseau, *Confessions*

[2] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 3 – 5.

Two tasks are at hand. In the opening lines of the first *Confessions* composed by Augustine of Hippo in 397 – 401, someone seeks, and prays, and strives to open himself to god. In the opening lines of the second *Confessions* composed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in 1765 – 1771, someone tells god to throw open this confession to his fellow men and entreats them to hear it. Both seem pressing. Against the threat of implacable enemies, Rousseau defies his public to cast a stone at him while calling on god to assemble them about Rousseau, to hear the confession that now sits in my – your – our hands.[3]An uneasy alliance – for us readers at least – is established by Rousseau. Even as he sits in judgment before god, Rousseau establishes his rapport with god from the claim that his *Confessions* is already known by god, what has he to fear? The only fear would be if the text were to contradict the truth. Rousseau's confidence guarantees its truth, and his scene of judgment before god becomes a trial of its witnesses. The audience – at this point, you and me – is suspended. Rousseau points over his shoulder, not addressing us, but saying to god, let them hear it, with a knowing smile: if we were to think we are better than Rousseau, god might judge us too.

The relations between god, author, and audience in the opening lines of the *Confessions* by Augustine are something else entirely. If the audience is in jeopardy at the outset of the *Confessions* by Rousseau, the audience might start out worried about the author of the *Confessions* of Augustine. Indeed, the relation to god that Rousseau seems sure of is what Augustine knows he needs to be delivered to safety – or salvation rather. And we readers from the outset seem to be the witnesses to this journey, which we hope will succeed. While the unknown in the Rousseau text seems to be what the audience will judge of Rousseau, the unknown in Augustine's will be whether the author is able to get god into his heart. From the

[3] On the rhetorical relationship between the historical reader and the figure of the reader as a theme, see chapter 4.

outset, each sets out these goals before us. In no uncertain terms the confessions set out important work to do, and start to build how it will happen or not through their *Confessions*.

The practice of confessing, the hyperbole of the penitent, the address to god, and the embarrassment of the audience are so palpable from the opening lines that we might ask, how does each confession work? What kind of terrain are we entering into? Putting a pin in the relationship between the historical individuals, the facts of their life, and these narratives about them, could we examine the texts, these pulpy compositions, to consider how they work? Rather than taking the truth of the true accounts as an exemption from these questions, could we take the accounts as sites to examine the power-laden economy of truth-telling. I suggest we approach the texts not as evidence for our use – clear, sterile containers in which their data are delivered – but as rhetorical operations intensely saturated with ethical goals and effects. We could accept they are telling the truth: they are published for us to read; they depend on some facts, evidence, and statistics; and can be compared to archival and historical records. Or we could bracket whether or not the truths claimed are truths indeed. Either way, we move from a judgment of if the truths are true to an examination of the labors and their effects. In the *Confessions*, accounts are not simply submitted to our judgment; we witness what is submitted to god. The contest is not between our knowledge of them and the text at hand. The *lutte* is cosmic; these are battles for the soul of the author – and his audience. There's a hope, a technique, a good and a bad, a contest among agents, a transformation of actors, competing wills, and a desired outcome. This is a question of power.

From a Foucauldian point of view, the texts by Augustine and Rousseau are part of a long history of confession. Augustine's delineation of the ethical problem of the subject in the will

paved the way for pastoral forms of power in medieval Christianity.[4] Techniques of attention, cultivation, and mastery sharpened into hermeneutics, negation, and obedience. The confession of sins became a cornerstone of a social fabric and individual formation. And while the story of theological *méconnaissance* would promise a liberation after a secular turn, Foucault insists that the forms of power in early modernity and secular nation-states only proliferated the practices of confession and its force.[5] On the cusp of the French Revolution, pastoral and state institutions impose themselves on Rousseau, and the confessions he offers reinflect the enterprise, kicking off a literary and autobiographical form. Rousseau's feeling of constant surveillance, dedication of his confession to the science of man, and even interpretation as mad attest to the lasting obligation to expose the truth of oneself.[6] The 'secular' legacy of confession in literature, the human sciences, education, psychoanalysis, and the formation of concepts[7] allows its continued pressure in delineating and producing forms of life. In 1976, Foucault worries about the history and presence of confessional modes, and their masquerade as a promise of freedom.[8] Foucault's work draws out the description of torturous scenes to produce a confession, the irony of the purification felt by the blood drawn to get the truth, the depths to which examination can plunge and the pains it can induce for extraction.[9] Over his readings, confession becomes as worrying as torture, its "shadow,"[10] as he develops a problem in the relationship between power and truth.

That is to say, Foucault submits truth – its formations, its production, and its effects – to questions of power.[11] In the passages above, the Augustine and Rousseau *Confessions* already

[4] Foucault, *History of sexuality volume 4*, 291 – 314.
[5] Foucault, *History of sexuality volume 1*, 53 – 64; Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*; Foucault, *History of sexuality volume 4*. For secularism and the nation-state, see Asad, *Formations of the Secular*.
[6] Foucault, "Introduction to Rousseau's *Dialogues*," *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, 33 – 51.
[7] Foucault, *History of sexuality volume 1;* Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality.*
[8] Foucault, *History of sexuality volume 1*, 3 – 13, 77 – 91.
[9] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 3 – 69.
[10] Foucault, *History of sexuality volume 1*, 59.
[11] To address a common misconception, this is not the same as a refutation of the truth, which engages the question of whether a truth is true or not.

cut across the question of truth and power Foucault sets out around the confession. In order to examine this, we first have to put in place some of the problematics of the Foucauldian question of power. In the *History of Sexuality*, we can find a vocabulary and an analytic framework to approach the problem of power that would make us worry about the way that, as he famously put it, "Western man has become a confessing animal."[12] Projecting the pastoral practice through to its proliferated forms, Foucault describes:

> The confession is a ritual of discourse in which the speaking subject is also the subject of the statement; it is also a ritual that unfolds within a power relationship, for one does not confess without the presence (or virtual presence) of a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it, and intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console, and reconcile; a ritual in which the truth is corroborated by the obstacles and resistances it has had to surmount in order to be formulated; and finally, a ritual in which the expression alone, independently of its external consequences, produces intrinsic modifications in the person who articulates it: it exonerates, redeems, and purifies him; it unburdens him of his wrongs, liberates him, and promises his salvation.[13]

On this account, Foucault is not examining if the contents of a confession are true (epistemological question), not asking if the person has been duped, or judged fairly (juridical question), or if the sins are even really that bad (moral question). The question is on the outcome of the truth-telling. The description is of a machinery, a technique, a procedure, a mechanism, a practice. If you apply the knife point here, you can slice the apple vertically, if you do this, in this way, in this context, these are the effects.[14] Foucault looks at the confession, and its truth-telling, as a technique, a practice, a procedure, with component parts that have effects: this is the question of power.

[12] Foucault, *History of sexuality volume 1*, 59.
[13] Foucault, *History of sexuality volume 1*, 61 – 62.
[14] Foucault, *History of sexuality volume 1*, 92 – 102.

Foucault insists that we include all the ways effects are borne on individuals when we consider 'power.' One helpful way to understand this move is a rebuttal of a common image of power as a 'king.' Power, in this (too simple) picture, is the line drawn from the king onto his subjects, the 'lines of force' by which the king acts on each of these individuals to ban or prohibit them from breaking any of his decrees, directly or through his administrations.[15] Foucault argues that this picture is incomplete, and that to see the other, additional, very real forces that act on subjects, we need a better picture. The (new) picture depicts the forces between each subject and all that influences its body and behaviors, from authority figures to peers or social patterns, bodies of knowledge and their systems and operation, considering how they act on, change, add to, or reproduce such forces in turn. The forces do not only stretch between a king and its subjects, but between each subject and each other subject, every actor and the contexts they create, build, and sustain which impact, shape, and pattern their modes of being.[16] For a visual, the lines of force stretch weblike between each subject, wrapping around contexts, and crawling over social territories like cartographical lines. The lines of force tracing these forces among subjects could be redrawn or erased, repeated and strengthened with use like axon terminals, or peter out and fade as practices change. The forces act among bodies like gravitational pulls, each object acting on others, increasing force with increased exposure. Each individual in this space feels the push and pull of these forces, and the forces work on each subject: shaping, changing, making or forming them. The way in which subjects are produced through, in, and by this field of forces is the way 'power' operates in the 'formation of a subject.'

The confession is one technique that changes, shapes, or forms the subject; that is to say, confession is a practice through which a person becomes one thing or another: free or enslaved,

[15] Foucault, *History of sexuality volume 1*, 81 – 102.
[16] Foucault, *History of sexuality volume 1*, 92 – 95.

guilty or redeemed, loved or despised, criminal or citizen, mad or sane, exiled executed or exonerated. Foucault's lens raises the way the confession forms a subject, insisting on the way the confession takes effect in the one confessing, through the force of another soliciting the confession and doling out its effects: "one does not confess without the presence (or virtual presence) of a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it, and intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console, and reconcile."[17] Just between the two actors Foucault describes here, the one confessing and the authority which requires it, the confession takes place in a field of force relations that requires and impels one to confess. In the confession, the forces between two actors are usually unequal, and the one telling the truth is the one who is transformed:

> By virtue of the power structure immanent in it, the confessional discourse cannot come from above…but rather from below, as an obligatory act of speech…the agency of domination does not reside in the one who speaks (for it is he who is constrained), but in the one who listens and says nothing; not in the one who knows and answers, but in the one who questions and is not supposed to know. And this discourse of truth finally takes effect, not in the one who receives it, but in the one from whom it is wrested.[18]

The relations of force between two figures produce this confession. One solicits the information on the penitent from the penitent, the speaker externalizes a truth of him or herself, and is redeemed or purified. The ritual transforms the 'guilty' party;[19] they are forgiven, consoled, reconciled or purified as an effect of the procedure. In effect, the very expression holds out a thrilling promise: "the expression alone, independently of its external consequences, produces intrinsic modifications in the person who articulates it: it exonerates, redeems, and purifies him; it unburdens him of his wrongs, liberates him, and promises his salvation."

[17] Foucault, *History of sexuality volume 1*, 61 – 62.
[18] Foucault, *History of sexuality volume 1*, 62. Note the bracketing of freedom supposed by the confession to open space for Foucault's approach to interrogating its effects.
[19] Note guilt is also not conceded in the Foucault passage to describe the speaker.

Freedom is held out as a promise of this truth-telling, which makes the solicitations and requirements of confession invisible – or desirable. In fact, the very pains of its production guarantee its veracity, as "a ritual in which the truth is corroborated by the obstacles and resistances it has had to surmount in order to be formulated." If the confession is verified by the arduousness of the ritual, the very difficulty of the confession itself guarantees the truth of what it says and its effects: the reconciliation of the sinner with the fold, and the therapeutic to transform the sick. The procedure holds the premise that the truth is located within the speaker and can be externalized; that in this externalization, a transformation of the speaker can take place; and that this "liberates him."

In this first volume from 1976, Foucault homes in on the way an individual is formed through a field of force relations, especially those involved in rituals of truth, such as the confession. In the later volumes of the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault again expands the way to think about how an individual is made, under the name of 'ethics.' For Foucault, this opens up the additional part of the picture: the work that an individual does on itself to form itself into one kind of subject or another. This arises primarily out of his engagement with philosophy and sexual ethics in Greco-Roman antiquity especially in conversation with Pierre Hadot.[20] For example, in the writings of Seneca and Marcus Aurelius, Foucault starts examining exercises of meditation, notebooks writing, and the examination of one's day against principles of conduct, as exercises to internalize truth as a principle of action, and which cultivate oneself with more even passions, self-mastery, and ability to govern.[21] In the picture of how individuals are formed, this exploration opens up another domain for Foucault's analysis: the relation to oneself, and the

[20] See Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*; Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*; and Davidson, *Foucault and his Interlocutors.*
[21] Foucault, "Self-writing," *Ethics*, 207 – 215, and "Genealogy of Ethics," *Ethics*, 223 – 281; Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*.

exercises one can do to form oneself from this domain. A marker develops for Foucault scholarship between the period of 'genealogy' on power and 'ethics' on practices of the self, which marks crucial methodological, conceptual, and historical shifts in his work.[22] However, I would like to proceed with this conjoined domain: the situation of power and the exercises of ethics, as concurrent operations, in the domain of 'subject formation.'[23]

With these aspects in play, we can continue to develop the question of the modes of subject formation that developed in early Christianity between the sexual ethics of antiquity and pastoral forms of power in medieval Christianity. This is where the *History of Sexuality* project left off until recently, with only volume 2: *The Use of Pleasure* and volume 3: *The Care of the Self* on Greco-Roman sexual ethics published before Foucault's death in 1984. With the publication of the volume 4: *Confessions of the Flesh* in 2018, Foucault's work on early Christianity expands our investigation into the Christian era and its modes of making subjects. As the domain of Greco-Roman antiquity and early Christianity opens, the confession's tendency towards domination[24] does not apply to all rituals of truth-telling. Indeed, Foucault focuses on practices of truth-telling that contrast with confession, and pursues the analysis of truth-telling involved in both techniques of power and practices of the self. The domain of truth-telling opens up a variety of exercises, and an expanse of questions on subject formation and rituals of truth-telling. With the techniques of power and the exercises of the self both in view, we can delineate

[22] See Davidson, "Archaeology, Genealogy, Ethics," *Foucault: A Critical Reader,* 221 – 233; Davidson, "Introduction," *Security, Territory, Population,* xiii – xxxiv. On Foucault's notion of the subject and the vocabulay of *subjectivation* and *assujettissement*, see *Foucault and the Making of Subjects*.

[23] Foucault's 'ethics' introduce a few new terms in the making of a subject: the part of the self transformed (ethical substance), the exercises through which one is transformed (*askēsis*), the logic through which the subject relates itself to the ethical schema (mode of subjection, *mode d'assujettissement*), and the goal of the transformation, that is to say, the type of subject one is made into (*telos*), Foucault, *History of sexuality volume 2,* 26 – 29; *Histoire de la sexualité 2* (Gallimard), 36 – 40; see also Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics," *Ethics,* 253 – 280.

[24] In later work, Foucault names four kinds of technologies: of domination, of the self, of production, and of signification. Technologies of domination and technologies of the self index questions of power and ethics respectively, Foucault, "Subjectivity and Truth," *About the Beginning,* 24 – 25; Foucault, "Technologies of the Self," *Technologies of the Self,* 16 – 49.

some of the themes of the Christian techniques of truth-telling as a mode of subject formation that agitate a worry for Foucault.

The confession may worry Foucault as a mechanism that continues the production and exercise of force relations. From the modern forms of power into the Christian experience of the flesh, Foucault describes "'local centers' of power-knowledge":

> For example, the relations that obtain between penitents and confessors, or the faithful and their directors of conscience. Here, guided by the theme of the 'flesh' that must be mastered, different forms of discourse – self-examination, questionings, admissions, interpretations, interviews – were the vehicle of incessant back-and-forth movement of forms of *subjugation* and schemas of knowledge. Similarly, the body of the child, under surveillance, surrounded in his cradle, his bed, or his room by an entire watch-crew of parents, nurses, servants, educators, and doctors, all attentive to the least manifestations of his sex, has constituted, particularly since the eighteenth century, another 'local center' of power-knowledge.[25]

The situation of force relations not only requires one to confess, the practice of confession helps to build forms of knowledge that return the subject to techniques of power. The domain of 'sexuality' precipitates techniques of examination and an internal domain which each subject has to confess. In effect of this confession, one is subject to techniques, discipline, surveillance, and analysis.[26] The mutual relations between the production of truths and the exercise of power perpetuate and stabilize the forces, effects, and constraints on subjects.

In the pastoral period, the confession which started out as a lay practice in Ireland gains steam and the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215[27] made the confession of one's sins to a priest a requirement of every Christian:

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[25] Foucault, *History of sexuality volume 1*, 98 (italics mine). Here, he uses "*assujettissement*," *Histoire de la sexualité 1*, 130.
[26] Foucault, *History of sexuality volume 1*; *Discipline and Punish*; *Madness and Civilization*.
[27] After Lateran IV, the Council of Trent in 1545 and the reforms of Charles Borromeo in the Counter-Reformation expand and proliferate the confession in the sacrament of penance. Borromeo advises: "govern yourself according to his counsel. Go to confession often, the more often the better, every eight days or at least every month, and more often for the solemnities and principal feasts of the year...Try to never retire for sleep with some mortal sin on your soul, but confess it as soon as possible, and

> All the faithful of both sexes shall after they have reached the age of discretion faithfully confess all their sins at least once a year to their own (parish) priest and perform to the best of their ability the penance imposed, receiving reverently at least at Easter the sacrament of the Eucharist, unless perchance at the advice of their own priest they may for good reason abstain for a time from its reception; otherwise they shall be cut off from the Church (ex-communicated) during life and deprived of Christian burial in death. Wherefore, let this salutary decree be published frequently in the churches, that no one may find in the plea of ignorance a shadow of excuse. But if anyone for a good reason should wish to confess his sins to another priest, let him first seek and obtain permission from his own (parish) priest, since otherwise he (the other priest) cannot loose or bind him. Let the priest be discreet and cautious that he may pour wine and oil into the wounds of the one injured after the manner of a skilled physician, carefully inquiring into the circumstances of the sinner and the sin, from the nature of which he may understand what kind of advice to give and what remedy to apply, making use of different experiments to heal the sick one.[28]

The confession gained a set of rules: it had to be done by everyone in the community, to the ordained priests, a certain number of times per year, to cure the flock like a doctor healing the sick. While a late addition to the pantheon of Christian sacraments,[29] the confession was through and through a ritual that operated in a field of power.[30] Not only was it mandatory, it became an integral part of the economy of pastoral power. Foucault describes:

> If Christianity, the Christian pastor, teaches the truth, if he forces men, the sheep, to accept a certain truth, the Christian pastorate is also absolutely innovative in establishing a structure, a technique of, at once, power, investigation, self-examination, and the examination of others, by which a certain secret inner truth of the hidden soul, becomes the element through which the pastor's power is exercised, by which obedience is practiced, by

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if that is not possible at the time, at least take care to have contrition and sorrow for it and weep over it bitterly. Do some act of penance every week, such as fasting, the discipline, a hair shirt, sleeping on a hard surface and other things; but only with the advice of the spiritual father," *Selected Orations*, 170 – 171. The Trent Council records: "the universal Church has always understood that the complete confession of sins was also instituted by the Lord and is by divine law necessary for all who have fallen after baptism; because our Lord Jesus Christ…left behind Him priests…as rulers and judges, to whom all the mortal sins in to which the faithful of Christ may have fallen should be brought in order that they may…pronounce the sentence of remission or retention of sins. For it is evident that priests could not have exercised this judgment without a knowledge of the matter, nor could they have observed justice in imposing penalties, had the faithful declared their sins in general only and not specifically and one by one. From which it is clear that all mortal sins of which they have knowledge after a diligent self-examination, must be enumerated by the penitents in confession," *Canons and Decrees*, 92 – 93.

[28] Schroeder, *Disciplinary Decrees*, 259 – 263.

[29] For an account of the development of the confession, see H. C. Lea, *History of Auricular Confession I – III*. For Foucault's read of the pastoral practices into modernity, see "19 February 1975," *Abnormals*, 167 – 199. For primary sources on the penitential manuals and additional context, see McNeill, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*. This material emphasizes the Catholic tradition, for the Protestant development of spiritual journals as a mode of self-writing also important to this story, see O. Watkins, *The Puritan Experience*.

[30] A methodlogical note: Foucault's analytic of power across historical periods distinguishes them by the fields of force relations.

> which the relationship of complete *obedience* is assured, and through which, precisely, the economy of merits and faults passes. It is not salvation, the law, and the truth, but these new relationships of merits and faults, absolute *obedience*, and the production of hidden truths, which constitute, I think, what is essential and the originality and specificity of Christianity.[31]

The confession of one's sins to a priest works on each individual and functions in a social field. Sin fuels an economy; sin requires the confession of a secret fault which is delivered to the priest, the priest exercises his power in listening to the confession and in doling out penance for its remission, the priest exercises his authority, the sinner practices obedience. The circulation allows for the conduct of each individual, and the movement of the flock towards redemption.[32] To the situation of subjugation out of the local centers of power-knowledge, the pastoral example adds the aspect of obedience in the Christian history of truth-telling.

In pre-confessional truth-telling rituals in Christianity, the subject suffers a similar theme. In two practices, *exagoreusis* and *exomologēsis*, Foucault examines early Christian iterations of truth-telling as a mode of subject-formation. In *exagoreusis*, a practice that developed in early Christian monasticism, and on which Cassian offers rich examples, Foucault examines how one would undertake an examination – and a verbalization – of everything inside.[33] The externalization of the truth of oneself was not just limited to sins, or faults, or desires. The externalization had to be comprehensive because the judgment of the spiritual director was required to discern what was the enemy lurking within. The logic suggests that all of one's own impulses are suspect, and the rectification for the danger they pose is to expose oneself – all thoughts – that could be the devil – to another and to bind oneself into direction by this other. The comprehensive nature of the exercise, and the possibilty of all of one's own impulses arising

[31] Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 183, (italics mine).
[32] Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 191 – 226; Foucault, *History of sexuality volume 4*, 291 – 314.
[33] Foucault, "Christianity and Confession," *About the Beginning*, 62 – 74; Cassian, *Institutes*, especially the theme of obedience in book 4; Foucault, "Self-writing," *Ethics*, 208 – 221. On Cassian and Foucault, see Niki Clements, *Sites of the Ascetic Self*.

from the devil, effectively grounded a practice in which one had to completely submit oneself to the direction by another. Foucault describes its technique of "verbalization as a movement toward God [as] a renunciation of Satan, and a renunciation of oneself. Verbalization is *self-sacrific*."[34]

In *exomologēsis*, an early Christian form of penance, a member of the congregation gains remission for a sin committed. In this case, one told a sin to a priest and then adopted a public position as a 'sinner' which was manifested through bodily and ritual markers of an extended period of penance.[35] Wearing sack cloth and ashes would visually manifest one's status as a sinner, and one would both manifest this status and exercise it through performances of self-negation. The fifth-century penitent Fabiola, "hair disheveled, her face pale, her hands dirty, her head covered in ashes, she chastened her naked breast" as an enactment of the sinner status she held.[36] The ritual would also include the readmission to the church at the end of the period, often Easter, with the laying on of hands welcoming the sinner back into the fold. A dramatic enactment, the model of which was martyrdom,[37] Foucault describes "in the ostentatious gestures of maceration, self-revelation in exomologēsis is, at the same time, *self-destruction*."[38] In truth-telling practices even beyond the specific recounting of one's own sin, before the pastoral confession of sins, Foucault develops the theme of self-negation in the Christian subject-forming practice.

[34] Foucault, "Christianity and Confession," *About the Beginning*, 72.
[35] Foucault, *History of sexuality volume 4*, 58 – 78. Foucault, "Christianity and Confession," *About the Beginning* 56 – 61. On the ritual of *exomologēsis*, see Tertullian, *On Repentance*; and early penance, Cyprian, *Letters*. Penance answered a theological and practical problem for early Christianity: how to absolve a sin committed after baptism? The 'second penance' offered a means to redeem a sin after baptism.
[36] Foucault, "Christianity and Confession," *About the Beginning*, 58.
[37] Foucault, *History of sexuality volume 4*, 76 – 78.
[38] Foucault, "Christianity and Confession," *About the Beginning*, 61.

Self-destruction, obedience, and self-negation mark out a theme. The subject-forming practices in this lineage involve a negation of the subject, with a promise of redemption or freedom connected to it. The notion of salvation is bound to this negation. If the practices aim at forming a Christian subject, what is being 'negated,' and how are such subjugations understood as freedom? This seeming paradox can be understood, perhaps, through a conceptual apparatus articulated by Augustine, with whom Foucault ends *The Confessions of the Flesh*.[39] Augustine represents the problem of subjugation as a problem of the will.[40] One's own 'wanting' is directed at the wrong objects because one has fallen away from god.[41] Ideally, one would be in relation to god, and one's will would only want the best things, that is to say, god himself. As it goes,[42] our will unfortunately is turned the wrong way, and in effect our will is actually a constraint. Because the will is fallen, following it leads to subjugation, and negating the will, submitting it to the yoke of god promises freedom. According to this logic, freedom lies in negation and scepticism of oneself, and obedience to another.

We should note that the will takes a double hit here. First, it is misdirected, and becomes the domain of the self that intervention works on.[43] The task of Augustine's subject-formation is transform the will. But this also leads to a second hit. As the source of the problem in the subject, the will cannot direct oneself in remedying itself. As the source of the problem, one's own will cannot direct oneself in a spiritual exercise against whatever subjugations are at play. The will

[39] The *History of sexuality volume 4* was an unfinished manuscript, see Gros, "Foreword," *History of Sexuality volume 4*.
[40] For the development of Foucault's terms *subjugation, assujetissement,* and *subjectivation,* see *Foucault and the Making of Subjects*. In this dissertation, I use '*subjugation'* a stable term to compare the notions of Augustine and Rousseau after Foucault, keeping 'subjugation' as ethically-negative constraint, against 'freedom' – *always internal* to the thinking of the author in play.
[41] Foucault, *History of sexuality volume 4*, 262 – 263. Augustine illustrates the notion in a reading of Genesis in *City of God* XIV. While the Augustinian formulation grounds the modern problem of 'desire,' it is anachronistic to import the full apparatus of the modern notion of desire under the form of experience of sexuality into Augustine. While using 'desire,' I also use the language of 'wanting' to create some space from the modern conceptual apparatus of 'desire' when possible, in service of the comparison of the conceptual and historical connections and differences. In the original texts, I highlight the language of *libido, voluntas, consuetudino,* and *concupiscientia,* as well as the characters of '*corde'* in Augustine and in Rousseau, '*coeur*.'
[42] On the figure of Adam and original sin, see Tertullain, *On Repentance*; Augustine, *City of God,* XI, XIV.
[43] Whether as *ethical substance* as in "Genealogy of Ethics," or as *instinct* in *Abnormals*.

can only submit to another, or align with another, and in this submission become part of the 'ethical' work on oneself. But the will cannot be trusted to direct oneself, or direct another, without this first establishment of its obedience to someone else. This shift renders the *telos* of Aurelius's exercises of the self in governing oneself and governing others incoherent.[44] In the Christian formulation, even the pastor of the flock has submitted his will to god.

Foucault's counterpoints to the Christian legacy of subject formation often oppose this picture, and highlight the government of oneself – and others – as a goal of mastering the passions. The virtue of *enkrateia*, "an active form of self-mastery, which enables one to resist or struggle, and to achieve domination in the area of desires and pleasures," was an ethical exercise that "enabled one to rise above other citizens to a position of leadership" because "self-mastery and the mastery of others were regarded as having the same form."[45] Augustine's legacy, on the other hand, casts an image of the subject of desire whose ethical formation demands a submission of its will. These wants do not take the form of a "pathos – which, coming from the body, risked compromising the sovereignty of the soul over itself. Now, Augustine's analysis doesn't make concupiscence a specific disposition in the soul, or a passivity that limits the soul's power, but the very form of the will, which is to say, of that which makes the soul a subject. For him, it is not the involuntary against the voluntary, but the involuntariness of volition itself: that without which the will cannot will, except precisely with the assistance of grace."[46] It casts an

[44] The ancient ethical practices are embedded in discussion of the governing others from the Alicibiades – "if we develop this care of the self properly…it lead[s] Alcibiades to what he wants, that is to say to knowledge of the technē he needs to be able to govern others, the art that will enable him to govern well" – to Aurelius – "at the heart of the Empire, at its center, there is the problem of the monarch who not only has to be master of the Empire, but master of himself," Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 38, The *Government of Self and Others*, 296. Note Foucault's intervention raising the ethical components of political texts; close comparisons with Greco-Roman and Christian exercises and their contrasts, for example, in the role of the other in spiritual exercises; and the alignment with truth as a theme of Greco-Roman politics and philosophy.
[45] *Foucault, History of sexuality volume 2*, 64, 75. The example for Marcus Aurelius unifies the mastery of oneself and the task of governing: "through his practice of self-restraint…he trained himself in the art of sufficing to himself without losing his serenity. And it was in these conditions that the exercise of imperial responsibilities could appear," Foucault, *History of sexuality volume 3*, 90.
[46] Foucault, *History of sexuality 4*, 271.

image of the subject whose ethical formation – and telos – is to submit its will. This brings the ethical space under a mode of infinite supervision, obedience, and direction by another. The goal of the subject is to be governed; the ethical schema dreams of its submission to god. Techniques of power such as the confession flood into the space of the exercises of the self.

When Foucault declares 'Western man has become a confessing animal,' does he mean we[47] are inextricably doomed to these techniques of power? Even within the fields of power relations at hand, Foucault insists, there is the possibility of change and resistance.[48] Even in pastoral conduct, where confession takes on such sharp applications, Foucault raises the possibility of changing the way one is directed. Outlining a series of 'counter-conducts,' Foucault describes:

> Equally specific movements of resistance and insubordination appeared in correlation with [pastoral conduct] that could be called specific revolts of conduct…They are movements whose objective is a different form of conduct, that is to say: *wanting* to be conducted differently, by other leaders and other shepherds, towards other objectives and forms of salvation, and through other procedures and methods. They are movements that also seek, possibly at any rate, to escape direction by others and to define the way for each to conduct himself.[49]

The example of counter-conduct amongst Foucault's examples of resistance to power is particularly pointed here because it deploys 'wanting' as a ground for change to the mode of subject-forming.[50] It is along the poles of subjugation and freedom, and the alignment of one's wants with either subjugation or freedom, that the Augustine and Rousseau *Confessions* expand the question of subject-formation between power and ethics. The Augustine *Confession*, on the

[47] By 'we' I implicate you as a reader of the canonical 'Augustine' and 'Rousseau,' with a hope that this reading modifies the force relations that allow these texts to designate their publics 'western men' and 'confessing animals.'
[48] Foucault, *History of sexuality volume 1*, 95.
[49] Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 194 – 195, (italics mine).
[50] Notably, for example in the Ursule story, the refusal only justifies itself on the grounds of submission to god as the ethical *telos*, Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 209 – 210.

one hand, lays out an idea and puts into work a technique premised on the will as fallen and subjugating. The Rousseau *Confessions*, on the other, lays out an idea and puts into work a technique premised on his wants as liberating. The comparison affords the space to examine the machineries generated out of each of these two ideas.

With this in mind, Rousseau's *Confessions*, in comparison to Augustine's *Confessions*, suddenly poses a(nother) problem. Augustine's truth-telling is coherent with Augustine's ethical schema. The confession of his sins helps to transform him, and his will, towards god, bringing him under divine direction. The confession of his *Confessions* matches the task at hand. If Rousseau's ethical schema reverses the evaluation of his desire from subjugation to liberation, how could his *Confessions* be a confession? Without a wish to negate or transform himself, what does the text have in common with the confession or the *Confessions*?

In this dissertation, I compare the two texts in order to mark out the delineations between them. For this comparison, I use the grounds of truth-telling practices and their subject-forming effects. That is to say, I take the texts as spaces that name themselves, sets up logics for, stage a scene, act out, and exercise the *work* of truth-telling. In this examination, we can then see how the texts stage themselves, set up logics for, and perform its *effects* in the formation and transformation of *subjects* – that is to say, both the authors and the audiences of the texts. This is not to say that they do tell the truth or that they accomplish these effects, but that this is the game at hand.

The readings forced me to abandon a stable division between Rousseau's *Confessions* as a resurrection of Greco-Roman practices of truth-telling, especially *parrhēsia* and its ethical schema, against the Augustinian *Confessions* as a display of the mechanisms of the Christian confession. The rituals of truth-telling formulated in each combine elements from the Greco-

Roman and Christian traditions. The Augustine *Confessions* not only weaves together elements of the ancient and Christian traditions (as the Rousseau does also), it braids together early Christian truth-telling practices into a confession.[51] While this is not the thesis of the text, I note invocations of the different ethical schemas, the significance of their usage, and the stakes of their presentation. As it happens, it appears that the authors of each work were inventing and deploying masterful combinations of truth-telling practices in the composition of their respective *Confessions*. The texts under examination stage their own invocations of these rituals of truth-telling and their ethical schemas. They demand to be part of the conversation. The terrain on which I set out this argument is the more general one that allows this to come into view.

The *Confessions* of Augustine and the *Confessions* of Rousseau compound the scenes narrated in the confessions with the scenes of their performance of the ritual of truth-telling. In each text we can examine the way the scene is composed, the machine assembled, the technique put into play, the acting out of the roles and choreography of the interactions, and the staging of its own effects. In this examination we can dwell in the space of their inventions and dissect their operations. And in this we can better see how and when truth-telling and power intersect.

Because techniques of power, such as the confession, are composed of complex machinery, they are open to other outcomes, through the intervention into this machiney, to turn it to other effects. Because confession, and techniques of power, are always produced, they are likewise always vulnerable to the threat of movable, internal slippages. Foucault's attentions to the ethical practices of antiquity pit them against modern forms of power, and ancient practices of 'truth-telling' present counterpoints to the confessional mode. However, ancient elements: the

[51] Foucault describes the Augustine *Confessions* as a combination of *exomologēsis* and *exagoreusis*, *About the Beginning*, 93 – 94. As the texts craft the confession and invoke rhetorical traditions, they offer occasions to parse the ethical formation marked out by these designations, how 'rituals' transform, and above all, the kind of subject and its exposures to power set into motion through these figurations, invocations, and compositions.

relation to the self, *parrhēsia*, and medieval counter-conduct, all lurk in the machiney of the confession, its history, development, and invention, ready to slip out of place and jam the machinery or redirect the flow of discourse to some other effect, like a knife that slips as pressure is put on it and cuts the wrong way.

The *Confessions* of Augustine and the *Confessions* of Rousseau, composed in 397 – 401 and 1765 – 1771 respectively, each have well-established commentary and manuscript traditions. The *Confessions* of Augustine was composed in his first three years as a bishop in the late Roman empire,[52] chronicling the story of his life up to his baptism in books 1 – 9, and composing meditations on time, memory, and exegeting Scripture in books 10 – 13. While the text itself does not name its author, Aurelius Augustine composed a *Retractiones* (426) at the end of his life reviewing his extensive body of writings including the *Confessions*. A public figure during his own life, Augustine was considered a saint quickly after his death and multiple manuscripts from as early as the ninth century are still extant.[53] The tradition of translating the *Confessions* in English began in the 17th century, and the edition used for the in-text passages here is the second Loeb printing of Augustine's *Confessions* in 2014 and 2016, the first was in 1912.[54] The canonical status of Augustine and this text have generated a thorough body of scholarship and especially rigorous commentaries on the text. The Institut d'Études Augustiniennes edition of the text by Solignac frames the text with attention to historical context, literary operations, and philosophical themes. The O'Donnell commentary on the *Confessions* notes the Latin usages with notes on traditions of commentary and comparative interpretations.

[52] Brown, *Augustine: A biography*, 151 – 178.
[53] Ninth-century manuscripts are housed in the Stuttgart Württemburgische Landesbibliothek, Paris Bibliothèque Nationale, and Vatican City libraries, Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb, xxxvii – xl.
[54] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb, ix.

The intellectual tradition of scholarship on the Augustine *Confessions* is a history unto itself. Pierre Coucelle's works treat the literary history of the themes of the text from their ancient predecessors and into their moden legacy in literature, the work of Marrou contextualizes the text in the intellectual and cultural moment of antiquity, and the work of Peter Brown prefigures that of Foucault in delineating the sexual ethics of early Christianity, and the importance of Augustine's thought therein. Brown's biography of Augustine is also comprehensive in tracing his biographical details, intellectual development, and historical context. Pierre Hadot's work on spiritual exercises raises the ethical dimensions of Augustine's writings and the influence of Neoplatonic philosophy. While much of the scholarship on Augustine is owned by theological discourses, these scholars have opened historical, literary critical, philosophical and political conversations as well. Augustine's *Confessions* is both expounded upon and planted as a stable pillar in phenomenological, historical, and genealogical work: in Ricoeur's canonical text on time and narrative, Marion's exploration of Augustine and the saturated phenomenon, and now, Foucault's political-ethical exploration of the genealogy of the modern subject.

The *Confessions* of Jean-Jacques Rousseau were also composed by a figure famous in his own time. A Genevan who had been displaced to Paris and circulated among eighteenth-century *philosophes*, corresponding with Voltaire and working on the *Encyclopédie* with Diderot, Rousseau became a famous author – and a banished one – when he followed up the well-received *Discourses* (1750, 1755) with the scandalous *Emile* (1762), *Social Contract* (1762), and *Julie* (1761). At the urging of his publisher,[55] who wanted to include it in a volume of collected works, Rousseau began composing an autobiography in the strange circumstance of being a cult-like revered celebrity and famously maligned. He produced a series of autobiographical writings

[55] Rousseau's publisher was Marc-Michel Rey, *Collected Writings 5*, xxxv, who becomes part of the story when Rousseau details his account of the publications of his works.

at the end of his life besides the *Confessions*, which are all inventive in style and genre and concerned with the very task of his writing, his image, and its reception by the public. The *Dialogues* (1772 - 1776) stage a conversation between a Rousseau figure and a Frenchman about his impression of Rousseau, and the *Reveries* (1776 – 1778) portray his meditations in happy retreat from the world. While he tries to read selections of the *Confessions* in Paris, he is banned from scandalizing people further and the text is only published posthumously.[56] Three versions of the manuscript are still extant, the Geneva manuscript, the Neuchâtel manuscipt, and the Paris manuscript. All three offer crucial representations of the text: the Geneva manuscript the one intended for publication, the Paris manuscript having later edits because Rousseau kept this copy with him for insurance, and the Neuchâtel another opening invocation that calls on the audience to look at this text as the true portrait of Rousseau. The in-text citations here are from the Oxford Classics edition translated by Angela Scholar based on the Geneva manuscript. The Pleiade edition has extensive historical and textual notes, and the *Collected Writings* series edited by Christopher Kelly includes notes on the text including the differences between manuscripts, and the letters Rousseau refers to in the text. Readings of Rousseau and the *Confessions* could be used to trace the history of thought from the 18th century to today, and have been definitive for twentieth-century criticism between literature, philosophy, and history. Jean Starobinski's foundational text *Transparency and Obstruction* delineated a central theme and conflict though which to read Rousseau's work and yielded Derrida's opus *Of Grammatology*. Derrida's exercise on Rousseau opened interpretive problems on the autobiographical mode by Kofman, Kamuf, and de Man, which bring to task the projects of writing and philosophy. In my reading, I am particularly endebted to this tradition for directing attention to the means by which the text

[56] D'Épinay asks the police to ban Rousseau from reading selections in Paris, and Part I is published in 1782, Christopher Kelly, *Collected Writings 5*, xvii.

grounds itself, and subordinating familiar interpretive categories to give space to questions of mode, operation, and stakes.

Perhaps the most notable space in which the two *Confessions* are brought together – often in the same breath – is literary criticism on autobiography. While anthologies like Olney's *Essays Theoretical and Critical* return to the pairing as a canonical inauguration, work like Lejeune's "The Autobiographical Pact" uses Rousseau's *Confessions* as the self-evident exemplar of his definition. Other work on autobiography such as Laura Marcus' *Auto/biographical Discourses* calls into question the formation of canon around the concept, subjecting its origins to a genealogical look at the relationship between the genre and the formation of human scienes, and pointing to the political implications of accepting its domain as universal. This approach harmonizes with Foucault's questions for autobiography, which are subordinated to the political history of truth. In *History of sexuality volume 1*, he notes the autobiography as one of the many domains that represent the proliferation of confession beyond its sacramental form in modernity, or, in cases such as Sade, examples of an historical conceptual framework in place. Two notable treatments are a piece on Rousseau's *Dialogues*, in which Foucault uses the theme of surveillance to represent the impetus of the text, and a short piece called "Self writing," in which Foucault compares self-writing practices under the Greco-Roman and Christian ethical schema to raise distinctions beween them. I draw widely on Foucault's work as the conceptual apparatus for this analysis, and hope that the comparison of Augustine's and Rousseau's *Confessions* helps to explore the Foucauldian question on Augustine, the strategies of delineation on techniques of power, and the modes of truth-telling as subject-formation. While the new Foucault text on Augustine grounds this approach, it might be helpful to turn to another site in Foucault's work to establish the method here.

In his lectures on truth-telling practices in Greco-Roman stories, for example in the story of Oedipus and the story of Ion, Foucault sets out a reading of a text that pieces out a 'truth game' at hand from the logic and composition of the text.[57] A truth game does not suggest that the truth-telling is insincere, or nefarious, or idle, or frivoluous. The language aims to indicate that, like a game, there is a delineated space in which actions obtain certain effects, there are agents and actors operating in the space, and that the agents acting in the space interact with the set of 'rules' in place such that their actions take on certain effects. It simply indicates that there is a space in which one can set up and act out the rituals of truth-telling. In Foucault's readings of these texts, he lays out the truth-games that are at stake: how the text sets out a regime of truth, the conditions and circumstances these lay out, the outcomes for actors and their engagements with them. He introduces aspects like the mode in which the truth is manifested, what kind of truth is manifested, and the effects of the game. It is in this mode that I propose to compare the *Confessions* of Augustine and Rousseau: to give full space to the literary qualities of each text and their rhetorical devices; the staging, performing, and outcomes of the truth-tellings therein; and the negotiation between author, audience, and god set out from top. The dramatic performance of the ritual of truth-telling in the *exomologēsis* opens a way to interrogate the scenes composed and performed in the two *Confessions*. Isabelle Galichon's work on Foucault and literature and Arianna Sforzini's work on Foucault and the theater demonstrate the merits of exploring these ethical and political questions through the trope of theatricality.

The dramatic terms on which the two *Confessions* stage themselves set out this approach from their openings. Rousseau's Neuchâtel preface might offer the best metaphor to describe this

[57] For readings in this mode, see interpretations of Oedipus, Foucault, *Government of the Living*, 1 – 92; and of Ion, Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others*, 75 – 172. On the truth-game, see Foucault, *History of Sexuality volume 2*, 6 – 7; and Foucault, "The Ethic of Care for the self as a practice of freedom," *The Final Foucault*.

mode of interpretation as the analysis of an image or portrait. The Neuchâtel preface describes the work as a portrait, reiterating the theme from the opening of Montaigne's *Essays*.[58] I take the suggestion seriously and examine the composition, relationship of parts, ironies, staging, and performance of the self-writings as self-representations under the rubric of confession. To that end, I do not offer a comprehensive reading of each text. I often attend more to the moments where the 'scene' in question is not an anecdote from the life captured in the text, but the scene of the confession of the text itself. In the comparison, I raise the truth-telling at stake for each text as a central and crucial organizing principle of their self-representation. I draw out the parallels between the arc of each text as a confession on Foucauldian terms, from the deficit and sin established in the beginning of each text, to the reading practices at the culmination of each. I suggest the arc of the texts reflect the question of subject-formation through truth-telling.

In Chapter 1: Stealing Fruit, I compare the famous pear scene in Augustine's text to Rousseau's scene of stealing an apple. In the scenes, each illustrates a 'debt' that sets out different 'problems' in the subject and defines the problem of subjugation for each. In the respective 'scenes of original sin,' each invokes a tradition and casts a notion of 'the sin' at stake. In turn, the scens also configure the possibility of 'freedom' for each author, and the mode of confession, or truth-telling, that would bridge the separation between subjugation and freedom. In Chapter 2: Girl Troubles, I compare the famous ribbon scene in which Rousseau steals a ribbon and gives it to another servant, Marion, to Augustine's description of his relation

[58] Montaigne writes: "If I had written to seek the world's favor, I should have bedecked myself better, and should present myself in a studied posture. I want to be seen here in my simple, natural, ordinary fashion, without straining or artifice; for it is myself that I portray. My defects will here be read to the life, and so also my natural form, as far as respect for the public has allowed. Had I been placed among those nations which are said to live still in the sweet freedom of nature's first laws, I assure you I should very gladly have portrayed myself here entire and wholly naked," *Essays*, 2. On self-portrait in the medium of text, see Marin's discussion of the Montaigne opening, "'C'est moi que je peins…': De la figurabilité du moi chez Montaigne," *L'écriture de soi*, 113 - 126; and Kofman's discussion of the camera obscura as a metaphor for Rousseau's image, "Rousseau's Confessional," *Camera Obscura*, 35 – 40.

to his ‘mistress.’ Augustine describes his relation as borne out of concupiscence instead of following the law of god, in the same breath describing his teaching of rhetoric and how to defend the guilty. I raise the relations between the theme of sexual desire, the juridical, and the truth forged in Augustine’s portrait. In comparison, I suggest the Rousseau ribbon scene reconfigues the relation between truth, sexual desire, and the juridical, to impute culpability and the deficit of truth on the social, where Augustine claims these for himself before his conversion. In Chapter 3: On Conversion, I compare the way conversion scenes in Augustine and Rousseau configure the change in the authors and the shift in their modes of confession from the first to second parts of each *Confessions*. In Augustine’s conversion, the confession against himself brings him to a confession of the truth of god. In coherence with this movement, the confession of the text shifts after the conversion scene, from a performance of the confession that turns him away from self to god (through the narrative of his life telling the truth of his sins), to, after his conversion to god, a performance of the confession that turns him away from self to god (through the reading and writing on Scripture telling the truth of god). The Rousseau text paints his early conversion to Catholicism as a farce. Yet like the Augustine text, the shift from part I to part II also recounts the change in Rousseau that incite him to write the *Confessions*. The transformation Rousseau recounts is likewise a commitment to live according to the truth, which for him means telling the truth of Rousseau hidden so far by its enemies. In Chapter 4: Public Trials, I compare the way each text sets up the roles of god, audience, and author in the confessional machinery. Both portray the audience viewing the truth they confess, who, in bearing witness to it, ought to be effected and turn towards the truth. The Augustine audience hears his confession, is incited to confess itself to god, and turn to truth. Rousseau puts himself on trial to demonstrate the deficit of truth suffered by the audience and remedied by his

Confession. Rousseau recasts events for which he is condemned, for example the public scandal of his affair with Sophie d'Houdetot, as a moral example, like the story in his novel *Julie*, and stages an ethical boon for the audience in joining and loving Rousseau instead of judging him falsely. The same public scandal leads to Rousseau's the desperate state of the writing author figure. In Chapter 5: Time, Text, I compare the confession of Rousseau's side of the scandal though the transcription of letters with d'Épinay, Grimm, and Diderot, to the text Augustine refers to at the culmination of his *Confessions*. For Augustine, reading the text of Scripture is a truth-telling exercise that forms him and pulls his wants to god. In Rousseau, the truth on trial is the truth of himself, and he likewise turns to a textual exercise; but for Rousseau, this amounts to a re-reading and re-writing the truths contained in his letters and correspondences.

Two aspects – the creative composition and the canonical status – of the two texts generate an opening. The two *Confessions* are foundational for the formulation and refomulation of confession across epistemolgical-political shifts, and serve as pillars for the lasting logic of confession, its proliferated forms, and even philosophical and ethical modes. The confession articulated and rearticulated by Augustine and Rousseau remains a mainstay of our conceptual and ethical apparatus. In short, it is no coincidence that definitions of autobiography, for example, refer to these texts as their foundations – even while uncertain of the boundaries between them, and between 'confession' and 'autobiography.' This tension is central: the confession is the history of the genre, and the obfuscation of its prefiguration of modern forms of self-writing – while seeming to offer freedom – robs us of the analysis of the rhetorical and political forms of confession embedded therein.

While the *Confessions* of Augustine and Rousseau are pillars of the confession Foucault critiques for the genealogy of the modern subject, and are culprits in connecting confession to

freedom, the examination of their respective 'confessions' opens up domains to explore the relationship between truth-telling and subjugation. One of the problems the texts pose is that – when Foucault's lens on power shocks us with the image of wresting truth from the one confessing, we can also see the way these texts stage the effects of the confession on others. In effect, the confession is not only a technique of power on the one confessing, and an ethical practice under the Christian experience of the flesh, it is also a technique of power on its witnesses. The way that these texts explicitly stage this demands attention to the complex field of power relations in which the confession takes place, and which it creates. From the beginning of the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault examines how 'desire' was constituted as an object of inquiry, of political and legal investigation and exercise, anchoring a conceptual apparatus. The role of desire in Greco-Roman examples poses a counterpoint to Christian and modern ethical formations; 'desire' in Christian ethics becomes the impetus for negation, obedience, and conduct. Augustine's *Confessions* is exemplary of the Christian question for Foucault, while deploying the rhetorical tradition of antiquity as well. Rousseau's text offers another comparison to this question, aliginging freedom with an enjoyment of desire, its virtue in moral exercises, and subjugation in another source. Yet even as Rousseau couples desire with virtue, when broadcasting the confession of his desires, he mobilizes an economy of truth-telling whose currency is desire and verification is suffering. Comparing the texts displays the creative assemblages of techniques of power, ethics, and truth-telling.

The importance of Foucauldian themes to understanding these texts is not accidental. The confessions of the *Confessions* should be considered, and in this consideration they shine light into the corners of the genealogy of the modern subject. Foucault claims the importance of the Augustinian notion of the suject of desire as a subject of law. The *Confessions* offer a 'literary'

demonstration of this schematic. The Augustine text sets out scenes in which the problem of the subject is a problem of its desire, in which this subject falls towards subjugation or freedom in a dramatic juridical scene. But the literary scene also reopens the juridical question as Augustine reopens the Genesis scene and Rousseau reopens Augustine in turn.[59] The literary scene allows us to consider these aspects: the formation of the technique and its logic, the exercise of the confession it girds, and the grounds through which it wagers its authority. The scenes are spaces in which the truth-telling is acted out, in the scenes of the life recorded, and the scenes of recording life. In the performances, we can examine the truth-telling subject-forming modes of the confessions. And yet, while they each masterfully draw together a technique and put it into operation, reading the texts together opens up the tensions, ironies, and seams. We can see their moving parts, they cannot but constantly stage them as they forge, and perform, and paint the radiation of the confessions beyond the texts. Reading the texts might offer occasion to explore the machineries, learn the truth-games, and dwell on the power effects that can be put into operation in their name.

[59] On the nature of the relation between the literary and the theological, see Hammerschlag, *Broken Tablets*.

Chapter 1: Stealing Fruit

There was a pear tree near to our vineyard, laden with fruit which had no attractive appearance or flavor. So we set out in the dead of night – a gang of good-for-nothing youths – to shake it down and carry off its fruit; up till then we had prolonged our sport in the usual vexatious fashion in the streets. We carried off great loads, not for ourselves to eat but for throwing to pigs – though we did eat some of them, on condition that what we were doing was something we enjoyed because it was forbidden.[1]

– Augustine, *Confessions*

These apples were at the bottom of a big store-cupboard, which took its light from the kitchen through the louvred blind. One day when I was alone in the house I climbed on to the dough trough, from where I could look down into this garden of the Hesperides and see the precious fruit that lay beyond my reach… I climbed onto the trestles, extended the spit, adjusted it, and was ready to spear an apple… unfortunately, the dragon was not asleep. Suddenly the door of the store-cupboard was opened; my master emerged, crossed his arms, and looked at me: 'Bravo!' he said…the pen falls from my hand.[2]

M. Verrat, who did not have much money, hit upon the notion of stealing his mother's early asparagus… I went every morning and harvested the best asparagus; I took it to the Molard, where some woman or other, who could see that I had just stolen it, would say so, in order to get it from me cheaper. In my fright I would accept whatever she chose to give me, which I then took to M. Verrat. It was promptly exchanged for a meal, which I had procured, but which was shared with another friend; while I, who would have been glad of any morsel that came my way, received not so much as a taste of wine.[3]

I go past a fruit shop; out of the corner of my eye I catch sight of some lovely pears; they smell delicious… I am everywhere intimidated, impeded by some obstacle; my craving increases along with my sense of shame, but I return home, fool that I am, consumed with longing, my pockets full of the means to satisfy it, and without having dared to buy anything at all.[4]

– Rousseau, *Confessions*

[1] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb, 73.
[2] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 33.
[3] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 31 – 32.
[4] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 36.

Scenes of stealing fruit appear early in each text, in book 2 of Augustine's *Confessions* and book 2 of Rousseau's *Confessions*. Augustine composes the scene as a recapitulation of the Genesis scene in which Adam and Eve eat fruit from the tree of knowledge, though god had forbidden them from doing so.[5] As the Genesis scene serves as the origin story of the original sin, Augustine's recapitulation of the story in his own *Confessions* serves as a first-person narrative of his own problem of sin.[6] In a way, this lends a coherence to the position of the scene and the operation of Augustine's *Confessions.* The scene establishes the debt to be remitted through the practice of confession, and serves as a cornerstone for understanding the confessional operation of the text in answering this debt.

The Rousseau *Confessions* also composes a scene of stealing fruit, which also establishes a debt that will be remitted through the truth-telling of the confession. In comparison with the operation of the Augustine text, we might see it fulfill parallel functions to new effect. Like the Augustine *Confessions*, the scene establishes the debt to be restored and the operation of this confession to do it. In this chapter, I compare the scene of fruit-stealing in the Augustine *Confessions* and the Rousseau *Confessions* to delineate the different 'problems' for each subject, the source of the subject's subjugation, and confession as a truth-telling that alleviates it.

[5] Hadot, "Quelques thèmes," *Études Patristique*, 320. The scene reads: "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You may freely eat of every tree in the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die,'" Genesis 2:15 – 17. It continues: "Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?' The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'' But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves," Genesis 3:1 – 7.

[6] The move makes the scene personal to himself and allows him to claim his own culpability for the sin while also connecting his personal sin to a universal 'problem of the subject.'

The Scenes

The scene of Augustine's famous 'pear theft' is brief. Presented with a pear tree that did not belong to him, and did not appeal to him, Augustine and his friends stole its fruit in order to enjoy stealing:

> There was a pear tree near to our vineyard, laden with fruit which had no attractive appearance or flavor. So we set out in the dead of night – a gang of good-for-nothing youths – to shake it down and carry off its fruit; up till then we had prolonged our sport in the usual vexatious fashion in the streets. We carried off great loads, not for ourselves to eat but for throwing to pigs – though we did eat some of them, on condition that what we were doing was something we enjoyed because it was forbidden.[7]

Claiming his own culpability for committing the theft, Augustine removes any rationalization – like the temptation of a delicious pear – as the cause of his sin. Not in themselves attractive, the pear tree close to his vineyard was "laden with fruit which had no attractive appearance or flavor." It doesn't look good, it doesn't taste good, and these attributes do not excuse or compel Augustine to steal its fruit. The lesser neighbor of his own tree, the only feature of this other tree, "near to our vineyard," was that it was not his own. The neighboring pear tree is not unique in offering Augustine fruit, it is only unique in not belonging to Augustine, and in that picking its fruit would be a theft.

Anchored by his statement that theft breaks the law of god, the confession of his theft is a confession of his breaking the law of god:

> Your law, Lord, surely punishes theft; and that law is so written in human hearts that not even wrongdoing can efface it. For what thief willingly puts up with a thief, even if one has all he needs while the other is driven by need? I wanted to

[7] "Arbor erat pirus in vicinia nostrae vineae pomis onusta nec forma nec sapore inlecebrosis. Ad hanc excutiendam atque asportandam nequissimi adulescentuli perreximus nocte intempesta (quosque ludum de pestilentiae more in areis produxeramus) et abstulimus inde onera ingentia, non ad nostras epulas sed vel procienda porcis, etiamsi aliquid inde comedimus, dum tamen fieret a nobis quod eo liberet quo non liceret," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb II 4. (9), 73. While Courcelle points out the time of night represents a moment of transition or transformation in literature, O'Donnell suggests the time of night reiterates the transgressive nature of the theft, *Commentary II*, 129. O'Donnell points out the scene of stealing pears limits the cataloguing of sins Augustine has to actually recount, *Commentary I*, 104 – 105. The genealogy of confession shows the late development of cataloguing sins, see H. C. Lea, *History of Auricular Confession*. In my argument, the composition of the scene around pears redirects the problem of his sin to the perversion of his will.

> commit theft; so I did. I was not driven by any kind of lack other than the absence of righteousness and a distaste for it: and the fact that I was bloated with sin. For I stole what I had already in plenty, and of far better quality. I had no desire to enjoy what I had aimed to steal; rather, what I enjoyed was the theft and sin themselves.[8]

The fruit is stolen not just to steal the fruit: "not for ourselves to eat" but "what we were doing was something we enjoyed because it was forbidden." The motivation to commit the theft is to break the law of god, out of a desire to break the law of god. If this is the scene of his 'original sin,' the problem-to-fix is the 'self who would want to do such a thing.' The scene places the origin of his 'sin' in his 'want' and establishes that his want opposes the law of god.

As the scene coheres around this idea, it opens a few questions:

The problem of the sin becomes the problem of the disorder in oneself and its attraction. If Augustine points out that his crime was not motivated by some gain, but by an interest in the crime itself, this cannot be examined in the usual terms for a crime. To the question, what did you gain from your theft, Augustine? The answer is nothing, it was not committed out of interest or out of a motivation for gain, nor to enjoy the fruit. For this, Augustine needs to turn to some other explanation – and resolution. Augustine's story opens up a new way to look at and understand his theft: he pins the problem in the sinner and his attachment to sin – not his material or political circumstances, nor his malicious ends. What, then, would be the rectification of the sin? What confession would answer the scene? The problem is not just getting over a desire for pears. The problem is not the object stolen, but the subject who would desire to steal. As such,

[8] "Furtum certe punit lex tua, domine, et lex scripta in *cordibus hominum*, quam ne ipsa quidem delet iniquitas. Quis enim fur aequo animo furem patitur? Nec copiosus adactum inopia. Et ego furtum facere volui et feci, nulla compulsus egestate nisi penuria et fastidio iustitiae et sagina iniquitatis. Nam id furatus sum quod mihi abundabat et multo melius, nec ea re volebam frui quam furto appetebam, sed ipso furto et peccato," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb II 4. (9), 73. O'Donnell notes 'lex tua' refers to Scripture, *Commentary I*, 128. Solignac notes the inscription of divine law into natural law and reason as a principle for the philosopher to cohere with natural order from Stoic philosophy and Cicero to Augustine; in addition, the law of sin from Paul divides one from this natural law. Following the law of god corrects the problem of sin, coherence with the written law can then realign one with natural law, Soulignac, *Oeuvres 13*, 663 – 664.

the response to the problem of sin lies in the transformation of oneself, or more specifically, the transformation of one's want.[9]

Augustine's scene[10] recounts how our protagonist 'young Augustine' suffered from sin, having a disorder in his wants, and wanting to violate the law of god. While, on the other hand, the author 'Augustine now' wants to follow the law of god. The contrast between the two is not solved by a temporal explanation – I was young and now I'm not – but holds an epistemological and ethical tension – the sin was a problem in my will, and now my will changed: I wanted to disobey god, now I want to obey god. The way the 'scene' is delivered in a 'confession' – in the voice of the 'author now' confessing the sins of himself as a 'sinner then' manifests a rhetorical structure that reflects the centrality of the transformation of the self in the confession. The question is how the 'original scene' stages a debt the confessions of its author can restitute, a desire the author could change.

The representative scene of Rousseau's text is not the 'fruit-stealing' scene, but the 'ribbon scene,' which seems exactly right as a representative passage of the confessional operation in Rousseau.[11] However, I raise the 'fruit-stealing' scenes in the Rousseau *Confessions* as a first place to examine the shifts in the 'problem' of the subject and the 'remedy' of the

[9] At the end of *History of sexuality volume 4*, Foucault's reading of Augustine casting the subject of desire as a subject of law opens a theme in the genealogy of the modern subject on the criminalization of wants. Augustine opens the ethical formation to techniques of power when he casts the ethical substance, in the form of a fallen will, and under the mode of *assujetissement*, law. See also Foucault, "Genealogy of Ethics," Ethics, 268; and *History of Sexuality volume 3*, on Christianity changing the nature of the relation to the self: "the ethical substance based on finitude, the Fall, and evil; a mode of subjection in the form of obedience to a general law that is at the same time the will of a personal god; a type of work on oneself that implies a decipherment of the soul and a purificatory hermeneutics of the desires; and a mode of ethical fulfillment that tends towards self-renunciation," 239 – 240.

[10] For Augustine on the Genesis scene, see *City of God* XIV 10 – 19; Augustine, *On Literal Reading of Genesis.* In the *Confessions*, the composition presents the problem of the subject as the problem of a will disobedient to god in writing a scene in which his own experience claims the theological problem outlined in the Genesis scene. When casting the scene in this way, the text can not only present the idea, it can put into work a rhetorical operation of using the author figure as an example of this problem, and perform – in the act of narrating the scene as an act of orientating to god – the way the telling of the scene as a confession answers the debt established in the scene.

[11] For readings of Rousseau's ribbon scene, see Starobinski, "Exhibitionism," *Transparency and Obstruction*, 170 – 176; and de Man, "Excuses (Confessions)," *Allegories of Reading*, 278 – 301.

confession. In comparison with the Augustine scene, we can see how Rousseau deploys – and changes – the relation between subject and truth in the original scene and the confession as reply.

Consider the passage in Rousseau's *Confessions*, which similarly resurrects the scene of stealing fruit to configure the sin he has perpetrated and the confession to match:

> These apples were at the bottom of a big store-cupboard, which took its light from the kitchen through the louvred blind. One day when I was alone in the house I climbed on to the dough trough, from where I could look down into this garden of the Hesperides and see the precious fruit that lay beyond my reach. I fetched a spit to see if I could reach it with that, but it was too short. I lengthened it by adding another, shorter spit, which was used for small game, for my master liked hunting. I stabbed several times with this but without success; at last, overjoyed, I managed to spear an apple. I raised the spit very carefully; already the apple was against the blind; it was as good as mine. But…what words can express my grief? The apple was too big: it would not pass through the gap in the blind. But what inventiveness did I not employ to get it through? I found supports to hold the spit in place, a knife that was long enough to split the apple, a board to rest it against. After much ingenuity and time I managed to halve it, meaning to ease the pieces through one after the other. But no sooner were they separated than they fell back down into the cupboard. Pity me in my affliction, gentle reader…[12]

In the first part of the scene, young Rousseau sees apples by peeking through a blind in the store cupboard, and with ingenuity and daring, spears an apple and cuts it in half to pull it through. Ironies abound in this passage as a retelling of the Genesis and Augustine fruit-stealing scenes: The grandeur of the language contrasts with the gravity and depravity of his circumstances. He describes the forbidden fruit in the "garden of the Hesperides."[13] The author

[12] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 33. "Un souvenir qui me fait frémir encore et rire tout à la fois, est celui d'une chasse aux pommes qui me coûta cher. Ces pommes étoient au fond d'une Dépense, qui par une jalousie élevée recevoit du jour de la cuisine. Un jour que j'étois seul dans la maison, je montai sur la may pour regarder dans le jardin des Hespérides ce précieux fruit dont je ne pouvois approcher. J'allai chercher la broche pour voir si elle y pourroit atteindre: elle étoit trop courte. Je l'allongeai par une autre petite broche qui servoit pour le menu gibier; car mon maitre aimoit la chasse. Je piquai plusieurs fois sans succés; enfin je sentis avec transport que j'amenois une pomme. Je tirai très-doucement; déja la pomme touchoit à la jalousie; j'étois prêt à la saisir. Qui dira ma douleur? La pomme étoit trop grosse; elle ne put passer par le trou. Que d'inventions ne mis-je point en usage pour la tirer? Il fallut trouver des supports pour tenir la broche en état, un couteau assez long pour fendre la pomme, une latte pour la soutenir. A force d'adresse et de tems je parvins à la partager, espérant tirer ensuite les piéces l'une après l'autre. Mais à peine furent-elles séparées qu'elles tombérent toutes deux dans la dépense. Lecteur pitoyable, partagez mon affliction," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 34.

[13] From the ancient tradition, one of Hercules' labors was to steal a golden apple guarded by daughters of night and a hundred-headed dragon in the garden of Hesperides, *Collected Writings 5*, 604. The commentary calls this scene a "comic discussion" in

does not express "grief" at his attempt to steal, but asks, "what words can express my grief?" on behalf of this young self, when the attempt is thwarted by the slats in the blind. Perhaps above all, the author asks the reader, "Pity me in my affliction," though we are unclear if the affliction is the desire to steal…or his inability to.

He recalls the scene "with terror and amusement," maintaining an identity and sympathy with his young theft. This is in clear contrast to the Augustine telling, which identifies his young theft with 'me then,' 'different from me now,' and which condemns the theft and the self who did it. In the Rousseau scene, it is clear that he attempted to steal, but he generates ambiguities around the culpability. He did not enjoy the theft, he was terrified; he did not have pears, he was deprived of food; he did not steal them and throw them away, he was thwarted from getting the fruit and punished for it anyways. While the reader easily aligns with the author Augustine and his condemnation of his young self, Rousseau asks the reader to pity him in his affliction, without having divided himself from his sin.

Notably, the 'affliction' he asks the reader to pity also unites the author Rousseau 'now' and the apprentice Rousseau 'then.' The injustice he suffers and the misery of his exile characterize his circumstances 'now' 'as he writes' as a refrain throughout the text. Sympathetic to the young Rousseau 'then,' while his terror at being caught should reflect his culpability, it instead reflects the coarse violence, absurd rules, and unjust punishments he suffers during his apprenticeship with M. Ducommun in Geneva.[14] The instruction, "Pity me in my affliction," speaks in the present tense to the reader, collapsing the affliction of being Rousseau then to the

comparison to the Augustine scene. I suggest the scene deploys humor, even inciting the reader to laugh with Rousseau, but that the scene mobilizes humor to accuse M. Ducommun and the social, *Collected Writings* 5, 604.

[14] For a biographical account of young Rousseau's life in Geneva including his apprenticeship, see Cranston, *Early Life*, 13 – 30.

affliction of being Rousseau now, in his current state of miserable exile. The judgment of the reader is solicited for the scene, and extended to the 'author now.'

However, in the scenes we read, the origin of the original sin encompasses a wider problem that the disordered will of young Rousseau. In the second part of the passage, he writes:

> I did not lose heart; but I had lost a lot of time. I was afraid of being caught; I postponed my next and more successful attempt until the next day, and went back to work as calmly as if nothing had happened, and without thinking of the two pieces of incriminating evidence that were lodged against me in the store-cupboard.
>
> The next day, finding a suitable occasion, I tried again. I climbed onto the trestles, extended the spit, adjusted it, and was ready to spear an apple… unfortunately, the dragon was not asleep. Suddenly the door of the store-cupboard was opened; my master emerged, crossed his arms, and looked at me: 'Bravo!' he said…the pen falls from my hand.[15]

Having forgotten about the halved apples left behind, Rousseau returns the next day where his master catches him trying to spear an apple with a dramatic "bravo!" Rousseau should now – of all moments – be giving a *bona fide* confession. And yet, at this moment, the text halts: "the pen falls from my hand," staging and suffering the arrest of his confession. Rousseau writes that he stops witing the *Confessions*. This, however, is not Rousseau's fault. Indeed, throughout, he points out that he writes this confession to us against all odds. It is all the more egregious then when the confession is interrupted as, Rousseau recollects, "my master emerged, crossed his arms, and looked at me: 'Bravo!' he said…the pen falls from my hand." The interruption of M. Ducommun's voice arrests the confession, yelling 'bravo' with a heady excitement for having caught him and found another unjust justification for more punishments. The conflation of

[15] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 33. "Je ne perdis point courage; mais j'avois perdu beaucoup de tems. Je craignois d'être surpris; je renvoye au lendemain une tentative plus heureuse, et je me remets à l'ouvrage tout aussi tranquillement que si je n'avois rien fait, sans songer aux deux témoins indiscrets qui déposoient contre moi la dépense. Le lendemain retrouvant l'occasion belle, je tente un nouvel essai. Je monte sur mes treteaux, j'alonge la broche, je l'ajuste, j'étois pret à piquer… malheureusement le dragon ne dormoit pas. Tout à coup la porte de la dépense s'ouvre; mon maitre en sort, croise les bras, me regarde, et me dit: courage… la plume me tombe des mains," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 34.

Rousseau then and Rousseau now brings into comparison the reader of the text with M. Ducommun, the original witness to the theft. When his 'pen falls from his hand,' the scene that we witness – of his youthful theft – is overlaid with the scene of Rousseau writing the *Confessions*. The exposure of young Rousseau to M. Ducommun suddenly compares to the exposure of author Rousseau to us readers.

Of course, between those two things is the 'narrative,' the way that Rousseau writes this account, and the use of a confession as a rubric of its telling. Where Rousseau's judgment by M. Ducommun is exercised without his confession, here, finally, Rousseau gets a chance to give his confession for the theft. M. Ducommun cut him off short, cuting off Rousseau's truth-telling and the possibility of making a just judgment. We lucky witnesses, on the othe hand, apprehend Rousseau anew in this moment, and have the chance to hear his confession about it. In effect, we could be spared the mistake M. Ducommun makes, if we listen to the confession. The collapse of the two moments does not just give Rousseau another chance, it gives his judge another chance. If only M. Ducommun didn't stop his confession. If only we don't make the same mistake.

While the 'original sin' might be Rousseau's theft, the scene puts the social on trial with him. Like Augustine's passages surrounding the scene, Rousseau's scene is embedded in a discussion of his circumstances and the origin of his theft. For Rousseau, the problem lies in the the social: his desire to steal is not natural to him, or even a necessary fact of any social acclimation, but borne out of his initiations into society during his time as an apprentice where the subjugation he suffers at the hands of others teaches him to steal, and instead of inviting him to confess and rectify the sin, it taught him to be punished, to steal again, and to dissemble. The social killed the truth-telling impulse that would redeem both him and his judges.

Through his scene, Rousseau stages the same issue, even as the meaning is changed: what is the sin, what is the problem, and in response, what does the confession do? From the scenes of stealing fruit to the closings of the respective books, Augustine and Rousseau each meditate on correlative questions related to the themes introduced in the scenes above. In their respective ways, the passages elaborate the scenes, and the nature of the confession each sets up. The passages also begin to put into place some of the pillars of the confession that will answer these images of the original sin. For Augustine, it will be the praise of god, the condemnation of himself and his 'sinner's bloat,' the confession of faith and praise which discipline his will towards god. For Rousseau, it will be the truthful account of himself, the brave self-defense against a public which has condemned him for his awkward exposure to their social ills. In effect, the nature of the 'confessions' wagered in each piece responds to the grounds for the piece established in the debt of the original sin, and present themselves as the remedy to the subjugation presented in each.

The Sin: Augustine

In the *Confessions,* Augustine's sin is a manifestation of an internal status: when his will is turned away from god, he desires the 'lower' things, and breaks god's law in pursuing them. The source of his sin is the deformity in his will, of which theft is an example. Freedom, on the other hand, lies in turning his wants, freeing himself from the lower attachments, and submitting to the law of god.

Augustine's notion of sin marries an epistemological argument: that god is higher than all other things, to an ethical argument: that among all the attractions, the strongest attraction should be to the highest good. The outcome of this principle is: the attraction to god should be stronger

than attraction to all other things.[16] In reverse, the principle holds that an attraction to these lower things is an ethical mis-orientation, that is to say, a 'problem' in the subject. Augustine condemns this 'problem' of wanting the wrong things: "there should be no escaping from you, Lord, and no turning away from your law, so as to obtain all these things."[17] While he concedes attraction to plenty of appealing things, he draws a firm line between everything else that is appealing, and god, which is – or should be – more appealing than everything else. The danger in the attraction to lower things is that the attraction to these 'lower things' could exceed and interfere in the attraction to god and lead one to break god's law. For Augustine, this is the epistemological and ethical mistake that is the condition for sin: "it is in pursuit of all these things and the life that sin gains an entrance, while an ungoverned inclination for those things, even though they are only the lowest level of goods, means that better and higher ends are abandoned – which is to say you, Lord our god, and your truth and your law."[18]

Theft is the example of this sin as the effect of disordered priorities, when the attraction to lower things is pursued above the highest good, which focalizes the source of this problem in his will: "I wanted to commit theft, so I did."[19] He perpetrates a theft due to the disordered attractions of his will, and anchors theft as breaking the law of god. Arguing that theft justified by human circumstances still does not justify theft, Augustine refers to an intractable rule higher

[16] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb II 5. (10), 75.
[17] "Et tamen in cuncta haec adipiscenda non est egrediendum abs te, domine, neque deviandum a lege tua," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb II 5. (10), 75.
[18] "Propter universa haec atque huius modi peccatum admittitur, dum immoderata in ista inclinatione, cum extrema bona sint, meliora et summa deseruntur, tu, domine deus noster, et veritas tua, et lex tua. Habent enim et haec ima delectiones, sed non sicut deus meus, qui fecit omnia, quia in ipso delectatur iustus, et ipse est deliciae *rectorum corde*," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb II 5. (10), 75. O'Donnell notes truth and law are unified in Augustine's doctrine of the Trinity, and that god's epithet 'summum bonum' is frequent in Cicero, *Commentary I*, 135. Courcelle cites this as an example of the Neoplatonic influence, *Recherches*, 28. For the Neoplatonic influence in Augustine, see also Hadot, "Citations de Pophyre chez Augustin," "Présentation du Platonisme par Augustin," *Études de Patristique*, 225 – 283. On this passage, Soulignac points out the hierarchy of goods in the theology of Augustine gives an ontological and ethical dimension to the will, which can either turn to god, the highest being, as 'will,' or away from god to the lower, temporal things, as *cupiditas* (translated as 'desire'), *Oeuvres 13*, 664.
[19] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb II 4. (9), 73. For the problem of the subject as a problem of will, see Foucault, *History of sexuality volume 4*, 256 – 285; Marion, *In the Self's Place*, 145 – 190; Brown, The *Body and Society*, 399 – 427.

than human legislating, and intractably felt by humans: even thieves are irked by theft, even in cases where the one being stolen from does not have their needs impinged on by the theft, and the one stealing does have a need for the stolen thing. If even a thief doesn't like being stolen from, and if even someone who has all he could need doesn't like being stolen from, there is something given about theft being wrong. By nature unacceptable even when reasonable under the circumstances, theft is a violation of a higher law, that of god.

As it goes, Augustine describes a (past) self that suffered a desire to violate god's law, so he stole. Augustine confesses his own theft without ambiguity, claiming to break God's law when he steals pears from the garden. But what could make him do so, especially if, as he established, the theft is always a violation of this law, and felt to be so even by the thief? Augustine pins the origins of his sin in a disordered will, but claims exemplarity in his attraction to the lower things because his theft was not just an unwanted consequence of loving pears. He was attracted to the violation of the law itself:

> I was not driven by any kind of lack other than the absence of righteousness and a distaste for it: and the fact that I was bloated with sin. For I stole what I had already in plenty, and of far better quality. I had no desire to enjoy what I had aimed to steal; rather, what I enjoyed was the theft and sin themselves.[20]

His theft does not desire a lower thing – pears – over a higher thing – god; the theft is significant because it shows his desire for violating the law of god. The 'wanting' in this situation was not directed at the fruit. Augustine writes, "I had no desire to enjoy what I had aimed to steal; rather, what I enjoyed was the theft and sin themselves." The theft arose from his "absence of righteousness and a distaste for it." In other words, the act of the theft is a manifestation of the condition of himself, as Augustine puts it: "I was bloated with sin." In this state, the theft itself is

[20] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb, II 4. (9), 73.

what he desired. Why steal fruit? Because stealing was against God's law, and he wanted to break the law.

Augustine shifts the notion of sin through a comparison with the figure of Cataline.[21] In the comparison, Augustine calls himself a *worse* sinner than Cataline, setting into motion a different villain and a different ethical problem of a subject. For Cataline, as Augustine describes, is exemplary of the way we understand a crime[22]:

> So when the cause of a crime is investigated, the usual reaction is disbelief, except when the desire to obtain any of those goods belonging to someone else that we have labeled 'inferior' – or the fear of losing one – seems likely to be realized. After all they are beautiful and attractive, although they are still lowly and humble in comparison with the higher goods, which bestow blessings on us.[23]

Augustine points out that the crimes are generally comprehended according to their end. The crime in pursuit of one of these 'lesser attractions' at least offers a clear and obvious motive for breaking the law of god. Augustine suggests we can easily identify these pursuits for Cataline; though horrible, Cataline's crimes have clear ends and gains. But Augustine does not want to consider a crime in terms of ends and means, motives and gains. On the grounds of attraction to a lower good instead of the higher good, Augustine becomes the new exemplary villain. Augustine usurps Cataline and, in effect, sets up 'the problem' 'to change' in subjects.

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[21] Political opponent of Cicero, Cataline was a villain par excellence in the rhetorical tradition, famous for trying to overthrow the Roman state. O'Donnell notes Augustine in conversation with the classic tradition: Sallust and Cicero wrote on Cataline, 134. Against Courcelle on Cataline as the Roman tradition at the exclusion of the Scriptural references, O'Donnell argues the Cataline and Adam references work in concert with one another, claiming that Cataline invokes natural law in addition to divine law, *Commentary II*, 127. O'Donnell points out the Cataline story also accuses "the city that allowed [his] conspiracy to flourish" *Commentary II*, 133. On Augustine, the Latin tradition, and cultural context, see Marrou, *Saint Augutine et la fin de la culture antique*. On the Latin education of Augustine, see Brown, *Augustine*, 23 – 29. The invocation of Cataline places the evaluation of a crime in terms of means and ends on thin ice, and Augustine pitches his new ethical picture as a counterpoint. This invocation of the Greco-Roman tradition positions it – at least in the figure of Cataline – against his Christian fomulation, invites the reader to adopt his ethical scheme, and pressures those who remain open to stealing pears. On the other hand, Cicero remains part of the ethical-epistemological spiritual journey of Augustine, and his rhetorical effects can call the reader to follow a *Confessions* through its invocations of him. On the mode of writing in Cicero's philosophical treatises and ethical task of exhorting reader to take up the labor, see Baraz, *Written Republic*.

[22] O'Donnell emphasizes the criminal sense of the 'facinore,*'Commentary II*, 133, consider the legacy of Augustine and the approach to 'wants' under the sign of 'criminality,' Foucault, *Abnormals*.

[23] "Cum itaque de facinore quaeritur qua causa factum sit, cedi non solet, nisi cum appetitus adipiscendi alicuius illorum bonorum quae infina diximus esse potuisse apparuerit aut metus amittendi. Pulchra sunt enim et decora, quamquam prae bonis superioribus et beautificis abiecta et iacentia," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb II 5. (11), 75 – 77.

Augustine's theft is exemplary because the 'lower thing' which outstrips his attraction to god's law is the breaking the law itself! This is why Augustine is even worse than Cataline, whose attractions to the lower things overtake the attraction to god's law and let in sin, sure, but they are not aimed at the sin itself. Augustine, in a powerful rhetorical move, argues that he is worse than Cataline because the thing which he was attracted to was the sin itself; he sins out of 'love' for sin: "So not even Catiline himself loved his own criminal deeds; surely he was committing them for some ulterior motive. I was pathetic!"[24]

Stealing the pears may seem less alarming than Cataline's murders. How significant could it really be to steal some pears? On Augustine's account of sin, the comparison to Cataline illustrates the theft is an extremely significant violation. Not only does he love a lower thing than god; the lower thing he loves is breaking god's law. Augustine's scene of stealing pears becomes the most egregious possible sin. Where Cataline made the mistake of loving a lower thing, he loves it for its ends. Augustine points out that what he loved was the violation of the law of god. The problem is so egregious because, one could wonder, if the sin to rectify stems from a disorder in the will, how do you change that desire?

The Cataline distinction also pitches Augustine's position with respect to his social context, raised also by the theft in the company of friends, and in the argument 'correcting' a notion 'we' (his readers) already have to the extent that we accept Cataline as a villain. If his readers know that Cataline is bad, and Augustine convinces us that his sin was even worse, we should end up fairly perturbed by the sins Augustine commits. However, the sin that Augustine perpetrates is carried out in the company of a group of friends, they are not punished for it, and it

[24] "Nec ipse Catilina amavit facinoa sua, sed utique aliud cuius causa illa faciebat. Quid ego miser in te amavi, o furtum meum," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb II 5. (11), 77. Instead of the clause, "I was pathetic," Ruden translates the self-description, "pathetic dupe" within the clause, Ruden, *Confessions*, 44. O'Donnell emphasizes the apostrophe 'o futum meum' as Augustine addesses the theft, *Commentary II*, 134.

seems Augustine is doing work to convince us that what they did was wrong. In other words, even as Augustine exclaims the seriousness of his sin, this sin is staged as in-step with a social context. To the extent that Augustine is at odds with a social, it is the Augustine 'now' who is writing, at odds with the social context that accepted Augustine 'then.' The *Confessions* might dissent from a social practice, while they present and enact the transformation of the author between then and now, adherent or dissident. In convincing the reader who might have thought his theft was fine, who might be a good-for-nothing friend, or have a 'Latin' education,[25] Augustine may not only be objecting to his reader, but convincing a Christian community of its merits, and dropping breadcrumbs for anyone else to join.

Augustine's passage also makes a shift in the notion of 'freedom.' In the end, he argues, the transformation of his will yields freedom. The confession will bring freedom because the confession will transform his will to align with that of god. It was a mistake (which we may suffer, and that he claims leads to sin) to think that acting on his 'want' was a freedom. Augustine explains that, in the theft, he loved the seeming freedom, for in breaking the law, it felt as though he were giving himself a law. However, he describes, this "imitated my Lord, albeit in a wicked and perverse way."[26] It felt as though he were legislating for himself, and that in usurping the role and omnipotence of god, he was giving himself the greatest degree of freedom. However, from the delineation that Augustine has developed, it follows that if the

[25] On his own account of the Latin education and its ethical problems, see Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb I 13. (20) – 13. (21).
[26] "Quid ergo in illo forto ego dilexi, et in quo dominum meum vel vitiose atque perverse imitatus sum? An libuit facere contra legem saltem fallacia, quia potentatu non poteram ut mancam libertatem captivus imitarer, faciendo impune quod non liceret tenebrosa omnipotentiae similitudine?" Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb II 7. (14), 83. On sin as the perverse imitation of god, see Solignac, *Oeuvres 13*, 180 – 181. Consider too the notion of 'perversion' as the misdirection of the will away from god highlighted in the Ruden translation (starting from the preceding passage, "Ita fornicatur anima, cum avertitur abs te et quaerit extra te ea quae pura et liquida non invenit, nisi cum redit ad te. Perverse te imitantur omnes qui longe se a te faciunt et extollunt se adversum te," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb II 7. (14), 81): "in these ways the soul goes whoring, when it turns away from you…it's the kind of backward imitation of you performed by all the people who place themselves far from you in this way" and in "what then, did I care for in that theft of mine, through what did I imitate my master in that vicious and twisted way?" Ruden, *Confessions*, 47.

pursuit of 'freedom' undercuts the law of god, it could not be real freedom, and indeed, would be turning away from the highest freedom (found only in god).

The distinction between the higher and lower virtues corrects the idea that there was a freedom in stealing the fruit. Augustine distinguishes between what seems beautiful and what is the most beautiful, what seems glorious and what is the most glorious. For Augustine, idleness seems to bring peace, luxury seems to bring plenty, lavishness seems to bring generosity, greed seems to bring possessions, envy seems to bring superiority, anger seems to bring revenge, terror seems to bring security, grief seems to match deprivation.[27] But each of these is inferior to the virtue that god presents on each of these points: god brings the most peace, bounty, beneficence, possession, supremacy, vindication, security, non-deprivation. Pursuing these lower things is a mistake because the highest expression of bounty, safety, and so on are found in god.

If the highest freedom is in god's love and truth, it cannot be found in breaking god's law. The turn to these lower forms of freedom or power are pale imitations of the highest power of god. Breaking the law of god for these lower expressions is foolhardy, because that is in effect to mistake the lower bounty for the highest. The theft is an expression of precisely this, the pale imitation of the power of god and the pale imitation of freedom. The fact that it manifests in theft, a violation of law of god, reveals this theft is not actual freedom, which will only be found for Augustine in following god's law.

While the notion of the sin, and the setting of the scene, nail down the problem to fix, they also leave this problem: how to fix it? The narration of Augustine's own desire to steal embedded in this argument sets up the tension: how to get from this subject who wanted to sin to this subject who praises freedom as following god's law? The confession will answer it. And, in

[27] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb II 6. (13), 81. For O'Donnell on this list, see *Commentary II*, 137 – 138.

this text as a confession, we can witness a performance of the confession as the transformation of this sinner. Good thing, too, because by the time Augustine has defined the 'original sin' in this way, the 'audience' might be casting about for the remedy for their own sake as well.

The Social: Rousseau

In comparing the 'apple scene' of Rousseau's text with the 'pear scene' in the Augustine *Confessions*, I am after the 'sin' which is structured as the 'original break,' the 'problem in the subject' and source of 'subjugation' which the *Confessions* will resolve. Characteristically, Rousseau recasts the story of 'stealing fruit' so that the 'original sin' depicts not only the culpability of the thief, but also the culpability of the one who creates this thief and of those who misjudged him. The sin here is Rousseau's in part, but it is also bound to the 'sin' of the social. Foreshadowing the rhetorical moves at the end, and the effects the confession will generate, we can see in the passages surrounding the scene Rousseau has bound the sins, judgments, and redemptions of the public to his own.

Just as Augustine presents the ethical problem of sin as an epistemological problem – the love of sin manifesting a failure to follow truth – Rousseau too anchors the sin in an ethical-epistemological picture. In Rousseau's picture, there is, on the one side, a truthful, honest countenance which does not hide anything, and which in itself is good. On the other hand, the practices of deception are themselves the seeds of bad behavior. Theft comes after the destruction of Rousseau's impulse to speak freely, when he had "no desire that I could not express, no impulse that sprang from my heart that I could not reveal with my lips."[28] In Rousseau's story, theft follows the disruption of the free truth-telling about his desires and the

[28] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 30. "à n'avoir pas un desir que je ne témoignasse, à mettre enfin tous les mouvements de mon *coeur* sur mes lévres," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 31 (italics mine).

impulses of his heart. Augustine places the desire to violate the law first, theft follows, and the confession of the theft last. Rousseau imagines a truth-telling first, and then a destruction of this which yields a desire (which violates the rules set out for him), and a theft which is learned once he has learned to covet, disssemble, and lie. The theft, in this progression, follows the destruction of his natural impulse to tell the truth.

Where Augustine's deformation of the will obstructs him from the truth, Rousseau's obstruction from the truth deforms his will. Augustine's sin and theft demonstrate his original aversion to the truth. Rousseau's subjugation kills his natural attraction to the truth and teaches him to steal. For Rousseau, telling the truth is the practice which evinces, enacts, and proves an ethical practice. The 'sin' corrected by this are the 'sin' of deception and its effects, the deformation of his new socially misguided will, and the transgressions it teaches. Rousseau's confessions remedy the sins of the social (mis)guidance of young Rousseau, the transgressions that result, and the dissembling and subjugation that allow it.

While the sin in Augustine arises from his desire to steal, Rousseau's theft contrasts to his natural aversion to steal. In fact, it comes about from his subjugation and depivation at the hands of others. The scene of his theft is situated squarely in a narrative of the transformation that takes place in him during his time as an apprentice: "My new master, who was called M. Ducommun, was a coarse and violent young man, who succeeded in no time at all in dulling my childish brightness, in deadening my affectionate and lively nature, and in reducing me, both in spirit and in status, to the rank of apprentice to which I properly belonged."[29] Beginning with his timid nature, Rousseau contrasts himself as he was before the apprenticeship with what he became through the effects of his apprenticeship:

[29] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 29. For notes on the figure M. Ducommun, see Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 1248.

> Naturally timid, easily shamed, no defect was more foreign to my nature than impudence. But up until then I had enjoyed an honourable freedom, which had been reduced only by degrees, and had now vanished completely. I had been bold at my father's, free at M. Lambercier's, circumspect at my uncle's; at my master's house I became fearful, and from that moment I was lost. I was used to a perfect equality with my elders and betters in the conduct of our daily lives: there was no pleasure that was forbidden me, no dish of food that I could not share, no desire that I could not express, no impulse that sprang from my heart that I could not reveal with my lips.[30]

When free to eat or want or speak, his natural propensities produce a perfectly honorable young Rousseau, indisposed to impudence. Free from privation, he is also free from the desires borne out of privation – until his apprenticeship changes him. When he is deprived of his own speech, of food, or sitting at a table equally with others, his natural timidity manifests itself as fear and envy. Rousseau becomes transformed, down to the level of his desires, and challenges his reader:

> Judge…the effect on me of living in a house where I did not dare open my mouth, where I had to leave the table halfway through the meal and the room as soon as I had no reason to be there, where, perpetually shackled to my work, I saw nothing but objects of pleasure to others and of privation to me alone; where the sight of freedom enjoyed by the master and journeymen only increased the weight of my own servitude; where, in disputes over matters about which I knew more than they, I dared not open my mouth; where, in short, everything that I saw became an object of envy to my heart simply because everything was denied me.[31]

[30] Rousseau, *Confessions,* Oxford, 30 – 31. "Naturellement timide et honteux, je n'eus jamais plus d'éloignement pour aucun défaut que pour l'effonterie. Mais j'avois joui d'une liberté honnête qui seulement s'étoit restreinte jusques là par degrés, et s'évanouit enfin tout à fait. J'étois hardi chez mon pere, libre chez M. Lambercier, discret chez mon oncle; je devins craintif chez mon maitre, et dès lors je fus un enfant perdu. Accoutumé à une égalité parfait avec mes supérieurs dans la maniére de vivre, à ne pas connoitre un plaisir qui ne fut à ma portée, à ne pas voir un mets dont j'eusse ma part, à n'avoir pas un desir que je ne témoignasse, *à mettre enfin tous les mouvements de mon coeur sur mes lévres*," Rousseau, *Confessions,* Pleiade, 31.

[31] Rousseau, *Confessions,* Oxford, 30 – 31. "Qu'on juge de ce que je dus devenir dans une maison où je n'osois pas ouvrir la bouche, où il falloit sortir de table au tiers du repas, et de la chambre aussi-tôt que je n'y avois rien à faire, où sans cesse enchaîné à mon travail, je ne voyois qu'objets de jouissances pour d'autres et de privations pour moi seul, où l'image de la liberté du maître et des compagnons augmentoit le poids de mon *assujetissement,* où, dans les disputes sur ce que je savois le mieux je n'osois ouvrir la bouche, où tout enfin ce que je voyois devenoit pou mon *coeur* un objet de convoitise, uniquement parce que j'étois privé de tout," Rousseau, *Confessions,* Pleiade, 31 – 32. The Pleiade notes: "experience de la vie sociale tourne donc au plus mal. Temps *d'assujettissement, d'oppression,*" 1249, (italics mine).

Rousseau described, "everything that I saw became an object of envy to my heart" as an effect of his subjugation, not as an inheritance from Adam. His desires changed "simply because everything was denied me," and his deprivation becomes a source of (mal-)wanting.

Such constraints also dampened the attractions to things Rousseau actually enjoyed. He liked engraving: "my new profession did not in itself displease me; I was passionately fond of drawing; I found working with engraving-tools congenial enough; and… I had some prospect of mastering the art." Unfortunately, his "master's brutality and the excessive constraints that the work imposed on me had not made it abhorrent."[32] Such constraint kills his fondness for the art. His attractions become increasingly disordered as he loses freedom to choose for himself. In effect, he claims, he better enjoyed other work "because it was freely undertaken."

Theft arises as another effect of this apprenticeship:

> Such was the tyranny of my master that, in the end, work that I would otherwise have liked became intolerable, and I acquired vices that I would otherwise have hated, such as lying, laziness, and stealing. Nothing has shown me more clearly the difference that there is between filial dependence and abject servitude than the memory of the changes that this period of my life produced in me.[33]

The "abject sevitude" of his apprenticeship damages his attraction to good things and creates his desire for what is forbidden to him. The "tyranny of his master" actually changes Rousseau, and is culpable for a variety of "changes that this period of my life produced," including his coming to dislike the work of engraving, and vices that he "otherwise would have hated": "lying, laziness, and stealing."

While still using the 'I' as the exemplary figure, and casting a scene in which he perpetrates fruit-stealing, the Rousseau *Confessions* migrate the origin of the original sin from a

[32] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 30.
[33] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 30.

wanting that does not love god the most to a wanting produced by abject servitude. Alas, as it happened, Rousseau tells us:

> So I learned to covet in silence, to hide, to dissemble, to lie, and even to steal, a vagary which it had never occurred to me to indulge, and of which I have never been quite able to cure myself since. This is where envy combined with powerlessness always leads. This is why all servants are pilferers and all apprentices are likely to be; although, in a state of peace and equality, where everything they see is within their reach, the latter lose this shameful propensity as they grow up. Not having had this same advantage, I have not been able to derive the same benefit from it.[34]

The theft is pinned on inequalities, powerlessness, and deprivation which generate envies that are either suffered, or fulfilled and violate the prohibitions. Rousseau's theft is exemplary as a sin caused by subjugation: the inevitable acting on a 'want' that is both caused, and forbidden, in his servitude.

The principle that Rousseau's theft is learned rather than innate is reflected in the series of scenes through which he depicts this progression. Besides the moment he is caught stealing an apple, he describes how he learns to sneak into a room undetected to steal paper and tools. He points out the irony: in the same room was a box of money with which he could buy even more paper and tools,[35] but Rousseau never touches them because he would be horrified to steal any based on his upbringing:

> There were also boxes containing pairings of gold and silver, tiny jewels, some quite valuable coins, and money. It was rare for me to have even four or five sous in my pocket; and yet, far from touching any of these things, I never remember casting so much as a single envious glance in their direction. I looked on them with more dread than pleasure. I suspect that this horror at the idea of stealing money and valuables was largely the effect of my upbringing. It was associated in my mind with dark thoughts of shame, imprisonment, punishment, and the

[34] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 31. "Voila comment j'appris à convoiter en silence, à me cacher, à dissimuler, à mentir, et à dérober, enfin: fantasie qui jusqu'alors ne m'étoit pas venue, et dont je n'ai pu depuis lors bien me guérir. La convoitise et l'impuissance ménent toujours là. Voilà pourquoi tous les laquais sont fripons, et pourquoi tous les appentifs doivent l'être: mais dans un état egal et tranquille, où tout ce qu'ils voyent est à leur portée, ces derniers perdent en grandissant ce honteux penchant. N'ayant pas eu le même avantage, je n'en ai pu tirer le même profit" Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 32.
[35] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 34.

> gallows, which would have reduced me to terror if I had allowed myself to be tempted.[36]

Stealing money was unimaginable, just the thought of it sparked a fear of the gallows! The line demonstrates the strength of the impression his early ('natural') upbringing had on him; from this upbringing, he was so averse to stealing that he couldn't even think of stealing coins without fear of death. It is specifically in the subjugations of his apprenticeship that Rousseau could ever steal. The escapades during his apprenticeship gather materials which should have been available to him anyways, but which he has to steal because they are absurdly denied to him. As Rousseau describes it, his stealing is not a violation of his contract with M. Ducommun, but its fulfillment:

> I had soon endured so many beatings that I became less fearful: I saw them in the end as a sort of compensation for what I stole, which gave me the right to go on doing it. Instead of looking backwards and thinking of the punishment, I looked ahead and thought only of revenge. I judged that the thrashings I received for being a petty thief legitimized my being one. I decided that stealing and being beaten went together and constituted in some sense a contract.[37]

From the moment Rousseau's master catches him stealing apples from the cupboard, Rousseau describes a perverse state established between him and his master. Instead of deterring young Rousseau from his next theft, his punishment serves as justification for it. Having already been penalized for a crime, the next theft became its compensation.

Rousseau's recollection of the punishment is not connected to a future restitution, either in the past or authorial present. The scene portrays an ongoing relationship in which Rousseau did not look back, and remember the theft, connecting it to the punishment he endures. Without this connection between the past event and the present punishment, Rousseau's 'reform' through

[36] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 34.
[37] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 33. "Bientot à force d'essuyer de mauvais traitemens, j'y devins moins sensible; ils me parurent enfin une sorte de compensation du vol, qui me mettoit en droit de le continuer. Au lieu de retourner les yeux en arriére et de regarder la punition, je les portois en avant et je regardois la vengeance. Je jugeois que me battre comme fripon, c'étoit m'autoriser à l'être. Je trouvois que voler et être battu alloient ensemble, et constituoient en quelque sorte un état" Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 34.

punishment to avoid future thefts becomes logically incoherent. Without a relation between the past theft and current punishment, the current punishment has no 'corrective' function. That, however, does not render it ineffective. Indeed, Rousseau describes, it did take effect precisely in his attitude towards stealing or not. The effect, however, is the opposite than the one intended: "I looked ahead and thought only of revenge." With this prospective view of theft in operation, the punishment is the first act, the precipitating act, which starts the exchange and the theft is the return act, the reciprocal act, which comes about in effect of the punishment. The theft, in the scene of punishment, transforms from cause to effect. And for young Rousseau, the theft moves from his violation to his burden, in order to recuperate his losses already gathered in the punishment.

In his series of scenes, Rousseau's configuration is further expounded with two scenes – of stealing asparagus and buying pears – demonstrating the social effects in his desire and the origins of subjugation. Attributing the culpability to the social constraints, more than an individual vice, Rousseau takes the example of children to delineate the origins of stealing (where Augustine looks at children to demonstrate the innate selfishness of individuals[38]):

> It is nearly always some good but ill-directed impulse that leads children into taking the first step towards evil. In spite of continual deprivation and temptation, I had been living in my master's house for more than a year before I could bring myself to take anything, even things to eat. My first theft was taken to oblige someone else; but it opened the door to others, which did not have so laudable an aim.[39]

Demarcating the natural good impulse from the ills of social direction and its corruptions, he describes the origin story of his thieving: slow to start, against his natural impulses, learned by

[38] See Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb, I 7. (11), 19.
[39] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 31. "Ce sont presque toujours de bons sentimens mal dirigées qui font faire aux enfans le prémier pas vers mal. Malgré les privations et les tentations continuelles, j'avois demeuré plus d'un an chez mon maitre sans pouvoir me resoudre à rien prendre, pas même des choses à manger. Mon prémier vol fut une affaire de complaisance; mais il ouvrit la parte à d'autres, qui n'avoient pas une si louable fin" Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 32.

degrees, from the ill-direction of others.[40] Before stealing the apples from M. Ducommun's store cupboard, Rousseau's first scene of stealing reads:

> M. Verrat, who did not have much money, hit upon the notion of stealing his mother's early asparagus and selling it in exchange for a few good meals. Since he did not want to risk being seen himself and since he was not very agile, he asked me to mount this expedition for him. After some initial coaxing, by which I was the more easily won over in that I did not see where it was leading, he suggested it to me as an idea that had only just occurred to him. I argued long and hard; he persisted. I have never been able to resist flattery; I gave in. I went every morning and harvested the best asparagus; I took it to the Molard, where some woman or other, who could see that I had just stolen it, would say so, in order to get it from me cheaper. In my fright I would accept whatever she chose to give me, which I then took to M. Verrat. It was promptly exchanged for a meal, which I had procured, but which was shared with another friend; while I, who would have been glad of any morsel that came my way, received not so much as a taste of wine.
>
> This little game went on for several days, without it once occurring to me to cheat the thief, or to exact my tithe on the proceeds from M. Verrat's asparagus. I went about my pilfering with the utmost fidelity; my only motive was to oblige the person who was making me do it. And yet, if I had been caught, what blows, what abuse, what savage punishment I would have suffered; my wretched accomplice would have denied any involvement and would have been believed, while I would have been punished twice over for having dared to accuse him, since he was a journeyman and I was only an apprentice. So it is among every condition of men: the guilty and powerful save themselves at the expense of the innocent and weak.[41]

[40] For this theme in Rousseau, see *First Discourse*; *Émile*; and *Social Contract*.

[41] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 32. "M. Verrat, dont la maison, dans le voisinage, avoit un jardin assez éloigné qui produisoit de très belles asparages. Il prit envie à M. Verrat, qui n'avoit pas beaucoup d'argent, de voler à sa mére des asperges dans leur primeur, et de les vendre pour faire quelques bons déjeunés. Comme il ne vouloit pas s'exposer lui-même et qu'il n'étoit pas fort ingambe, il me choisit pour cette expédition. Après quelques cajoleries preliminaires qui me gagnerent d'autant mieux que je n'en voyois pas le but, il me le proposa comme une idée qui lui venoit sur le champ. Je disputai beaucoup; il insista. Je n'ai jamais pu resister aux caresses; je me rendis. J'allois tous les matins moissonner les plus belles asparages; je les portois au Molard, où quelque bonne femme qui voyoit que je venois de les voler, me le disoit pour les avoir à meilleur compte. Dans ma frayeur je prenois ce qu'elle vouloit bien me donner; je le portois à M. Verrat. Cela se changeoit promptement en un déjeuné dont j' étois le pourvoyeur, et qu'il partageoit avec un autre camarade; car pour moi très content d'en avoir quelque bribe, je ne touchois pas même à leur vin. Ce petit manege dura plusieurs jours, sans qu'il me vint même à l'esprit de voler le voleur, et de dixmer sur M. Verrat le produit de ses asparages. J' éxecutois ma fripponnerie avec la plus grande fidélité; mon seul motif étoit de complaire à celui qui me la faisoit faire. Cependant si j'eusse été surpris, que de coups, que d'injures, quels traitemens cruels n'eussai-je point essuyés; tandis que le miserable en me démentant eut été cru sur sa parole, et moi doublement puni pour avoir osé le charger; attendu qu'il étoit compagnon, et que je n'étoit qu'apprentif. Voila comment en tout état le fort coupable se sauve aux dépends du foible innocent," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 33.

Rousseau learned to steal from M. Verrat, from a "good but ill-directed impulse." Naïve, easy object of guile, and ignorant of its end, Rousseau was convinced by M. Verrat to help him in his plot. Ironically, once a part of this plot, Rousseau executes his part with a perfect integrity. He is diligent, going every morning; discerning, picking the best asparagus; ashamed, taking fright at the accusations of the women in the market; and honest, bringing the entire sum of money to M. Verrat. Yet M. Verrat, after winning the money in this way from Rousseau's good work stealing, would share the spoils with a friend – other than Rousseau! This injustice inspires Rousseau to take up stealing for his own gain. The delinquency[42] of Rousseau does not stem from his character, but from his connection to M. Verrat, his misplaced obedience. Indeed, in this account, we listeners-of-the-confession witness the goodness of young Rousseau's character and the misfortune of its direction by so nefarious an adult.

The asymmetry of the relationship to M. Verrat, though between journeyman and apprentice, was another asymmetrical relation abused by the person 'above' him, teaching him behaviors, directing him towards ill. This time, Rousseau laments not just the behavior of M. Verrat, but a general social ill, "So it is among every condition of men: the guilty and powerful save themselves at the expense of the innocent and weak." This will be a repeated pattern for Rousseau in the narrative of his life, across the social contexts he will come to describe. The inequality of relations, the subjugation to others, the abuses put through by those with the 'upper hand' as it were, the constraints of these relations, are at the center of Rousseau's aggravation, and he levies this as a central problem in the deformation, degradation, and exile(s) of himself.

In effect, through the social relations and effects illustrated in this first scene, Rousseau learns to steal:

[42] On the *historical* notion of delinquency, character, and instinct, see Foucault, *Abnormal*.

> And so I discovered that it is not as terrible to steal as I had thought, and I soon turned this knowledge to such advantage that nothing I coveted and that was within my reach was safe. I was not wholly ill nourished at my master's, and I found abstention difficult only because I watched him observe it so imperfectly. The habit of sending young people away from the table before serving the foods they find the most tempting seems to me perfectly calculated to give them a taste for delinquency as well as for delicacies. I acquired both within a short space of time, and found myself in general much the better for this, although sometimes, when I was caught, much the worse.[43]

So, Rousseau gains this education. From his master, to covet and lie, and from M. Verrat, to steal. In subjugation, his love of freedom is reduced to a repulsion of constraint. He becomes a barometer for force relations, repulsed by any relation that lends constraint on him, or where he constrains anyone else in turn. The effects of these subjugations are indeed so severely felt that Rousseau becomes not only averse to constraints of any kind, he becomes averse even to the pursuit of desires which are not illicit, but which expose his desires to the power-laden field of social relations. The pear scene Rousseau tells is of *not* buying pears – that he has the money to buy, from a vendor – to protect himself from the embarrassments the desire exposes him to in this social context.

Rousseau describes the "thousand times" when he would take a bit of money to go buy a pastry, but would be deterred: "I approach the pastry shop; I see women at the counter; I imagine already that they are laughing and joking about what a greedy little fellow I am."[44] The same configuration is iterated again with pears:

> I go past a fruit shop; out of the corner of my eye I catch sight of some lovely pears; they smell delicious; two or three young men close by are watching me; a man who knows me is standing in front of his shop; far off I see a girl approaching; isn't she the servant from the house? My short sight plays all kinds

[43] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford 32. "J'appris ainsi qu'il n'étoit pas si terrible de voler que je l'avois cru, et je tirai bientôt si bon parti de ma science que rien de ce que je convoitois n'étoit à ma portée en sureté. Je n'étois pas absolument mal nourri chez mon maitre, et la sobrieté ne m'étoit pénible qu'en la lui voyant si mal garder. L'usage de faire sortir de table les jeunes gens quand on y sert ce qui les tente le plus me paroit très bien entendu pour les rendre aussi friands que fripons. Je devins en peu de tems l'un et l'autre, et je m'en trouvois fort bien pour l'ordinaire, quelquefois fort mal, quand j'étois surpris" Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 33.
[44] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 36.

> of tricks on me. I start to think I know all the passers-by; I am everywhere intimidated, impeded by some obstacle; my craving increases along with my sense of shame, but I return home, fool that I am, consumed with longing, my pockets full of the means to satisfy it, and without having dared to buy anything at all.[45]

Rousseau tells a new scene of going to buy pears, but shame deters him from buying them. The scene presents an inversion of Augustine's scene: the pears to which Rousseau has a perfect right – for purchase – are not bought by Rousseau – because his sense of shame and repulsion at the force relations plaguing even the most mundane moments. The scene contrasts to Augustine's sin, in which he takes pears to which he has no right. When it comes to pears, Rousseau's aversion to the social encounter with these additional actors is so strong, he leaves the pears behind, for the aversion to the constraints are stronger than his attraction to the fruit.

Rousseau's replication of the scene, in which stealing fruit is recalled with amusement, and then foregoing a socially acceptable purchase of the pears due to shame, reiterates the double aspect of Rousseau's portrait: both attuned to the social forces at play and out of step with them. shame functions in both the scenes. For Augustine, shame actually invites the theft, because the shame is felt from his fellow good-for-nothings, and as he puts it, "once someone says, 'Come on, let's do it,' it is shameful to be anything but shameless."[46] In Rousseau's case, the shame he feels – in contrast to the social relations which invite the use of money – prevents him from stealing the fruit. In other words, the shame which both attribute to the relations among people leads Augustine to join, and commit the crime, and Rousseau to leave, and disengage from the social community and its rules of operation. However, Augustine writes a break from this past

[45] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 36. "Je passe devant une fruitiére; je lorgne du coin de l'oeil de belles poires, leur parfum me tente; deux ou trois jeunes gens tout près de là me regardent un homme qui me connoit est devant sa boutique; je vois de loin venir une fille; n'est-ce point la servante de la maison? Ma vue courte me fait mille illusions. Je prends tous ceux qui passent pour des gens de ma connoissance: par tout je suis intimidé, retenu par quelque obstacle: mon desir croit avec ma honte, et je rentre enfin comme un sot, dévoré de convoitise, ayant dans ma poche dequoi la satisfaire, et n'ayant osé rien achetter," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 37.
[46] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb, 87.

attachment through the confession, while Rousseau's young resistance to the theft seems consistent with the posture of his perspective as the author of the *Confessions*.[47]

Where Augustine uses the figure of Cataline to clarify his notion of sin, Rousseau uses the figure of M. Ducommun as his counterpart. Where Augustine uses the figure to heap more blame onto himself, Rousseau uses the contrast to project culpability onto the field of force relations in which he finds himself in abject servitude. Where Augustine portrays his ease in the social context which supprted his sin, Rousseau portrays his awful induction into a depraved social contract.

Rousseau resurrects the notion of a 'Latin education' for sorting kinds of ethical formations of the self. The invocations of the 'Latin education' helps each delineate the notion of 'the sin.' For Augustine, to the extent that the social, Latin education, and friends are complicit in the theft, it is because he and they all suffer from the same error, the misdirection of desires to these lower things. Augustine aligns the social impulse with his natural one, for example referring to the behavior of a child to indicate that this social norm is aligned to a human norm. For Augustine, the 'Latin' education matches his lower impulses, and theft. Rousseau's account, on the other hand, delineates the social norm from his natural impulse.

For Rousseau, his upbringing, on the one hand, is characterized by his Latin education, whose "tales from antiquity" and "history" lend the child Rousseau his formation as a "gallant" with "innocent amusements." On the other hand, in his apprenticeship, his Latin is "forgotten," he is "reduced in spirit and status" and "acquire[s] the vilest tastes and most degenerate ways."

[47] The question stages a relation between the author and audience, Augustine's position internal to a community (and the invitation to follow him), and Rousseau's dis-juncture from the community (and confrontation with the reader as long as we stay in alignment with the public opinion of Rousseau and the social norms which judged him).

For Rousseau, his natural impulse and 'Latin' education with his father do not at all align with the impulse to thieve. Before, theft is contrary to his will and he is averse to it:

> My Latin, my tales from antiquity, my history, all were forgotten and long remained so. I scarcely remembered that the Romans had even existed. My father, when I went to see him, no longer idolized me; I was no longer the ladies' gallant Jean-Jacques; and I was so painfully aware that M. and Mlle Lambercier would no longer recognize me as their old pupil that I was ashamed to present myself before them, and I have never seen them again since. I abandoned my innocent amusements, indeed I forgot all about them, and acquired instead the vilest tastes and the most degenerate ways. In spite of a wholly respectable upbringing, I must have had a great propensity towards depravity; for all of this happened very quickly, without the least resistance on my part, and never did so precocious a Cesar so rapidly become a Laridon.[48]

Before the apprenticeship, Rousseau was a Cesar, whose 'Latin' education lent him a set of traits and values, until the subjugation M. Ducommun exercises on him turns Rousseau into a Laridon, such that the Lamberciers "would no longer recognize" him and he would "be ashamed to present [him]self before them."[49] These cultural and ethical attributes are figurations in part, but the figurations convey the transformations that he underwent as an apprentice; they demonstrate his different formations. The possibility of his transformation comes with a shift in his education, from Latin and the Lambercier's, to the "course and violent" engraver. For

[48] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 29 – 30. "Mon latin, mes antiquités, mon histoire, tout fut pour longtems oublié: je ne me souvenois pas même qu'il y eut des Romains au monde. Mon pére, quand je l'allois voir, ne trouvoit plus en moi son idole; je n'étois plus pour les dames le galant Jean Jacques, et je sentois si bien moi-même que M. et Mme Lambercier n'auroient plus reconnu en moi leur élève, que j'eus honte de me réprésenter à eux, et ne les ai plus revus depuis lors. Les gouts les plus vils, la plus basse polissonnerie succéderent à mes aimables amusements, sans m'en laisser même la moindre idée. Il faut que, malgré l'éducation la plus honnête, j'eusse un grand penchant à dégénerer; car cela se fit très rapidement, sans la moindre peine, et jamais Cesar si précoce ne devint si promptement Laridon," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 30 – 31. Laridon and Cesar are two dogs in a fable by La Fontaine, Cesar lives in the woods and grows strong, Laridon in the kitchen and becomes weak, Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 651. Rousseau's invocation deploys an irony, laying claim to the Latin education as he laments the perils of its loss. Consider the epitaph "*intus et in cute*" from the opening of Persius' third satire. A scene of the call to attend to oneself under a 'Latin' scheme, one sorry figure moans about his pen and his headache as he starts to begin work, and the other pressures him for whining about this sort of thing when we all know the problem lies in himself. To the complaint, "how can I work with a pen like this?" the other replies, "let the mob have your trappings! I know you inside out. You're not embarassed to live like that dissolute Natta," "ego te intus et in cute novi," Persius, *Satire 3*, 30, pg. 76 – 77.

[49] The Lamberciers were a family with whom Rousseau lived when young, see Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 12 – 24; *Collected Writings 5*, 601; Cranston, *Early Life*, 28 – 44. Notably, his education at the Lambercier's also supports his claim to Augustine which opposes his subjugation by the priest in Turin. The distinction is not between Christianity and Latin educations, but a Latin and Protestant education (including Augustine) against a subjugating (apprenticeship and Catholic) education, see chapter 3.

Rousseau the ‘Latin’ education matches his (good) natual impulses, and it is only when this is lost, and he is subjugated, and his will deformed, that he commits a theft.

Where Augustine’s friends join and impel him to steal, Rousseau too commits a theft due to the forces of his social context. In other words, not only does the author-penitent take on the sin, he configures the culpability of the social fabric in it. Augustine, friends with his co-conspirators, heaps blame on himself and pulls them to follow him into his new ethical-epistemological discovery. Rousseau, victim of his master, shares the blame for his sin with his employer, and asks our pity when he was subjugated instead of allowed to speak the truth. Where Augustine’s natural desires aligned with the social, and against the will of god, Rousseau raises previous, natural, passions and Latin education as a counterpoint for us readers to love. Left to his natural inclinations, which harmonized with his Latin education, to his moral benefit, Rousseau would never – it is clear – have committed such a theft. Augustine also proposes a distinct alternative: he could have been left to his natural inclinations and never been saved. Left to his own devices, Augustine could not be free.

The notion of freedom configured in his recasting of the ‘original sin’ is likewise amended in the Rousseau text. For Rousseau, freedom is freedom from the social constraints that incite envy and constrict his speech. Whereas Augustine thought his own wants posed the danger of unfreedom in drawing him away from god, Rousseau claims his free passions, unhindered by constraints, promise freedom and the happy possibility of speaking freely and truthfully. Freedom from constraint itself dictates the principles of Rousseau’s attractions and repulsions: “I adore freedom; I abhor embarassment, constraint, servitude”:

> If I am obliged to act, I do not know what to do; if I am obliged to speak, I do not know what to say; if someone looks at me, I am disconcerted. When moved by passion, I can sometimes find the words for what I need to say; but in ordinary

> conversation I can find nothing, nothing at all, indeed the very fact that I am obliged to speak makes the whole thing intolerable to me.[50]

When in a situation governed by social obligations, his speech – or obligation to speak, make speech impossible, intolerable, disconcerted. For food and sex Rousseau claims the same, "I can tolerate neither the constraints of eating in polite society nor the drunken ways of the tavern" and when "my aroused senses demand a woman, my agitated heart demands, still more urgently, love. A woman who could be bought for money would lose her charm for me."[51] Rousseau claims to enjoy them when freely undertaken, though they are impossible to enjoy when required or forced. This is the nature of his discussion of money and his aversion to it as well: the constraint that comes with the exchange of money is so abhorrent that it extends to the items exchanged. Rousseau claims "the pleasures that are within my reach: unless they are free, I find them insipid," using money instead to mitigate these constraints.[52]

Rousseau describes one successful theft, which did offer him freedom from social constraints, to enjoy his desires in a way that did not arise from or give rise to subjugation: reading. He tells of going to La Tribu bookstore, and the offer to provide him licentious books which he declined, but he read voraciously and indiscriminately, and spent everything he had to find more books there. He writes, "my heart would beat with impatience to begin leafing through the new book in my pocket; the minute I was alone, I would take it out, and no longer even thought of rummaging through my master's workroom."[53] In reading, Rousseau found a world free from the social constraints which plagued and repelled him. This time, the confession of

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[50] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 35. "S'il faut agir je ne sais que faire; s'il faut parler je ne sais que dire; si l'on me regarde je suis décontenancé. Quand je me passione, je sais trouver quelquefois ce que j'ai à dire; mais dans les entretiens ordinaires je ne trouve rien, rien du tout; ils me sont insupportables par cela seul obligé de parler," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 36.
[51] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 35.
[52] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 35 – 36. On money as a theme of social mediation and constraint, see Rousseau, *Émile*, book III – IV; Starobinski, "Economy," *Transparency and Obstruction*, 104 – 110; *Collected Writings* 5, 604; Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 1250.
[53] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 39.

himself, and his reading, and his theft, are the confessions of his passions exceeding social servitudes, and of his attraction to these passions over and against his governance by these social forces. The worlds in which Rousseau could live through imagination and reading were escapes. And though he refused the licentious books, this world of imagination "saved me from myself and calmed my emergent sensuality. This was to dwell on situations that had appealed to me during my reading, to recall them, to vary and combine them, and to appropriate them in such a way that I became one of the characters."[54] The subjugations around desire in his social world can be escaped in the world of text. Rousseau describes his enjoyment of desire in this realm gave him a lasting taste for the imagined.

Confession in action

As the *Confessions* of Augustine holds out the hope of remedy, so does that of Rousseau. In each text, the scene of sin is embedded in a rhetorical structure which prefigures the way the 'confession' matches the 'sin.' The notion of 'sin' explains the 'problem' the confession will remedy; the texts perform the confession which answers the sin. Augustine's scene defines a notion of sin, recounts a scene in which he perpetrates such a sin, establishing the confession which could match it, and performing this confession as well. That the scene presents a notion of sin answered by confession in a *Confessions*, confronts us with the question, how could telling this scene effect such a transformation of the self? To answer this question, we have to attend to the rhetorical operation of telling-the-scenes in relation to the transformation-of-self. As it goes, the Augustine *Confessions* speaks to precisely this point. In the Augustine *Confessions*, opening

[54] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 40. "Mon inquiete imagination prit un parti qui me sauve de moi-même et calma ma naissante sensualité. Ce fut de se nourrir des situations qui m'avoient intéressé dans les lectures, de les rappeller, de les varier, de les combiner, de me les approprier tellement que je devinsse un des personnages que j'imaginois, que je me visse toujours dans les positions les plus agréables selon mon gout, enfin que l'état fictif où je venois à bout de me mettre me fit oublier mon état réel dont j'étois si mécontent," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 41. The point prefigures the controversy around Rousseau's relation to Sophie d'Houdetot, the alleged inspiration for his *Nouvelle Heloise*, see chapter 4.

passages of the books repeatedly perform or stage the confessional mode. In addition, passages directly discuss the effects of the confessional mode in forming the subject. In the discussion following the fruit-stealing scene, Augustine narrates his *confessio*'s effect on himself, and its work of turning-himself-to-god.

In a way, the problem was visible from the start: from the opening when the 'author' declares: "Your law, Lord, forbids theft" on the one hand, while describing his young self: "I was bloated with sin…what I enjoyed was the theft and sin themselves" on the other.[55] Between the claim of the 'author now' and the description of him 'then,' we are confronted by a difference that establishes a transformation has taken place. Through its direct address to god, his posture displays and demonstates his new ethical orientation. And while we could attribute it to a singular moment in the anticipated conversion scene, the mode of speech constantly performs its transformative effects.

For example, in recalling the scene, Augustine pauses to ask if the recall itself is dangerous because it will redirect his orientation to the sin. In the final passages of book 2, Augustine addresses how he could remember these tales, recount and remember the theft, and not be afraid: "How shall I make restitution to the Lord for the fact that my memory recalls these things and yet my soul is not afraid because of them?"[56] If directing his attention to the sin instead of to god is the problem, is this telling going to redirect his attention back to the sin? In effect, this would return him to the original situation of being oriented to the lower things instead of god. Augustine argues this is not dangerous, but not because telling this scene does not have

[55] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb II 4. (9), 73.
[56] "Quid retribuam domino quod recolit haec memoria mea et anima mea non metuit inde? Didigam te, domine, et gratias agam et confitear nomini tuo, quoniam tanta dimisisti mihi mala et nefaia opera mea," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb II 7. (15), 83. O'Donnell aligns the question of restitution to the answer of confession, and the recall of his sin to the mercy of god, *Commentary I*, 140. Consider the sense of restitution highlighted in the translations by Ruden: "how shall I pay back my Master for letting my memory go over those things without feeling any fear from them?" Ruden, *Confessions*, 47; and P-Coffin: "What return shall I make to the Lord for my ability to recall these things with no fear in my soul?" *Confessions*, Penguin, 51.

the capacity to direct his attention. It is not dangerous because, in recalling it, his orientation becomes further drawn towards god. In the passage following the scene, Augustine explains how the memory of this past orientation establishes him further in his present orientation *away* from sin. It may seem a bit obvious to 'us' now, insofar as the confession is used to discipline oneself away from a desire.[57] But we might read this as a sincere response to a sincere question: if you have already converted, what are you dwelling on your youthful indiscretions for? Doesn't this resurrect the 'orientation to sin' you describe turning away from in the conversion? How can one remember the sin, without this memory recreating an orientation to it?

Augustine 'acts out' his orientation to the sin again, addressing himself to the sin directly: "What was it that I loved about you, my theft, my deed of darkness done in the sixteenth year of my age?"[58] Using direct address to the sin, Augustine stages his facing the sin. This usurps god as addressee of the text and puts himself in danger again. Or at least, that's what he acts out. Then, he acts out the epistemological-ethical shift again, this time slowly, so we can see it, and says to the sin, "Then again, should I be addressing you as if you were an actual thing?"[59]

If the sin were the pear, he would have something there to address, for the fruit was made by god and therefore has some degree of good to it: "The fruit we stole was beautiful because it was your creation, O most beautiful of all, creator of all, good God, God the supreme good, and my true good."[60] However, the sin was not in the fruit itself, the fruit was a bystander caught in the crosshairs of Augustine's sin of wanting to steal: "Yes, the fruit was beautiful, but my

[57] The confession in Augustine's time was nascent, and the notion of a public declaration of past sins idiosyncratic. Weaving together the truth-telling of the the martyr and the penitent, the conversion narrative, and exegesis of Scriptures assembles a machiney that mobilizes his personal account of sin in an effective, public discourse.
[58] "Quid ego miser in te amavi, o furtum meum, o facinus illud meum noctorum sexti decimi anni aetatis meae?" Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb II 6. (12), 77.
[59] "Aut vero aliquid es, ut loquar ad te?" Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb II 6. (12), 77. The Penguin edition avoids the direct address: "if the crime of theft which I committed that night as a boy of sixteen were a living thing, I could speak to it and ask what it was that to my shame, I loved in it," Augustine, *Confessions*, Penguin, 49.
[60] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb II 6. (12), 77 – 79.

pitiable soul did not desire the actual fruit."[61] In addressing the sin itself, Augustine would turn to address the theft, which he performs: "you were an act of theft."[62] And what he finds is that the theft 'is nothing,' there is nothing to address there. Being the violation of god and god's law, theft is depived of any being. When turning to address something – Augustine shares an epistemological principle that he acts out in his demonstration – turn to god.

From his orientation now, after the conversion, when looking at his theft, the sin appears as nothing. Now that he loves god's law, he sees there is nothing to address in the sin. With the 'author now' orientation to god – and difference from the 'author then' so firmly established in the mode of address – the author is constantly, overwhelmingly, hyperbolically stetching himself towards god, loving god, and confessing god's praises over the course of the text. The moment the address turns to sin has a performative function, 'acting out' the orientation to sin he has before, in contrast to the orientation to god he holds 'now.' Though this address mimics a change that has already happened, the motion is repeated in iterations of the same recapitulation. In each of these, he restages – and practices – the turning of his orientation to god. The recall of his theft repeats the motion, the confession affords him another opportunity to turn to god.

The narrative of the event is given in a mode of confession that opens his heart to god. The text can confess these events and extend this relation to god because it is premised on god's mercy. Augustine calls God immediately at the end of the 'scene,' as he did at the opening**,** this time, to look inside his heart:

> Look, O God, and see my heart, see my heart! For you had mercy on it even in the depths of the pit. Let my heart tell you now to look upon it: what was it searching

[61] "Pulchra erant poma illa quae furati sumus, quoniam creatura tua erat, pulcherrime omnium, creator omnium, deus bone, deus summum bonum et bonum verum meum. Pulchra erant illa poma, sed non ipsa concupivit anima mea miserabilis," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb II 6. (12), 79.
[62] "Furtum esses," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb II 6. (12), 77.

> for there? And how was it that I became a wrongdoer for nothing, and the cause of my wrongdoing was none other than wrongdoing itself?[63]

The recollection of these past things to a merciful god indexes the orientation of the speaker: even as Augustine remembers the theft, he is not attracted to it. He confesses the theft before god such that its recollection furthers his attraction to god. The ongoing praise of god is an ethical truth-telling activity – that is to say, a truth-telling activity that forms himself as a subject and inculcates a relation to truth. As an ongoing activity, this marries the activity of confessing his own sins to the extention of himself to god through the confession. The past self only persists in a memory of the theft done, not, however, in its ethical posture. The only way for the act to be recalled in a confession begins with a faith in the mercy of god; the ethical posture that allows this is precisely one that no longer is turned to sin.[64]

Three things are stitched together in this phrase – restitution, memory, and 'not afraid.' In trying to make restitution to god, to repay a debt for breaking the law of god, the memory connects the theft committed to the promise of mercy. The ritual, the act of recall and telling, does not inspire fear in this arrangement because it is embedded in a practice that turns one to god. In effect, the practice opens a path to restitution, which makes the memory work to move one away from sin. To his question of recollecting the sins now, Augustine thus forges the confession a part of the extension to god: "I will love you, Lord, and give thanks, and confess praises to your name because you have forgiven me my sins and all my wrongdoing."[65] In the

[63] "Ecco *cor meum*, deus, ecce *cor meum*, quod miseratus es in imo abyssi. Dicat tibi nunc, ecce *cor meum*, quid tibi quaerebat, ut essem gratis malus et malitiae meae causa mulla esset nisi malitia. Foeda erat, et amavi eam," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb II 4. (9) 73. O'Donnell suggests this is a prayer for the speech of the confession, that god will give to him the words for the confession of the theft, *Commentary II*, 132.

[64] The classic interpretation of the tripartite confession – confession of faith, confession of praise, and confession of sins – raises the way the activity folds together the confession of his sins with the ongoing confession of praise. The confession of sin is part of a machinery that holds these components as parts of one unified operation. In this mode, the recollection of sins turns the self to god. For the tripatite confession, see Soulignac, *Oeuvres 13*, 9 – 26; and Marion, *Self's Place*, 11 – 56.

[65] Augustine, Confessions, Loeb II 7. (15), 83.

end, after establishing the nature of sin, the function of the scene, and the function of his confession, Augustine turns away from the sin in a performative gesture:

> Who is going to untie that tangled, twisted mass of knots? How vile it is – I have no desire to turn my attention to it, I have no desire even to look upon it. I desire you – O Righteousness and Integrity, both lovely and becoming to the gaze that is true.[66]

As Augustine pitches it, the memory given to a merciful god promises mercy, a strengthening of his attraction to god, and a weakening of his attraction to sin. Indeed, in memory, the recall of the theft helps strengthen his pull to god away from sin. Establishing the death of his desire for sin, and the effects of its recall, Augustine launches into the ethical-epistemological journey that gets him step by step from there to here.[67] Or, from the point of view of the narrative, moves though a series of memories to disattach his affections to a series of lower things, each time in favor of throwing his attachments in the direction of god.

While Augustine's narration concludes with setting up the operation of confession and the release of the author from this sin, Rousseau's scene closes around the lamentation of his sorry state and the lasting effects of his scene for the author now. Rousseau concludes the book with an address to his reader, asking for us to follow him, "Before abandoning myself to the fateful destiny that awaits me, I may perhaps be allowed to consider for a moment the lot that would naturally have been mine if I had fallen into the hands of a better master."[68] Rousseau claims:

> Nothing would have been more congenial to my temperament nor more conducive to my happiness than the peaceful and obscure condition of a good artisan, especially one belonging to as respected a class as the engravers of Geneva. A situation of this kind, lucrative enough to provide a comfortable

[66] "Quis exaperit istam tortuosissimam et implicatissimam nodositatem? Foeda est; nolo in eam intendere, nolo eam videre. Te volo, iustitia et innocentia pulchra et decora, honestis luminibus et insatiabili satietate," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb II 10. (18), 87.
[67] The trajectory of the first part, books 1 – 9, is not just a biographical account, but a story of the long process to win his epistemological and ethical conversion.
[68] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 42.

> livelihood but without holding out hopes of a fortune, would have limited my ambitions for the rest of my days and, by ensuring me enough leisure, honourably won, to cultivate moderate tastes, would have contained me within my own sphere without permitting me the means to move outside it. Since I possessed an imagination rich enough to adorn with its fantasies any condition in life and powerful enough to transport me at will, as it were, from one to the other, it did not greatly matter in which I happened to find myself. Wherever I was, I was never so far from the nearest castle in Spain as not to be able to install myself there. It followed from this alone that the simplest condition in life, the one that gave the least worry and care and that left the mind most free to roam, was the one that would have suited me best; and this, precisely, was the one that had been mine. I could have spent, in the bosom of my religion, my fatherland, my family and friends, a peaceful and pleasant life such as my temperament required, sustained by regular and congenial work and by a society after my own heart. I could have been a good Christian, a good citizen, a good father, a good friend, a good worker, a good man in all ways.[69]

His imagination, and the free enjoyment of his passions absent the situations of social constraint, are all Rousseau really needed to be happy. As it happened, the social constraints under which Rousseau perpetrated his theft deprived him of the happy life he could have led. The origin of the problem, as it were, was not in Rousseau himself. Were he free from such constraints, Rousseau claims, he could have been a "been a good Christian, a good citizen, a good father, a good friend, a good worker, a good man in all ways." This seems like a catch-all list, but matches the major accusations leveled against the public figure of Rousseau. His condemnations for his writings on religion, exiles from his home city, France, and areas of Switzerland, his abandoning his children at an orphanage, his ostracization from Grimm, Diderot, and Mme d'Épinay, and charges of

[69] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 42. "Avant de m'abandonner à la fatalité de ma destinée, qu'on me permettre de tourner un moment les yeux sur celle qui m'attendoit naturellement, si j'étois tombé dans les mains d'un meilleur maitre. Rien n'étoit plus convenable à mon humeur ni plus propre à me rendre heureuse, que l'état tranquille et obscur d'un bon artisan, dans certaines classes surtout, telles qu'est à Genève celle des graveurs. Cet état, assez lucratif pour donner une subsistance aisée, et pas assez pour mener à la fortune, eut borné mon ambition pour le reste de mes jours, et me laissant un loisir honnête pour cultiver des gouts modérés, il m'eut contenu dans ma sphére sans m'offrir aucun moyen d'en sortir. Ayant une imagination assez riche pour orner de ses chiméres tous les états, assez puissante pour me transporter, pour ainsi dire, à mon gré de l'un à l'autre, il m'importoit peu dans lequel je fusse en effet. Il ne pouvoit y avoir si loin du lieu où j'étois au prémier château en Espagne, qu'il ne me fut aisé de m'y établir. De cela seul il suivoit que l'état le plus simple, celui qui donnoit le moins de tracas et de soins, celui qui laissoit l'esprit le plus libre, étoit celui qui me convenoit le mieux, et c'étoit précisement le mien. J'aurois passé dans le sien de ma religion, de ma patrie, de ma famille et de mes amis, une vie paisible et douce, telle qu'il la falloit à mon caractére, dans l'uniformité d'un travail de mon gout, et d'une société *selon mon coeur*. J'aurois été bon Chrétien, bon citoyen, bon pere de famille, bon ami, bon ouvrier, bon homme en toute chose," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 43 – 44.

absconding his responsibilities are all addressed in the *Confessions*. The text functions as a public record of Rousseau's own true account on each of these charges. In addition, the text reflects the original scene which presents the reason all of these transgressions came to pass in the first place:

> I could have been content with my condition; I might even, perhaps, have brought honour to it, and after a life that was simple and obscure, but even and sweet, have died peacefully in the bosom of my own kind. Soon forgotten no doubt, I would at least have been mourned for as long as I was remembered.
> Instead of which…how different a picture I must paint! Ah, let us not anticipate the miseries of my life! The reader will soon know all too well this melancholy tale.[70]

He would have been happy to be obscure and free. Instead, he's famous and subjugated, and his only recourse is to confess the truth against the accusations and subjugations he still suffers. In the Rousseau original scene, he loses his natural impulse to truth-telling when he becomes bound by social constraints to servitude and dishonesty. The *Confessions* is Rousseau's recuperation of this right, which perhaps the original scene suggests, he never abandoned.

Rousseau throws his truth-telling to the reader: "judge, then, the effect on me." As we learn of these changes in Rousseau as *effects,* our 'judgment' is nudged towards the social conditions and forces which bring them about. Rousseau's *Confessions* is a testimony before God the Supreme Judge which we are witnessing, and as Rousseau builds the story, we might notice the testimony directing our attention to judging some of these other characters.[71] As the audience judges the scene, we begin to judge those who brought these effects about, and who

[70] Rousseau, *Confessions,* Oxford, 43. "J'aurois aimé mon état; je l'aurois honoré peutêtre, et après avoir passé une vie obscure et simple, mais égale et douce, je serois mort paisiblement dans le sein des miens. Bientôt oublié, sans doute, j'aurois été regretté du moins aussi longtems qu'on se seroit souvenu de moi. Au lieu de cela…quel tableau vais-je faire? Ah! N'anticipons point sur les miséres de ma vie! Je n'occuperai que trop mes lecteurs de ce triste sujet," Rousseau, *Confessions,* Pleiade, 43 – 44.
[71] And, depending on our response, ourselves. Recall the opening lines of Rousseau's text: "Let the trumpet of judgment sound when it will, I will present myself before the Supreme Judge with this book in my hand," Rousseau, *Confessions,* Oxford, 3 – 5.

deprived Rousseau of the happy life he could have led. Rousseau also leads us to lament our loss of the Rousseau we could have had, were these subjugations not to have taken place.

Recall how Rousseau speaks in the voice of his past self before the future audience: "Farewell to my contentment, to gaiety, to happy turns of speech that in the past had often in the midst of some misdemeanor saved me from punishment. I cannot recall without laughing" – and neither, it seems, should we – "how… condemned because of some mischief… I said 'Goodnight, roast.' This innocent witticism caused such amusement that I was allowed to stay up to supper after all."[72] We could not be tyrants and subjugators, turning deaf ears to innocent confessions. We could hear the truth, befriend Rousseau, and be in on the joke. When Rousseau does offer this anecdote, as a peek into the Rousseau that Rousseau could have been if it were not for all of these misfortunes that came his way, the text lays claim to our sympathies for the accused in front of us: how he could have been somebody, and how we would have loved him.

[72] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 31.

Chapter 2: Girl Troubles

During those years I used to teach the art of rhetoric – I who was enslaved by desire was selling all-conquering eloquence. Yet as you know, Lord, I preferred to have good pupils (in the ordinary sense of the term 'good') and I was teaching deceit to those who were not then deceivers, not so that they would act against the lives of the innocent but so that sometimes they would protect the guilty. God, you saw from afar how I stumbled in slippery places, and the glimmer of integrity in that lightless murk that I manifested in my role as teacher to those who loved vanity and sought after lies – and I was of their company. During those years I kept to one woman, whom my roving desire, completely lacking in self-restraint, had pursued. But it was not that form of union which alone is recognized as legitimate. Still, she was the only one, and I kept faith with her as with a spouse. With her I experienced, through my own behavior, what a gulf separates a proper style of marriage, a covenant entered into for the sake of procreation, and a transaction based on erotic desire, when any offspring are born despite the couple's prayers – though once they have been born they make loving them inevitable.[1]

– Augustine, *Confessions*

I have never been less motivated by malice than at this cruel moment, and when I accused this unfortunate girl, it is bizarre, but it is true, that it was my fondness for her that was the cause of it. She was on my mind, and I had simply used as an excuse the first object that presented itself to me. I accused her of having done what I wanted to do, and of having given me the ribbon, because my intention had been to give it to her.

When she appeared shortly afterwards I was stricken with remorse, but the presence of so many people was stronger than my repentance. It was not that I was afraid of being punished but that I was afraid of being put to shame; and I feared shame more than death, more than crime, more than anything in the world. I would have wanted the earth to swallow me up and bury me in its depths. It was shame alone, unconquerable shame, that prevailed over everything and was the cause of all my impudence; and the more criminal I became, the more my terror at having to admit it made me bold. All I could think of was the horror of being found out and of being denounced, publicly and to my face, as a thief, a liar, a slanderer. The confusion that seized my whole being robbed me of any other feeling.

If I had been given time to collect myself, I would unquestionably have admitted everything. If M. de la Roque had taken me aside and had said to me: 'Don't ruin this poor girl. If you are guilty, own up to it now,' I would have thrown myself at his feet forthwith; of that I am perfectly certain. But, when what I needed was encouragement, all I received was intimidation.[2]

– Rousseau, *Confessions*

[1] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb, IV 2. (2), 135.
[2] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 84 – 85.

If, in the previous chapter, we observed new scenes of original sin, we might be curious to know what happened to Eve. The scenes of fruit-stealing absent Eve from the two scenes that delineate the 'problem' of the subject in each. 'Female figures' do, however, still play a role in the *Confessions*. From the point of view of 'sexuality,' one role of the female figures in the confessions is utterly obvious: they are sites to discern sexual desires of the confessing authors. Predictably, the scenes in this chapter are well-worn territory for interpretations of these two texts – and their authors.[3] However, in the readings below, I would like to shift the question we can address when dwelling on these scenes. The confession of desires is part of a domain of power relations and ethical practices working in the formation of a subject through truth-telling. On the question of the way that the *Confessions* are a truth-telling ritual which operates in the making of people, we can ask, what is the struggle at these sites? How do the texts stage the effects of these confessions? I suggest that the scenes of confession around sexual desires continue to configure the 'problem' of subjugation and its rectifiation in 'truth-telling.' Historically, under the form of experience of sexuality, sexual desire became the privileged thing-to-tell-the-truth-about as a way of forming the subject.[4] Augustine – and Rousseau – played parts in that history.[5] But in order to understand the confessional conflict staged in these texts, and its politics, I position the theme of sexual desire as an expression of the way its confession is staged as a remedy to an ethical-epistemological problem.

In this chapter, I compare passages in which two female figures bound up in confessions of sexual desire are connected to the ethical-epistemological problem. Staged from the original scenes, the problem of subjugation arises from an uncoupling of the self to truth, and the

[3] On the historical form of experience of sexuality, on its conceptual apparatus and interpretation, and on interpretation of literature through this lens, see Foucault, *History of sexuality volume 1*; Davidson, *Emergence of Sexuality*; and Sedgwick *Epistemology of the Closet*.
[4] See Foucault, *History of Sexuality volume 1*, 17 – 35, 51 – 74.
[5] See *Foucault, History of Sexuality volume 4*, 256 – 286.

possibility of freedom is promised by the recoupling of the self to truth. The two figures are Augustine's mistress, who serves as a metonymy for his sexual desires before his conversion scene, and Marion, who was the crush that catalyzes Rousseau's famous 'ribbon scene.' I throw the famous 'ribbon scene' in Rousseau's *Confessions* alongside a passage in Augustine's *Confessions* which unites his relationship to his mistress and his work teaching rhetoric. I raise the relationship between the mistress and the teaching-rhetoric in Augustine's passage as unified under the ethical-epistemological problem. The ethical-epistemological problem opens up the comparison between Augustine and Rousseau around the presentations of confession and the subject, the problem of sexual desire, and truth-telling against subjugation. In the comparison of these two moments, the 'juridical scene' reveals the logics put in place and the operations each *Confessions* trades in.

Augustine and the Guilty

The seemingly disparate questions of teaching rhetoric and keeping a mistress[6] are underlined by a common ethical-epistemological problem. As Augustine paints a picture of himself at the time, the two elements are expressions of the 'problem in himself.' As set out in the pear scene, the problem is a deformity of his will, wanting the lower things above the highest good, out of a failure to know and love the truth. In effect, Augustine's attraction to the lower things indicates a separation from the truth and manifests in a desire to break god's law. Consonant with this idea, Augustine's portrait illustrates his chronic condition. Repeating the refrain, describing this past self, and forging an ethical-epistemological argument, Augustine composes: "During those years I used to teach the art of rhetoric – I who was enslaved by desire

[6] On Augustine's 'mistress,' see Peter Brown, *Augustine: a Biography*, 50 – 54.

was selling all-conquering eloquence."[7] A tension is figured from the outset: teaching rhetoric despite his own enslavement to 'desire.' This ethical problem of his will and its desire – enslaved in attraction to lower things – is connected to his epistemological problem of being turned away from truth. In the pear scene, his love of the lower things manifests and perpetuates his separation from the truth. Here too, the ethical and epistemological deficits are connected. Augustine describes, "I was teaching deceit" and along with his students, was perpetrating against the truth: "in my role as teacher to those who loved vanity and sought after lies – and I was of their company." Not only was he not oriented towards the truth of god, he was actively pursuing and perpetuating its opposite – lies and deceit. Ethically, the markers of truth and untruth mark out the disorder of his self, Augustine "sought after lies" in the same breath he "loved vanity," and "taught deceit" for sale. Vanity, in the conversion scene, will be one of those attachments that actually bars Augustine from turning to and loving god and truth. Making explicit the subjugation of his ethical-epistemological condition, Augustine describes the "enslavement" of his desire.

The desire invoked in the first aspect of Augustine "during this time" is reiterated in the second aspect of his relation with his mistress "during this time." In this turn, Augustine describes: "During those years I kept to one woman, whom my roving desire, completely lacking in self-restraint, had pursued." The 'problem' Augustine highlights in his description is that the "transaction [was] based on erotic desire." The same desire which enslaved Augustine during

[7] "Docebam *in illis annis* artem rhetoricam, et victoriosam loquacitatem victus *cupiditate* vendebam. Malebam tamen, domine, tu scis, bonos habere discipulos, sicut appellantur boni, et eos sine dolo docebam dolos, non quibus contra caput innocentis agerent sed aliquando pro capite nocentis. Et deus, vidisti de longinquo lapsantem in lubrico et in multo fumo scintillantem fidem meam, quam exhibebam in illo magisterio diligentibus vanitatem et quaerentibus mendacium, socius eorum. *In illis annis* unam habebam non eo quod legitimum vocatur coniugio cognitam, sed quam indagaverat vagus ardor inops prudentiae, sed unam tamen, ei quoque servans tori fidem, in qua sane experirer exemplo meo quid distaret inter coniugalis placiti modum, quod foederatum esset generandi gratia, et *pactum libidinosi* amoris, ubi proles etiam contra votum nascitur, quamvis iam nata cogat se diligi," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb IV 2. (2), 135 (italics mine). For Solignac on *libido*, see *Oeuvres 14*, 537 – 542.

those years teaching rhetoric reappears with the desire that is the basis of his 'illegitimate' union with one woman. The problem with his sexual relationship is that it gives into, acts on, and sustains the desire that runs against and prevents an orientation and love towards god and truth. The passage eliminates other disqualifications: Was it bad because you did not procreate Augustine, or because you committed adultery? No, Augustine says, he kept to one woman, and did have a son, whom they loved. The issue is his "roving desire, completely lacking in self-restraint" as opposed to the "proper style of marriage, a covenant entered into for the sake of procreation." This proper style of marriage is "alone is recognized as legitimate" because it follows the law of god.[8] The sexual desire presented in the second half of the passage is also an expression of his failure to turn to god.

The underlying principle exemplified across the seemingly disparate domains expressed in each is the idea that Augustine's wants – "enslaved by desire," "my roving desire" – present a problem when aimed at the lower things and not at the highest thing. God being the highest thing, this wanting the lower thing is commensurate with a form of *méconnaissance*, a false orientation, a deficit in knowing and loving truth. In turning towards, orienting to, and following god instead, he would be following the truth. The redirection of his wanting towards god and away from the lower things – out of vanity and concupiscence – would be a freedom, as opposed to the subjugation in which he is held by the epistemological and ethical error of his failure to know the truth of god and to love the truth of god. The example of his concupiscence is one iteration of this problem, the confession-of-which could express and amend its ethical-epistemological error, in turning his wanting towards god.

[8] For sexual ethics in Augustine, see Augustine, *De Continentia*, *De Bono Conjugalis*, *Treatises on Marriage*; Foucault, *History of Sexuality volume 4*; and Peter Brown, *Body and Society*, 388 – 427.

The juridical theme reappears in the passage. This time, instead of breaking god's law in stealing, and loving breaking the law out of a disordered will, Augustine teaches his rhetoric students how to defend the guilty. The rhetoric perpetuates the ethical problem of the epistemological failing: "I was teaching deceit to those who were not then deceivers, not so that they would act against the lives of the innocent but so that sometimes they would protect the guilty." This is only possible because his love of the truth has not yet taken hold. In this time, he is enslaved by desire, divorced from truth, unattached to god. Himself enslaved by desire, too drawn to the lower things to even know truth, so much so that he was unfree to turn to the truth, Augustine describes teaching others to argue, not for truth (how could he?), but for lies.

While the juridical theme introduces others as the guilty party in question, we already know from the pear scene that Augustine has set up this young self as a perpetrator against the law of god. The guilty parties whom he defends as a teacher of rhetoric includes young Augustine. Without the turn to truth, he not only loves the lower things, he can defend the culpability of loving the lower things. During this time, he can love breaking the law, and defend breaking the law. The dramatic irony of the scene is that from the point of view of the author and audience, Augustine is 'the guilty' party. When not following god's law, not following the truth, and not accusing the guilty, he is also able to not accuse himself.

The perspective of the 'author' Augustine describing himself in this time, on the other hand, loves god and accuses himself of culpability for breaking the law. Augustine maintains the truth-telling he does 'now' as an address to god: "you know, Lord," manifests his 'current' coherence between knowing the truth (epistemological discovery) and loving the truth (ethical orientation), and stands with god in accusation of his earlier self, "God, you saw from afar how I stumbled." In the confession of his sin "during this time," the author Augustine continues to hold

himself open in front of god, exposed to the truth, without defending his desire. The telling keeps him oriented to god and extending toward him, while accusing the guilty – his younger self – with the truth, instead of defending the guilty with lies – as his younger self would do. The double offenses of breaking the law and defending breaking the law are both occasion for the confession of them and the relation to truth this offers. While desire indexes his ethical-epistemological problem, the confession of it indicates and sustains a truth-telling, subject-forming work.

Rousseau's Ribbon Scene

The Rousseau scene likewise is obvious from the point of view of 'sexuality,' the confession gives insight to evaluate and judge the sexual desires of Rousseau – and all of his pathologies.[9] Under our lens, and in comparison with the Augustine *Confessions*, we can examine how the passage casts the connections between sexual desire, truth, subjugation, confession, and the juridical scene. Take the famous 'ribbon scene' of Rousseau's confession in comparison with the Augustine passages. In Rousseau, the truth can correct the subjugation, but his sexual desire did not do anything to interfere with truth or freedom to begin with. The problem of sexual desire only began when it was submitted to the (ill-formed) juridical scene which obfuscates the truth and – through this – creates a subjugation.

Like Augustine's pear scene, the plot of the ribbon scene is direct: after his conversion in Turin, Rousseau worked a series of jobs in northwest Italy and the Savoy region, among these, as a servant in the Lorenzini household.[10] Rousseau recounts a story of stealing a ribbon and giving

[9] For sexuality as an historical mode of interpretation, see Davidson, *Emergence*; Foucault, "Rousseau's *Dialogues*," *Aesthetics, Method, Epistemology*, 49 – 51. For Rousseau and female figures, see Rousseau, *Émile*, book V; Rousseau, *Letter to d'Alembert*; and Kofman, *Le respect des femmes*. For a reading of Rousseau's portrait of Mme de Warens, perhaps the most important female figure of the *Confessions*, see Felicity Baker, "Portrait of the object of love in Rousseau's *Confessions*," *Representations of the Self*, 171 – 196, for Derrida's reading of Maman and Thérèse, see "That Dangerous Supplement, *Of Grammatology*, 141 – 164.
[10] For a biographical account, see Cranston, *Early Life*, 58 – 62.

it to another servant, Marion. When the theft is discovered, he accuses Marion of the theft and they are both put on an impromptu trial, during which Rousseau doubles down on his accusation. They are both dismissed.

In order to examine these themes in comparison with the Augustine *Confessions*, I will take the progression of the passage to show how the Rousseau *Confession*s builds a new set of relations among these themes, and the way in which the text sets up and puts into action the problems and solutions of truth-telling and subject-making.

Before telling the tale, Rousseau sets the scene of telling this story in his *Confessions* 'now,' as the writing author of the text in our hand. Rousseau claims an identity with the young protagonist on the grounds of his guilt. The remorse he feels for the crime stretches from "forty years" earlier, and he still suffers the pain of having committed it. The passage opens with a lament that it happened and a lament at having to confess it. But it also holds out the notion that the confession of it will relieve the burden of remorse for it, years later, for the author 'now':

> If only this were all that I have to relate about my time with Mme de Vercellis! But although my situation appeared unchanged, I was not the same on leaving her house as I had been when I entered it. I took away with me the enduring memory of a crime and the intolerable burden of a remorse, with which even now, after forty years, my conscience is still weighed down, and whose bitter knowledge, far from fading, becomes more painful with the years. Who would have thought that a child's misdeed could have such cruel consequences? But it is because of these all too probable consequences that my heart is denied any consolation. I may have caused to perish, in shameful and miserable circumstances, a young woman… amiable, honest, and deserving…without a doubt, worth a great deal more that I.[11]

[11] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 82. "Que n'ai-je achevé tout ce que j'avois à dire de mon séjour chez Mme de Vercellis! Mais, bien que mon apparente situation demeurât la même, je ne sortis pas de sa maison comme j'y étois entré. J'en emportai les longs souvenirs du crime et l'insupportable poids des remords dont au bout de quarante ans ma conscience est encore chargée, et dont l'amer sentiment, loin de s'affoiblir, s'irrite à mesure que je vieillis. Qui croiroit que la faute d'un enfant put avoir des suites aussi cruelles? C'est de ces suites plus que probables que *mon coeur* ne sauroit se consoler. J'ai peutêtre fait périr dans l'opprobre et dans la misére une fille aimable, honnête, estimable, et qui surement valoit beaucoup mieux que moi," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 84.

While the scene of stealing fruit undermines his culpability by laughing as he recalls it, the ribbon scene claims a sin that Rousseau repents for even as he writes it. From the moment of this crime, Rousseau claims he was transformed in a way that persists for the author 'now': "I was not the same on leaving her house as I had been when I entered it…the enduring memory of a crime and the intolerable burden of a remorse…even now…my conscience is still weighed down, and whose bitter knowledge, far from fading, becomes more painful with the years…my heart is denied any consolation." First emphasizing the lasting, persistent guilt (or debt) for this event, he gestures that the confession could alleviate it, and hopes that after this confession, he will not have to speak of it again. With the hope the confessions could offer restitution for the speaker, confession here can alleviate the intolerable torment felt since this crime. The claim of his current culpability, the necessity of confessing it now, and the possibility of this remedying his pain, extend the effects of the *Confessions* to a change in himself. The *Confessions* have an ongoing truth-telling subject-forming effect.

The sin in this case, Rousseau confesses, was that he: "may have caused to perish, in shameful and miserable circumstances, a young woman who, amiable, honest, and deserving, was, without a doubt, worth a great deal more that I." Rousseau tells how this came to pass:

> It is almost inevitable that the dispersal of a household should generate a certain confusion and that items should go astray. And yet, such was the loyalty of the servants and the vigilance of M. and Mme Lorenzini that nothing was missing from the inventory. All that was lost was a little ribbon, silver and rose-coloured and already quite old, which belonged to Mlle Pontal. Many other, better things had been within my reach; but I was tempted only by this ribbon, I stole it, and since I made little attempt to conceal it, I was soon found with it.[12]

[12] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 82. "Il est bien difficile que la dissolution d'un ménage n'entraîne un peu de confusion dans la maison, et qu'il ne s'égare bien des choses. Cependant telle étoit la filelité des domestiques, et la vigilance de M. et Mme Lorenzy, que rien ne se trouva de manque sur l'inventaire. La seule Mlle Pontal perdit un petit ruban couleur de rose et argent déja vieux. Beaucoup d'autres meilleures choses étoient à ma portée; ce ruban seul me tenta, je le volai, et comme je ne le cachois guéres on me le trouva bientôt," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 84.

Rousseau states his theft rather bluntly, "I was tempted only by this ribbon, I stole it." While the issue starts with a desire resulting in a theft, the story does not end there. Beyond wanting and stealing there are a few more steps before we get to the 'issue' through which subjugation comes into play. While the shift of 'the problem' will become increasingly clear over the passage, Rousseau undercuts the souce of the problem in temptation, wanting, or theft from the beginning. Consider the two qualifications: "many other, better things had been within my reach" and "since I made little attempt to conceal it, I was soon found with it." His desire for the ribbon is also not configured as 'the problem.' He did not steal the "better things within my reach," he was "tempted only by this ribbon," "already quite old." Notably, there is also no deceit or other opposition to the truth in the theft. The theft is committed without concealment. Indeed, he is overly transparent and quickly discovered with the ribbon. Neither interfering with the truth, nor borne of an improper desire, Rousseau's theft itself is not the central problem, nor the transgression for which he feels remorse. The sin for which he feels lasting remorse is his accusation of Marion – that is to say, his lie.

When they discover Rousseau has the ribbon, "they asked me where I had got it. I hesitated, stammered, and finally said, blushing, that Marion had given it to me."[13] Rousseau tells a lie that sparks an enquiry over "which of us was the thief." He describes his accused:

> Marion was a young girl from the Maurienne, whom Mme de Vercellis had engaged as a cook when, because she no longer entertained and had more need of nourishing soups than of delicate ragouts, she decided to dismiss her own. Not only was Marion pretty, with a freshness of complexion that is found only in the mountains, and, above all, an air of modesty and sweetness that won the heart of everyone who saw her, she was also a good girl, virtuous and totally loyal. There was thus great surprise when I named her. I was regarded as scarcely less

[13] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 82. "On voulut savoir où je l'avois pris. Je me trouble, je balbutie, et enfin je dis en rougissant que c'est Marion qui me l'a donné," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 84. The Pleiade commentary interprets the desire and its fulfillment as natural, his lie as a social defense which separates him from his natural self, and the confession as an attempt to recover the moment and win exoneration while avoiding the Catholic penance, Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 1274.

> trustworthy, and so an enquiry was thought to be necessary to establish which of us was the thief.[14]

On Rousseau (now)'s account, Marion was completely blameless. Beyond her circumstantial innocence, her character betrays a Romantic ideal – honest, loyal, "with a freshness of complexion that is found only in the mountains." Alas, she and Rousseau appear equally trustworthy at the time. To settle the matter, an impromptu trial of the innocent Marion and the guilty young Rousseau takes place. Hanging in the balance is the discovery of the guilt of young Rousseau or Marion. Also hanging in the balance, the reader will witness the efficacy or failure of the trial. In watching this scene of the trial, with Rousseau's true confession in hand, the audience-reader observes the trial and evaluates its efficacy as a ritual of truth-telling, which casts questions about the justice of its effects.

The trial took place before an assembled crowd, "a large crowd of people was present, among them the Comte de la Roque."[15] Both witnesses were considered equally credible, and the proceedings short: "She arrived, was shown the ribbon, and, shamelessly, I made my accusation."[16] When he accuses her, Marion does not respond to the public, but turns a glance on Rousseau, which, perhaps in the spirit of Augustine, has the potential to change his heart, but as Rousseau describes, "my barbarous heart resisted."[17] Her single gaze could not outweigh the pressure of their audience, and instead of his confession, he follows this other Augustinian decision, in such a circumstance, "it is shameful to be anything but shameless."[18]

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[14] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 82 – 83. "Marion étoit une jeune fille Mauriennoise dont Mme de Vercellis avoit fait sa cuisiniére, quand, cessant de donner à manger, elle avoit renvoyé la sienne, ayant plus besoin de bons bouillons que de ragouts fins. Non seulement Marion étoit jolie, mais elle avoit une fraicheur de coloris qu'on ne trouve que dans les montagnes, et surtout un air de modestie et de douceur qui faisoit qu'on ne pouvoit la voir sans l'aimer. D'ailleurs bonne fille, sage, et d'une fidelité à toute épreuve. C'est ce qui surprit quand je la nommai. L'on n'avoit guére moins de confiance en moi qu'en elle, et l'on jugea qu'il importoit de vérifier lequel étoit le fripon des deux," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 84.
[15] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 83. "L'assemblée étoit nombreuse, la Comte de la Roque y étoit," Pleiade, 85.
[16] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 83. "Elle arrive, on lui montre le ruban, je la charge effrontément," Pleiade, 85.
[17] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 83. "*Mon barbare coeur résiste*," Pleiade, 85. Cf. the Augustine conversion scene in chapter 3.
[18] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb II 9. (17), 87.

When Rousseau resists this disarmament, Marion "denied the charge" to their jury, but still addresses Rousseau, the guilty, and the one who knows the truth, calling for the truth to be spoken: "firmly but calmly, remonstrated with me, urged me to recollect myself and not to bring disgrace upon an innocent girl who had never done me any harm" to which, again, Rousseau "persisted in my infernal wickedness, however, repeated my accusation, and asserted to her face that it was she who had given me the ribbon."[19] The actors of the scene play their roles: Marion the innocent accused, Rousseau the guilty accuser. Instead of arguing 'he did it' to the juy, Marion implores Rousseau to tell the truth and Rousseau replies with the repetition of his lie. Her plea does not extend beyond the solicitation to tell the truth, she does not attack Rousseau, or declare what only she knows to be the case: that Rousseau's accusation is a lie. To the group gathered around, she only defends herself and denies the charge. To Rousseau, she says more, "Ah, Rousseau, and I always thought you had a good character! how wretched you are making me, and yet I would not for anything be in your place."[20] The truth-teller of the scene, young Marion, questions Rousseau's good character. And, despite the vulnerable position which Marion is now put in, and the way that the trial pans out, Marion declares she would not trade her place for his, even though he will escape unscathed while she will be made "wretched." Marion owns the place of the truth-teller, and Rousseau becomes the perpetrator of a deceit.

In the scene, the witnesses are divided by the distinctions of guilt and innocence, truth-telling and deceit. The scene of the trial stages the confrontation between the guilty liar and the innocent truth-teller. The tension now, the outcome of the story, is not the expectation or discovery of 'who did it' – we know this from the beginning. The outcome of the story is the

[19] Rousseau, *Confessions,* Oxford, 83. "Elle nie enfin avec assurance, mais sans emportement, m'apostrophe, m'exhorte à rentrer en moi-même, à ne pas deshonorer une fille innocente qui ne m'a jamais fait de mal; et moi avec une impudence infernale je confirme ma déclaration, et lui soutiens en face qu'elle m'a donné le ruban," Rousseau, *Confessions,* Pleiade, 85.
[20] Rousseau, *Confessions,* Oxford, 83. "Ah Rousseau! Je vous croyois un bon caractére," Rousseau, *Confessions,* Pleiade, 85.

judgment of the jury: whether the innocent will be redeemed and the guilty punished. Whether or not, this jury manages to get the truth out of Rousseau, or abandons poor Marion.

When Rousseau stages the scene in this way, he creates a dramatic irony in which we readers know the truth the jury does not. In effect, the jury represents the perspective we would have without Rousseau's *Confessions* in hand. With Rousseau's *Confessions* in hand, we do not just evaluate the respective testimonies in a trial, we witness the ruse in the exchange between the witnesses and the jury. However, in granting us this privilege, Rousseau wins one for himself. The reader of Rousseau's *Confessions* now knows the truth, and while it condemns 'Rousseau then' for the lie, it absolves 'Rousseau now' and verifies his truth-telling.

In confirming the truth that Marion told during the trial, now at the moment of writing, Rousseau crosses lines and walks over into Marion's camp as a fellow truth-teller. Young Rousseau accused Marion, and against the truth-teller Marion, aligned with the public which left her to a horrible fate. In this moment of writing, Rousseau moves camps, and walks from the side of those who suppose Marion's guilt, to align with Marion instead, (now) speaking the truth of the matter and defending the innocent truthful Marion.[21] In a way, Rousseau becomes the exemplar for the *reader* of the text, cutting a path for the reader to walk from accuser to defender of the innocent truth-tellers… *as though there were some innocent-accused before us, who had our sympathy, for us to defend against an unjust public opinion…*

Two audiences are suspended before they judge Rousseau and Marion. The audience of the text is suspended between judging the innocent-accused guilty, or the guilty innocent. The audience in the scene is doomed: they do not discern the truth, and therefore damn an innocent.

[21] Rousseau, we might cry out, you are the one who told everyone it was Marion's theft, you perpetrated a deceit against 'us' public, which made us guilty of condemning her to this fate!

If we readers of the text accept Rousseau's confession, we are spared their fate: we know the truth. Rousseau describes the fate of the jury which does not believe Marion:

> The contrast between her moderation and my decided tone worked against her. It did not seem natural to suppose that there could be such diabolical effrontery on the one hand and such angelic sweetness on the other. No formal conclusion was reached, but the presumption was in my favour. Because of the general upheaval, the matter was left there, and the Comte de la Roque, dismissing us both, contented himself with saying that the conscience of the guilty party would be certain to avenge the innocent. This was no vain prophecy, but is every day fulfilled anew.[22]

In the end, Rousseau tells us, no decision was reached on the culprit, but both were dismissed and it was presumed that Marion was guilty. The reason for this result was that it was impossible for the jurors to imagine that "such angelic sweetness" would meet such a "diabolical effrontery." It was so unprompted and unwarranted to level such a false and damning accusation against Marion, it was difficult for the onlookers to imagine this is what young Rousseau was doing, and difficult to imagine this accusation being met with such an "angelic" response. It seems more likely that the bald accusation was true, and the crying girl was guilty. The moral exemplarity and innocence of the young woman was more difficult to imagine than the "decided tone" of young Rousseau.

In the composition of the story, Rousseau and Marion come into contact again in the rhetorical formulation of the outcome. Rousseau writes, "dismissing us both, [he] contented himself with saying that the conscience of the guilty party would be certain to avenge the innocent. This was no vain prophecy, but is every day fulfilled anew." Rousseau does not divide himself and Marion in the end of the scene: 'I was let go, Marion was condemned,' but leaves

[22] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 83. "Cette modération comparée à mon ton décidé lui fit tort. Il ne sembloit pas naturel de supposer d'un coté une audace aussi diabolique, et de l'autre une aussi angélique douceur. On ne parut pas se décider absolument, mais les préjugés étoient pour moi. Dans le tracas où l'on étoit on ne se donna pas le tems d'approfondir la chose, et le Comte de la Roque en nous renvoyant tous deux se contenta de dire que la conscience du coupable vengeroit assez l'innocent. Sa prédiction n'a pas été vaine; elle ne cesse pas un seul jour de s'accomplir," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 85.

them lumped together: “dismissing us both,” “no formal conclusion was reached.” On the judgment of the Comte – “the conscience of the guilty party would be certain to avenge the innocent” – the determination of the guilty party is not mapped on to one of the two suspects, Rousseau or Marion, and the punishment is not exercised on one of them. The two remain bound in the scene from the perspective of the jury, the same. The only pronouncement is that the one who is guilty, their conscience would punish them well enough that it would “avenge the innocent.”

In this formulation, the judgment of the third party, the ‘public’ of the trial, is not needed for the punishment to be meted out. Indeed, the conscience which avenges the innocent would do so anyway, and the entire trial becomes unnecessary for avenging of the innocent, which raises an uncomfortable thought. If the trial was unnecessary, then the intervention which brought Marion into this mess in the first place was unnecessary. If the conscience will avenge the innocent party, then the thief of the ribbon ‘whoever it might have been’ when it was discovered with Rousseau, their conscience would avenge the innocent owner of the ribbon from whom it was stolen. But the demand to know who stole the ribbon – even if they were not going to verify it – makes Rousseau falsely accuse someone else. And now, instead of merely paying back the debt of stealing the ribbon, Rousseau’s conscience will also have to avenge the fate of Marion. Indeed, it seems that the ‘innocent’ ‘avenged’ is hardly the ribbon owner at all, but the falsely accused (‘whoever it was’), who was only falsely accused because of a demand for a trial that did not even discover the truth. In effect, the demand for the trial manufactures a greater crime of having these two both dismissed. If the outcome either way was the conscience avenging the crime, then the trial perpetrates a new crime. If Rousseau’s conscience could have avenged the

theft, the crime against Marion is perpetrated by the jurors for submitting her to an unnecessary accusation and them both to an unnecessary trial.

In this scene, the confession before that jury becomes completely suspect: the accusations deceptive, the judgment faulty, the harms amplified, the punishments extra. The confession *here*, by this text, make the scene available to a new jury, the public tribunal of the readers. Where Rousseau was subject to the way the juridical scene took place by Comte, he now gets to set the stage as he likes. And now, on this stage, Rousseau lied then, but Rousseau can tell the truth now. (We), the new jury, hear the truth, and he alleviates the intolerable guilt he feels. In this confession, Rousseau refuses the trial that won him a pass, and Rousseau revalorizes the truth-telling of Marion, spurned by the public, inadmissible for its ethical superiority, and realigns himself with Marion, the innocent-accused.

After Rousseau stages the scene, he reflects:

> I do not know what became of the victim of my false witness; it seems unlikely that, after this, she would easily have found another good situation. She had suffered an imputation to her honour that was cruel in every way. The theft was trifling; nevertheless, it was theft and, what was worse, had been used to seduce a young boy; finally, the lie and the obstinacy with which she clung to it left nothing to be hoped for from someone who combined so many vices. I fear, too, that wretchedness and destitution were not the worst of the dangers I exposed her to. Who knows to what extremes despair and injured innocence might not, at her age, have driven her? Ah, if my remorse at having made her unhappy is intolerable, only judge how it feels to have perhaps reduced her to being worse off than myself![23]

[23] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 83. "J'ignore ce que devint cette victime de la calomnie; mail il n'y a pas d'apparence qu'elle ait après cela trouvé facilement à se bien placer. Elle emportoit une imputation cruelle à son honneur de toutes maniéres. Le vol n'étoit qu'une bagatelle, mais enfin c'étoit un vol, et qui pis est, employé à séduire un jeune garçon; enfin le mensonge et l'obstination ne laissoient rien à espérer de celle en qui tant de vices étoient réunis. Je ne regarde pas même la misére et l'abandon comme le plus grand danger auquel je l'aye exposée. Qui sait, à son age, où le découragement de l'innocence avilie a pu la porter. Eh! Si le remords d'avoir pu la rendre malheureuse est insupportable, qu'on juge de celui d'avoir pu la rendre pire que moi," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 85.

Rousseau's knowledge of Marion's end is limited, but he does know the circumstances[24] of her dismissal and the likely outcome of this. Marion was dismissed under a cloud of suspicion, for stealing, seducing a young boy, and for lying about it. The picture of Marion that develops from this one false accusation amounts to a complete destruction of the picture of her good character. Rousseau is clear in his guilt: "She had suffered an imputation to her honour that was cruel in every way" and raises its dire and direct consequences: "Who knows to what extremes despair and injured innocence might not, at her age, have driven her?" While he maintains the theft itself is trifling, Marion is ruined by the lie that Rousseau tells when 'they' demand a culprit and the trial fails to determine the truth. As Rousseau raises the culpability of the jury for the outcome, he also asks the reader to judge how painful this must be – for Rousseau.

Rousseau describes the pain he suffers to us – his new jury: "at times I am so troubled by this cruel memory, and so distressed, that I lie sleepless in my bed, imagining the poor girl advancing towards me to reproach me for my crime as though I had committed it only yesterday."[25] The confession bears witness, per the suggestion of the Comte, that Rousseau's conscience would avenge the innocent. The imagined scene makes Rousseau feel reproach "as though I had committed it only yesterday," and leaves him with a cruel distress. Living with this memory 'now,' Rousseau reflects, "remorse is lulled during times of good fortune and aggravated in adversity," and on this point confesses the origins of his ongoing distress over the memory of this crime. His memory of his accusation against Marion "deprives me of the sweetest consolation known to persecuted innocence." Now, as the exiled *philosophe* and writing author, Rousseau finds himself in the position of the innocent accused, whose consolation during

[24] – he created –

[25] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 83 – 84. "Ce souvenir *cruel* me trouble quelquefois et me bouleverse au point de voir dans mes insomnies cette pauvre fille venir me reprocher mon crime comme s'il nétoit commis que d'hier," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 85 – 86. Note the parallel with the position of Marion: the "imputation of her honour" was "cruel," and here the "memory" suffered by Rousseau is "cruel."

persecution is his own innocence. Alas the memory of his crime against Marion deprives him of this consolation.[26] His persecution is not alleviated by the consolation of his innocence, and the guilt of this crime makes the tower of accusations against him all torturous.

Rousseau writes his *Confessions* to relieve this burden: "This burden, then, had lain unalleviated on my conscience until this very day; and I can safely say that the desire to be in some measure relieved of it has greatly contributed to the decision I have taken to write my confessions."[27] His crime was the false accusation against Marion, and the failure to tell the truth in the scene of the trial. In this *Confessions*, in front of his new jury, he now promises to tell the truth he did not before, including the reasons for the mistrial. If the Comte is reading next to us, he might start shifting in his chair.

The first confession he makes in this re-trial is the reason for the initial accusation:

> I have never been less motivated by malice than at this cruel moment, and when I accused this unfortunate girl, it is bizarre, but it is true, that it was my fondness for her that was the cause of it. She was on my mind, and I had simply used as an excuse the first object that presented itself to me. I accused her of having done what I wanted to do, and of having given me the ribbon, because my intention had been to give it to her.[28]

The reason for Rousseau's false accusation of Marion is actually his affection for her. Out of his affection, he wanted to give her the ribbon, so she was on his mind when he was discovered with it. Because Rousseau shifts the issue from the theft to the false accusation, the scene to this point stands in the clear: his affection and theft are not the sin for which he feels remorse for forty years. When the transaction based on erotic desire, giving a ribbon to Marion,

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[26] Perhaps a moment where Rousseau loses control of his irony.
[27] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 86. "Ce poids est donc resté jusqu'à ce jour sans allégement sur ma conscience, et je puis dire que le desir de m'en délivrer en quelque sorte a beaucoup contribué à la résolution que j'ai prise d'écrire mes confession," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 86.
[28] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 84. "Jamais la méchanceté ne fut plus loin de moi que dans ce *cruel* moment, et lorsque je chargeai cette malheureuse fille, il est bizarre mais il est vrai que mon amitié pour elle en fut la cause. Elle étoit présente à ma pensée, je m'excusai sur le prémier objet qui s'offrit. Je l'accusai d'avoir fait ce que je voulois faire et de m'avoir donné le ruban parce que mon intention étoit de la lui donner," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 86.

is exposed to a juridical scene, however, the issues begin. The sexual desire gives rise to a problem of subjugations when it is exposed to the juridical scene. Before 'they' demand an accusation, Rousseau doesn't even hide the theft. Once the accusation is demanded, Rousseau's temptation by the ribbon and fondness for Marion suddenly generate a lie: he falsely accuses Marion. Affection exposed to the juridical becomes accusation, and in the trial the accusation becomes subjugation. The problem between them is the false accusation, which only enters in when the two of them are exposed to the social and its force. In this account, we readers have the confession which the public did not have; this lack of truth caused detrimental effects, misjudgment, unfair punishments, and torment.

The second confession Rousseau makes in this re-trial, the *Confessions,* is the reason he sticks to the accusation. Immediately upon seeing Marion, he regrets his false accusation. The remorse which would torture his conscience from this young moment to the present began even before the pronouncement from the Comte that the conscience would avenge the innocent. Yet Rousseau cannot tell the truth in the moment because:

> When she appeared shortly afterwards I was stricken with remorse, but the presence of so many people was stronger than my repentance. It was not that I was afraid of being punished but that I was afraid of being put to shame; and I feared shame more than death, more than crime, more than anything in the world. I would have wanted the earth to swallow me up and bury me in its depths. It was shame alone, unconquerable shame, that prevailed over everything and was the cause of all my impudence; and the more criminal I became, the more my terror at having to admit it made me bold. All I could think of was the horror of being found out and of being denounced, publicly and to my face, as a thief, a liar, a slanderer. The confusion that seized my whole being robbed me of any other feeling.[29]

[29] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 84 – 85. "Quand je la vis paroitre ensuite *mon coeur* fut déchiré, mais la présence de tant de monde fut plus forte que mon repentir. Je craignois peu la punition, je ne craignois que la honte; mais je la craignois plus que la mort, plus que le crime, plus que tout au monde. J'aurois voulu m'enforcer, m'étouffer dans le centre de la terre: l'invincible honte l'emporta sur tout, la honte seule fit mon impudence, et plus je devenois criminel, plus l'effroi d'en convenir me rendoit intrépide. Je ne voyois que l'horreur d'être reconnu, déclaré publiquement, moi présent, voleur, menteur, calomniateur. Un trouble universel m'ôtoit tout autre sentiment," Rousseau, *Confessions,* Pleiade, 86. When Rousseau claims public exposure actually inteferes in the manifestation of truth, he opens the possibility that this text would be, like the accusation of Marion, a lie. When the text insists on his inescapable, already, always public view, it flips the circumstances to rebut a false accusation against

The presence of so many people arrested his confession. Augustine uses shame to describe the feeling that impels him to commit a crime with his friends; shame impels him to steal. Shame likewise diverts Rousseau from the truth, in keeping him from telling the truth before a crowd, which impels him to stick to his lie. Rousseau describes the threat of shame outweighed his fear of the crime or death. He felt the pressure of the social forces so strongly upon him that it was the "cause of all my impudence." After Marion has been cut off from culpability in the theft, after the theft has been called a trifling, and after we see the horrible pain caused by this event, we get to the origin of the story: the reason he sticks to his lie, and the reason the mis-trial discovers no truth. The trial young Rousseau is exposed to in the earlier scene actually increases the impetus to lie: the more he was afraid of the shame brought on by this crowd, the more he has to lie, the more fearful of shame he becomes, the more he has to stick to his story. In a familiar pattern, Rousseau contrasts what happened to what could have been:

> If I had been given time to collect myself, I would unquestionably have admitted everything. If M. de la Roque had taken me aside and had said to me: 'Don't ruin this poor girl. If you are guilty, own up to it now,' I would have thrown myself at his feet forthwith; of that I am perfectly certain. But, when what I needed was encouragement, all I received was intimidation. My age, too, was a consideration that it is only fair to take into account. I was scarcely more than a child, or rather I still was one. Real wickedness is even more criminal in a young person than in an adult, but what is merely weakness is much less so, and my offence, when it comes down to it, was little more.[30]

The social let him down; in the moment he needed them to compel him to tell the truth, they failed, and he maintains his false accusation against an innocent-accused. Under different

him. The craft of mastering the grounds and verifying the account is part of the negotiation at play in the text and the invocation of rituals of truth-telling.

[30] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 85. "Si l'on m'eut laissé revenir à moi-même j'aurois infailliblement tout déclaré. Si M. de la Roque m'eut pris à part, qu'il n'eut dit: ne perdez pas cette pauvre fille. Si vous étes coupable *avouez*-le moi; je me serois jetté à ses pieds dans l'instant; j'en suis parfaitement sur. Mais on ne fit que m'intimider quand il falloit me donner du courage. L'age est encore une attention qu'il est juste de faire. A peine étois-je sorti de l'enfance, ou plustot j'y étois encore. Dans la jeunesse les véritables noirceurs sont plus criminelles encore que dans l'age mur; mais ce qui n'est que foiblesse l'est beaucoup moins, et ma faute au fond n'étoit guére autre chose," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 87 (italics mine).

circumstances, Rousseau is certain, "I would unquestionably have admitted everything." It was not, however, Rousseau in a vacuum, it was Rousseau in a given set of social circumstances. In other circumstances, he would have admitted everything, but when the social forces around him were strong enough to overrule his "time to collect myself"[31] or "fear of crime," he repeats the accusation. Another figure, another person in a position 'of power,' another adult in an unequal force relation, bungles it. Feeling authority instead of guidance, force instead of training, Rousseau is too intimidated to tell the truth, to the ill-effect on him, Marion, and his jury.

Although Rousseau does claim responsibility for the crime, the confession lays 'the evil which it caused' at the feet of the jury who so bungled the trial. Rousseau claims his distress is not connected to an evil in his act, but the evil it caused, in getting Marion dismissed, dishonorably, with little hope for her future. The scene pins these effects on the way his theft and false accusation were handled, which could have been easily corrected, and which Rousseau might have done, but which were ill-dealt with by the social forces, the trial, and the judgment.

On the other hand, Rousseau describes, the experience was so painful that it actually spared him from any further transgressions. This, then, is the crime Rousseau will claim, which not only saves him from committing future crimes; this event also spares him from telling any more lies. The torment was so severe he never told another, and we readers are free, for the rest of the story, from examining his guilt or questioning his truth.

> If, as I venture to believe, such a crime can be expiated, it must surely have been so by the many misfortunes that burden my old age; by forty years of rectitude and honour in difficult circumstances; indeed, poor Marion has found so many avengers in this world that, however grave my offence against her, I am not too afraid that I will carry the guilt for it into the next. That is all that I had to say on this subject. May I be spared from ever having to speak of it again.[32]

[31] Cf. Augustine and the trope of collecting oneself to tell the truth, see chapter 5.
[32] Rousseau, *Confessions,* Oxford, 85. "Si c'est un crime qui puisse être expié, comme j'ose le croire, il doit l'être par tant de malheurs dont la fin de ma vie est accablée, par quarante ans de droiture et d'honneur dans des occasions difficiles, et la pauvre Marion trouve tant de vengeurs en ce monde, que quelque grande qu'ait été mon offense envers elle, je crains peu d'en emporter

When Rousseau pitches the restitution for this crime and the operation of the confession, he suggests, first, that if there is a restitution for such a crime, surely the misfortunes that are heaped on him in his old age amount to it, and second, that he has lived honorably for the forty years since this one event, and in doing so in the face of difficult circumstances, Marion has been avenged many times over. God, the Supreme Judge, already knows the full truth of these details, the suffering Rousseau has endured since then, complemented by his good behavior, which makes Rousseau confident he will be forgiven for this in the next life. As to this one, the duration of good behavior in face of misjustice, and this telling of the truth, Rousseau hopes, may amount to a temporal restitution for his sin. If only we believe him.

la couple avec moi. Voila ce que j'avois à dire sur cet article. Qu'il me soit permis de n'en reparler jamais," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 87.

Chapter 3: On Conversion

In fact, my feelings of sexual desire were formed out of the perversion of my will. While my will was in thrall to sexual desire, it grew into a habitual behavior: while I was capitulating to that habitual behavior, it grew into something I could not live without. These quite small links joined themselves together into the bond I called my chain: it was a cruel slavery that had me in shackles.

Yet I had begun to own a new will, a wish to worship you voluntarily and to enjoy you, O God, the only sure pleasure; but it was not yet ready to overcome my former will, strengthened as it was by its long duration. And so my two wills, one old, the other new, one physical, the other spiritual, were in conflict with one another and by their strife were shattering my soul.

Thus I was my own test case: and I began to understand what I had read… I was enmeshed in both but more in the form of desire that I approved of in myself that in the one I disapproved of. No more did I venture in that direction, because I was to a great extent already enduring it against my will rather than engaging in it willingly. Even so, force of habit had become stronger to subvert me, for of my own free will I had come to a place I was unwilling to be. Who could reasonably speak in my defense, since the punishment that pursues a sinner is just? No longer did I have that excuse with which I habitually contented myself, namely that I had not yet spurned the world and begun to serve you because my comprehension of truth was still unconfirmed: for now it was indeed confirmed. But I was still in bondage to the earth.[1]

– Augustine, *Confessions*

I did not, strictly speaking, decide to become a Catholic; rather, seeing the critical moment as still a long way off, I allowed myself time to become accustomed to the idea, imagining all the while that some unforeseen event would rescue me from my difficulty. To gain more time I resolved to present the best defense of which I was capable… set about trying to confound them. The zeal with which I approached this task was nothing short of ludicrous; for all the while they were working on me, I thought I was working on them, truly believing that all I had to do to persuade them into embracing Protestantism was to convince them…

He prevailed in the end… because he was in a stronger position and because, feeling myself, so to speak, at his mercy, I made the decision which, young as I was, was the correct one, not to push him too far; for I could see well enough that the little old priest had not taken a liking either to me or to my erudition. The second reason was that the young priest had been trained and I had not. This meant that he conducted the argument according to a method I could not follow.[2]

I renounced for ever any thought of fortune or preferment. Determined to spend the little time that remained to me in independence and poverty, I concentrated all my inner strength on breaking free from the shackles of public opinion and on doing courageously, and without troubling myself about the judgments of others, whatever seemed to me to be right.[3]

– Rousseau, *Confessions*

[1] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII 5. (10) – (11), 373 – 375.
[2] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 63 – 65.
[3] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 352.

Much like the ritual of discourse in which the speaking subject is also a subject of the statement, the confession of the *Confessions* claim an identity between the author and the protagonist *and* a transformation of the author-protagonist. Awkwardly enough, the confession is written 'after' a transformation, from the point of view of this changed person, but the confession is also part of the machinery that makes the transformation come about. The *Confessions* do not bracket this tension, but function in this space, in the mode of confession, from the narrative arc to the rhetorical mode, even staging the relations among these elements as component parts of the truth-telling ritual that creates a change in the self. Each tells the story of the transformation of the self and the practices of confession therein that drive the narrative arc, the original conflict, and the resolution. Each tells the story in the same mode of confession, enacted over the course of the text as a constant, ongoing, permanent mode of speech, configuring the role of the confession and practicing it. As such, the confessional mode of the text spans and reflects the 'conversions' at the center of each composition that reflect the central conflict of each – that is to say, the turnabout on what keeps each from the spoils of truth-telling, their freedom. As a scene, and practice, of overcoming the separation from truth that presents an ethical problem, the conversion scene presents a shift when the epistemological and the ethical can come together for a new kind of practice. The confession functions before, in, and after the conversion scenes. The way the confession participates in the conversion, prefigures the conversion, and continues after it render the whole arc of each *Confessions* coherent, and according to this coherence, transformed in the middle 'breaks.'

Confessions change

In the *Confessions* of Augustine, and the *Confessions* of Rousseau, the "Parts I" might serve to 'confess' the narrative of the self 'before.' This is the story of 'me as I was then' told by 'me as I am now.' In a vocabulary of confession, it is the 'I' telling the sins that it has committed

(retrospective). In this telling, the author-penitent is also recording the confessions that he writes 'now' – 'at the time of writing.' While the story of Part I begins with a figuration of the conflict as the formation of the self (through the original scene), it also configures the way the truth-telling of the story will itself match this issue. The confession is a part of the activity in the scenes narrated in part I, and part of the transformation portrayed in these scenes. At the culmination of each Part I, the 'young author then' reaches a culminating point where he collides with a truth – epistemologically and ethically. The moment is the result of a journey in which the deficit of truth is transformed – which is also a moment of transformation for the subject. The 'break' around the middle of each text figures the way that the confessional mode of writing has to change per the transformation of the author that culminates in Part I. Parts II also write in a truth-telling subject-forming mode, but one that reflects a 'past' conversion to truth. In this mode, the confession becomes an ongoing practice that one does to sustain the relation to truth and practices of the self connected to it. They continue to narrate as they perform the confession. In parts II as in parts I, they set up the machinery and effects and practice of the confessions they carry out. They establish the relation between their *Confessions* and, figured in the scenes, the textual medium through which they confess the truth.

At the middle of the Augustine text is a conversion scene which sets up the central anchor to approach the machineries working in both.[4] In the Augustine conversion scene, the truth which he had become convinced of in Part I is finally allowed to fully dictate his behaviors because he goes through a conversion which transforms his will, breaks the chain of his habits

[4] Conversions (plural) are considered for both Augustine and Rousseau: on the conversions of Augustine on his road to the conversion, see Brown, *Body and Society*, 389; on the roadside scene when Rousseau visits Diderot in prison like the conversion of Paul on the road to Damascus, see *Collected Writings 5*, xxviii. On my read, the 'conversions' are scenes of the ethical-epistemological 'problem' and the conversion at the pivot of each text stages the operation of its confession. On conversion as the center of narrative, see Taylor, *Erring*, 45.

that was created by living with the old set of desires, and allows him to now live (ethical aspect) in coherence with the law of god (epistemological aspect). The transition from part I to part II could be understood in the relationship between the confessional mode of writing and the transformation in the conversion scene. If the confession in part I stages, performs, and enacts the confession of his sin (past self) to come to this transformation, the confession in Part II stages, peforms, enacts the confession of truth (ongoing) after the central pivot where he turns to the truth. Both are ongoing truth-telling confessions, both as an author who converted, and author as a penitent – constantly enacting the mode of confession that brought about conversion, and speaking in the mode of confession that comes after a conversion. That is to say, the connected confession of sin and faith.[5] The conversion scene in Augustine is a way to see the way the elements are put together: the confession as an ongoing labor, the confession as an exercise that transforms the self, the confession as a writing and ethical practice. It helps to see the nature of the break as a coherent element in the text that is a tripartite confession of sin, faith, and praise that transforms the ethical subject though truth-telling.

With the Augustine conversion scene as a principle, we can examine the situation that unfolds in the Rousseau *Confessions*, in the confession as the mode of writing, in the transition between parts I and II, in the break in the middle of the text, and in the set of relations between the 'author now' and 'author then,' in the nature of the truth, the field of power relations, the effects of the confession, the address before a public, the problem of subjugations, the original problem of the deficit of truth and the rectification the confession poses for it, the debt to repay and the ongoing practices of truth-telling in his story. One of the most important things to note is

[5] The confession of faith, praise, and sins might be a technique that weaves together the regimes of truth of early Christianity: the truth-telling of doctrine and the truth-telling of the self, Foucault, *On the Government of the Living*, 83 – 85. The confession works both aspects through the scene of the conversion.

the way that, coherently, Rousseau's organization of the elements match the reconfigured notions of the debt to remit, the deficit of truth, the problem of subjugation, and the confession as a reply. A different landscape of 'conversion' passages match his configuration of confession, truth, writing, transformation, practice, and sin. Reading the Rousseau *Confessions* in comparison with the Augustine conversion scene, we can examine the new configurations and the shift in the confessional mode matching the story of the text.

In the Rousseau text, I examine passages on his transformation and the nature of the writing in the break itself. The first passage is 'the conversion scene' where Rousseau is sent to convert to Catholicism after being exiled from his native Protestant Geneva in order to get a job after he leaves his apprenticeship with M. Ducommun. The passage betrays the hypocracies and paradoxes of an absurd conversion, and in effect replicates the same 'deficit of truth.' First, I read this scene next to the sincere, famous Augustine conversion scene (just up to its last moments), comparing the elements in play and contrasting the way each configures the problem and solution. Second, next to the final capitulation of Augustine's scene, I look at a scene in Rousseau's text where a conversion of himself that represents a turn to truth will remit the debt incurred in the 'original sin' scenes of part I. In the ribbon scene, the sin was his failure to confess due to social constraints. In the transformation, he becomes a public figure (against his will) and is exposed to the public tribunal as a public figure. In the second 'conversion' moment, he decides to live according to truth and throw off the shackles of public opinion even as a public figure, to write the confession publicly (of himself) that will restore the deficit-of-truth (that deceives the public). He takes up the mantle and delivers the true confession in this trial. The progression of the text from the close of part I, in the break, and into the opening of part II stage his turn-to-truth in the decision to write his confessions publicly to fix the debt of not-telling-the-

truth of this public figure – 'Rousseau.' In this movement, the text enacts the confession as transformation and revelation – and takes effect for the viewer in giving the truth to its viewer. In the Rousseau text as well, the confession is a consistent principle of the whole text and its composition, and the break in the middle represents the principle that this *Confessions* represents the conversion to truth and its effects.

Augustine 1

Before the '*tolle lege* moment' when God's intervention finally strikes his open heart, the Augustine text dwells on the transformation of 'will' and 'habit.' The fundamental problem was the long-held "perversion of [his] will" which formed attachments to lower things, especially his "feelings of sexual desire."[6] In effect, instead of being turned to god, his will became entirely "in thrall to sexual desire,"[7] which then dictated his behaviors and gave way to a mode of being that pulled him away from god – and was impossible to shake. Acting on this desire pulls him away from the freedom of following god's law and forms "the bond I called my chain: it was a cruel slavery that had me in shackles." The chain is formed over time out of links accumulated by acting on these wants. Augustine describes, "while my will was in thrall to sexual desire, it grew into a habitual behavior: while I was capitulating to that habitual behavior, it grew into something I could not live without. These quite small links joined themselves together."[8] The practices which manifest from this (mis)direction of his will accumulate into a habit which in itself becomes a new attachment and obstacle to his conversion.

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[6] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII 5. (10) – (11), 373.
[7] "Velle meum tenebat inimicus et inde mihi catenam fecerat et constrinxerat me. Quippe ex *voluntate perversa* facta est *libido*, et dum *servitur libidini*, facta est consuetudo, et dum consuetudini non resistitur, facta est necessita. Quibus quasi ansulis sibimet innexis (unde catenam appellavi) tenebat me obstrictum dura servitus," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII 5. (10), 375. On *consuetudo*, *libido*, and *voluntas*, see Solignac, *Oeuvres v.14*, 537 – 542; for Foucault's interpretation of Augustine's formulation of the problem of the subject and the libidinization of sex, *History of sexuality volume 4*, 256 – 285.
[8] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII 5. (10), 375.

His budding attachment to god – at the same time, and on the other hand – gives rise to a new spiritual will:

> Yet I had begun to own a new will, a wish to worship you voluntarily and to enjoy you, O God, the only sure pleasure; but it was not yet ready to overcome my former will, strengthened as it was by its long duration. And so my two wills, one old, the other new, one physical, the other spiritual, were in conflict with one another and by their strife were shattering my soul.[9]

The "new will" wants to worship god, seeing that god is the (real) pleasure against the (only seeming) pleasure of concupiscence. In the pull between these two wills, Augustine describes the "strife was shattering [his] soul," and that part of the obstruction to leaving the "physical" behind in pursuit of the "spiritual" was this habit. Augustine turns over and over again the strife in his will, the problem generated out of this prolonged struggle, and his paradox: "of my own free will I had come to a place I was unwilling to be."[10] The chain of habit presents an acute problem because it sustains the old will despite the new "spiritual" one he tries to cultivate, and keeps him culpable even as his soul struggles to transform its attachments towards god. Through juridical language he sets the scene:

> Who could reasonably speak in my defense, since the punishment that pursues a sinner is just? No longer did I have that excuse with which I habitually contented myself, namely that I had not yet spurned the world and begun to serve you because my comprehension of truth was still unconfirmed: for now it was indeed confirmed. But I was still in bondage to the earth.[11]

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[9] "*Voluntas* autem nova quae mihi esse coeperat, ut te gratis colerem fruique te vellem, deus, sola certa iucunditas, nondum erat idonea ad superandam priorem vetustate roboratam. Ita duae *voluntate meae, una vetus, alia nova, illa carnalis, illa spiritalis*, confligebant inter se atque discordando dissipabant animam meam," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII 5. (10), 375.
The sexual desires as an expression of the problem of his will which also keeps him from converting to truth is explicit in the immediately preceding passage: "I was bound: not by someone else's iron chains but by my own iron will. The enemy still held sway over the exercise of my will, and from that had fashioned a chain for me and bound me in fetters. In fact, my feelings of sexual desire were formed out of the perversion of my will. While my will was in thrall to sexual desire, it grew into a habitual behavior: while I was capitulating to that habitual behavior, it grew into something I could not live without. These quite small links joined themselves together into the bond I called my chain: it was a cruel slavery that had made me in shackles;" "cui rei ego suspirabam, ligatus *non fero alieno sed mea ferrea voluntate*. Velle meum tenebat inimicus et inde mihi catenam fecerat et constrinxerat me. Quippe ex *voluntate peversa* facta est *libido*, et dum *servitur libidini*, facta est consuetudo, et dum consuetudini non resistu, facta est necessitas. Quibus quasi ansulis sibimet innexis (unde catenam appellavi) tenebat me obstrictum dura servitus," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII, 5. (10), 373 – 375.
[10] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII 5 (11), 375.
[11] "Tamen consuetudo adversus me pugnacior ex me facta erat, quoniam volens quo nollem perveneram. Et quis iure contradiceret, cum peccantem iusta poena sequeretur? Et non erat iam illa excusatio qua videri mihi solebam proptera me

When Augustine's "comprehension of truth was still unconfirmed," he had an excuse to dodge this confrontation, but once "it was confirmed," he loses this excuse and ought – from a mere epistemological perspective – "spurn the world and serve you." But while the truth exposes him to this obligation and illuminates his need to transform, it likewise requires an ethical practice to transform his will. Augustine's way is opened in part because he does come to comprehend the truth; this relieves one of the hurdles. The second aspect he has to overcome is making this comprehension of the truth ground a mode of life, habit, and behavior.

The conversion scene problems of 'will' and 'habit' confirm the problem in the subject painted by the self-portraits in the pear scene and as a teacher of rhetoric with a mistress. Augustine's 'girl troubles' index the sexual desire connected to his ethical-epistemological deficit. Over time, this desire forms a habit which becomes an obstacle to his transformation. In the conversion scene, his epistemological discovery of god as truth will capitulate an ethical transformation, changing his will and releasing him from the chain of habit. The fruit-stealing scene portrays the 'problem' of the subject as a will oriented to lower things, instead of a love of god. This an internal problem of the misdirected wantings, which is the origin of his subjugation: his wants manifest in sexual desire, the habit forms a chain, and both obstruct his ethical-epistemological goal of loving god.

In the conversion scene, the problems which have dictated the ethical-epistemological journey in Part I reach a culmination point where the possibility of change – promised by the confession of the Christian author – is finally realized. The protagonist 'in the scenes' finally adopts the confessional speech of the author in relation to these events. The confession of the

nondum contempto seaculo servire tibi, quia incerta mihi esset perceptio veritatis: iam enim et ipsa certa erat. Ego autem adhuc terra obligatus militare," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII 5 (11), 375.

Confessions is taken up by the protagonist, the conversion is a scene of this uptake. Against the time spent forming his chain, this moment of struggle and trial finally break it. Of course, on the part of god, this was a possibility from the beginning. In the conversion scene, the "struggle to return to you"[12] is finally accomplished because Augustine finally struggles against himself, and does not defend himself in this trial, and does not defer the confrontation required for his epistemological shift to tip into an ethical one:

> There was nothing for me to say in reply to your words to me, 'Get up, you who are asleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.' In every direction you made it clear that you were speaking the truth, and I was convinced by your truth, and there was absolutely nothing I could say in reply excepting only slothful, sleepy words: 'In a moment,' 'Look, just wait a moment,' 'Give me just a second.[13]

This transformation has been kicked down the road before, in his delay, "wait a moment" when responding to the truth he "was convinced by." This had led him to defer chastity, his new habit:

> But in my youth I was utterly wretched, wretched in the beginning of adolescence; I had even asked you for chastity and had said, 'Grant me chastity and celibacy, but not just yet!' For I was afraid that you would hear me straightaway and would cleanse me of the disease of desiring.[14]

Now, instead of defending himself, or begging for rest, Augustine adopts a juridical rigor in his struggle against himself: "Who could reasonably speak in my defense, since the punishment that pursues a sinner is just?" Neither he – nor anyone else – could reasonably speak in defense of him, or argue that he ought not to suffer this struggle, because it is not only the exposure of his bad habit to harsh truth, it is also the struggle to jettison it. Against the habit of

[12] Augustine laments the failure on our part against the constancy on god's at the end of the Simplicianus encounter: "those who dwell about you always rejoice in you... You are nowhere absent, yet we struggle to return to you," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII. (8), [].

[13] "Non enim erat quod tibi responderem dicenti mihi, 'surge qui dormis et exsurge a mortibus, et inluminabit te Christus,' et undique ostendenti vera te dicere, non erat omnino quid responderem veritate convictus, nisi tantum verba lenta et somnolenta: 'modo,' 'ecce modo,' 'sine paululum'" Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII 5 (12), 377.

[14] "At ego adulescens miser valde, miser in exordio ipsius adulescentiae, etiam petieram a te castitatem et dixeram, 'de mihi castitatem et *continentiam*, sed noli modo.' Timebam enim ne me cito exaudires et cito sanares a morbo *concupiscentiae*" Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII 7 (17), 389. Ruden translates: "disease of lust," Ruden, *Confessions*, 223.

"excuse," which sustains the old will, Augustine "accuses" himself, to adopt a new one. The juridical relation he staged with himself[15] offer the space for an activity of transformation.

Because 'vile' Augustine had already made this epistemological discovery, he feels the tension and struggles to convert to god against the chains that keep him from changing: "I withdrew into the garden… groaning in spirit, I was furiously indignant that I could not enter into a covenant and agreement with you, my God, when all my bones were crying out that I should do so."[16] In pain for not-yet-being in a covenant with god, he turns on himself:

> So I was sick and tormented. I blamed myself much more vehemently than I usually would have done. I was twisting and turning in my chains, until they were utterly broken; until then they were restraining me, but only just. And you, Lord, pressed on in my innermost being with your relentless mercy. You redoubled the lashes of fear and shame to stop me from giving up again, from keeping that thin remaining link of chain unbroken, and allowing it to become strong again and bind me more securely.[17]

Augustine describes god at work in the struggle against himself. His forces of habit start to yield as god presses on him to continue: "you, Lord, pressed on in my innermost being with your relentless mercy," "you redoubled the lashes of fear and shame," to break the "chains" that tether him to "sin" and keep him from living in a covenant with god. The moment of accusation leads to a struggle with himself, in which he is suspended between his old habits and new covenant.

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[15] The 'juridical relation to the self' is the outcome I read of Foucault's interpretation of the Augustinian 'subject of desire as a subject of law,' which exposes the ethical relation to the self to the occupation of techniques of power, Foucault, *History of sexuality volume 4*, 279 – 285. While, for example in the Senecan examination of the self, the 'juridical' was used as a metaphor for the exercise, Foucault, "Subjectivity and Truth," *About the Beginning*, 29 – 34, the Augustinian formulation creates a juridical relation to the self that dictates the mode of exercise (*mode d'assujettissement*), and its outcome (*telos*). The 'juridical' metaphor graduates from a metaphor and technique in training oneself, to an infinite obligation of accusation that tethers freedom to its constant operation. The Ruden translation of Augustine raises the juridical sense: "the uproar in my heart drove me out there, where no one would get in the way of this flaming lawsuit with myself" Ruden, *Confessions*, 225, of the passage, "illuc me abstulerat tumultus pectoris, ubi nemo impediet ardentem litem quam mecum aggressus eram," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII 8. (19) 390.

[16] "Abscessi ergo in hortum…ego fremebam spiritu, indignans indignatione turbulentissima quod non irem in placitum et pactum tecum, deus meus, in quod eundum esse omnia ossa mea clamabant," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII 8. (19) 393.

[17] "Sic aegrotabam et excruciabar, accusans memet ipsum solito acerbius nimis ac volens et versans me in vinculo meo, donec abrumperetur totum, quo iam exiguo tenebar, sed tenebar tamen. Et instabus tu in occultis meis, domine, severa misericordia, flagella ingeminans timoris et pudoris, ne rursus cessarem et non abumperetur idipsum exiguum et tenue quod remanserat, et revalesceret iterum et me robustius alligaret," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII 11. (25), 403. Ruden keeps the language of accusation: "so I was sick and suffering horrendously, accusing myself more fiercely than usual," Ruden, *Confessions*, 232.

While he cries out to god, 'let it happen now,' calling on god to push him over the edge, the passage describes a prolonged internal struggle of Augustine against himself:

> In my heart I was saying, 'Look, let it happen now, let it happen now!" and as I was saying it, I was coming to the point of decision. One moment I was about to do it, and then I was failing to do it. Yet I was not slipping back into my former state but stopping very close and catching my breath. Then I was trying again, and I was a little closer, and closer, and at that very moment I was about to touch it, about to grasp it: but I did not make it. I missed touching it, I failed to grasp it – I was hesitating about dying to death and living to life, for habitual wrongdoing had more power over me than goodness, which was unfamiliar. The closer that moment came, that point of time when I was to become different, the more it made me shiver with dread. And yet it did not knock me back, nor did it divert me. It merely left me hanging in the balance.[18]

The approach is incremental, insecure, hard-won, as reflected in the language of the description. The passage repeats and describes his turning and inability to break through. This is the moment he has finally slowed down his old habits all the way to a halt, and is prepared to tip over onto the other side and take up new habits.

In this suspension, the allegorical pair of Frivolity and Vanity appears to young Augustine. He describes they "slowed me down as I hesitated to snatch myself away from them and shake them off, and to make the leap to where I was being called; for my impetuous habits kept calling to me, 'Do you think you can cope without those things?'"[19] The allegorical figures embody those vices that accompany his attachment to the lower things and animate the old habits he struggles to drop. On the chopping block, the personifications of the worst parts of his vile self remind him just how attached he is to these lower things. Their interferences illustrate – and

[18] "Dicebam enim apud me intus, 'ecce modo fiat, modo fiat,' et cum verbo iam ibam in placitum. Iam paene faciebam et non faciebam, nec relabebar tamen in pristina sed de proximo stabam et respirabam. Et item conabar, et paulo minus ibi eram et paulo minus, iam iamque attingebam et tenebam: et non ibi eram nec attingebam nec tenebam, haesitans mori morti et vitae vivere, plusque in me valebat deterius inolitum quam melius insolitum, punctumque ipsum temporis quo aliud futurus eram, quanto propius admovebatur, tanto ampliorem incutiebat horrorem. Sed non recutiebat retro nec avertebat, sed suspendebat," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII 11. (25), 403.

[19] "Sed velut a dorso mussitantes et discedentem quasi furtim vellicantes, ut respicerem. Tardabant tamen cunctantem me abripere atque excutere ab eis et translire quo vocabar, cum diceret mihi consuetudo violenta, 'putasne sine istis poteris?'" Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII (26), 405.

interfere anew in – his resistance to conversion, "slowing down" this arduous climb, and challenging him on whether he could actually – as he's trying to – "cope without" these habits. Against their attempts to keep him in place, Augustine describes a new figure arrives on the scene:

> But that call of habit was now barely lukewarm, for from the direction where I had turned my face, and where I trembled to move across, there appeared the pure excellence of Chastity. She was tranquil rather than carelessly merry, she was frankly coaxing me to come on and not hesitate… Full of hesitation, I was hanging in the balance. And there she was again, as if to say: 'Make yourself deaf to those parts of you which are unclean in your earthly existence, so as to put them to death.'[20]

The figure of Chastity is given the affective qualities he now seeks, especially contrasting to the torment and raging he suffers in this moment of exposure: "she was tranquil," and pulls him to "the direction where I had turned my face." The allegorical figures embody different modes of being and ethical orientations. Augustine's two potential ways of life stand allegorized before him, each representing a way that he might choose to live, and in the moment, Augustine is suspended between them. The direction he falls hangs on a change in his will and habit. To this point, the physical will and habit of sexual desire, his attachments to the lower, resistance to Chastity, and attachments to Frivolity and Vanity, have run the show but are now slowed to a stop through his lashing against himself – his accusations against himself – spurned on by god. At this moment, he turns to Chastity, available with a change in his will, who holds out her hands to him. Once his habit has finally broken off, Augustine calls to god to change his will:

[20] "Sed iam tepidissime hoc dicebat. Aperiebatur enim ab ea parte qua intenderam faciem et quo transire trepidabam casta dignitas continentiae, serena et non dissolute hilaris, honeste blandiens ut venirem neque dubitarem, et extendens ad me suscipiendum et amplectendum pias manus," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII 11. (27), 405. For a discussion of the dramatic scene of this internal strife, see Solignac, *Oeuvres volume 14*, 543 – 546. Bouissou notes the literary elements of the scene suggests Continence uses an ironic language towards his 'old friends' which might be a mode of speech the converted Augustine adopts when he addresses his theft 'what did I love about you?' in chapter 1. I suggest the scene with Vanity and Continence does not just represent this past moment of conversion. The turn away from Vanity turns away from both past *and future* where his old friends could continue to be enjoyed, and converts his experience from temporal distention towards Chastity and god.

> I cast myself upon the ground beneath a fig tree, and I gave free rein to my tears and they flowed in torrents from my eyes, an acceptable sacrifice to you. I spoke to you at length, not in these actual words, but along these lines, 'As for you, how long, Lord? Lord, how long will you be angry, for ever? Do not remember our former sins any more.' For I felt that I was in their grip. I sobbed out my pitiful cries. 'How long? How long must it be ''tomorrow'' and ''tomorrow''? Why not ''now''? Why not an end to my degradation from this very moment?'[21]

Finally, the time of Augustine's practices and the time of God's intervention will coincide, which will finally create a change in Augustine. In the second section on Augustine, we will see how confession plays a role in this transformation and stages the role of these passages.

Rousseau 1

The author of Rousseau's *Confessions* is less excited about his conversion, which brings him no closer to freedom, and no closer to truth. After leaving Geneva at a young age, Rousseau finds a potential patron in Mme de Warens while wandering through the countryside southwest of Geneva in the Annecy region of France. She sends him to Turin with a traveling couple to convert to Catholicism and eventually find a living.[22] Among the many hypocrisies chronicled in his training as a catechumen, Rousseau's debates with the Catholic priests weigh against Augustine's model conversion account. In his rhetorical moves and themes, Rousseau mobilizes themes of the Augustine *Confessions* and the figure of Augustine himself, but uses the scene to raise his charges against the priests and portray the farce of his young Catholic conversion.

The problem of the Rousseau conversion is represented right off the bat with this claim: "I did not, strictly speaking, decide to become a Catholic." Where the Augustinian conversion accomplishes a hard-won change in his will as the culmination of a conversion he has been

[21] "Ego sub quadam fici arbore stravi me nescio quomodo, et dimisi habenas lacrimis, et proruperunt flumina oculorum meorum, acceptabile sacrificium tuum, et non quidem his verbis, sed in hac sententia multa dixi tibi: 'et tu, domine, usquequo? Usquequo, domine, irasceris in finem? Ne memor fueris iniquitatum nostrarum antiquarum.' Sentiebam enim eis me teneri. Iactabam voces miserabiles: 'quamdiu, quamdiu, 'cras' et 'cras'? quare non 'modo'? quare non hac hora finis turpitudinis meae?'" Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII (28), 409.

[22] For a biographical account of Rousseau's time in Turin and conversion, see Cranston, *Early Life*, 53 – 68.

wanting to want for a time, the Rousseau 'conversion' happens against his will, and ironically without any real change to it. Despite this difference, they both maintain the relation to truth as a central problematic, though in different configurations. Augustine's struggle to turn his will seeks to match (it to) his discovery of the truth: he turns away from the part of his will that interferes with truth. Rousseau's struggle to discover the truth is interfered with by the conversion which demands a subordination of the will. The problem of subjugation migrates in the Rousseau scene from the deficit of truth before conversion and the inability to get truth to govern his will, to a deficit of truth in his conversion and its irrelevance to his will.

The scene rearranges the operations of time and struggle to demonstrate an entirely other scene, from Milan to Turin, garden to city:

> I did not, strictly speaking, decide to become a Catholic; rather, seeing the critical moment as still a long way off, I allowed myself time to become accustomed to the idea, imagining all the while that some unforeseen event would rescue me from my difficulty. To gain more time I resolved to present the best defense of which I was capable. Before long, however, my vanity had absolved me of any need to remember this resolution, and once I had observed that I sometimes embarrassed my instructors, I needed no further encouragement, but set about trying to confound them. The zeal with which I approached this task was nothing short of ludicrous; for all the while they were working on me, I thought I was working on them, truly believing that all I had to do to persuade them into embracing Protestantism was to convince them.[23]

In Rousseau's scene, he finds himself preparing for conversion to an epistemological position he does not believe. As he "allowed [him]self time" to engage, it manages to form a grasp on young Rousseau: "all the while they were working on me." The culminating 'moment,'

[23] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 63. "Je ne pris pas prémisément la résolution de me faire catholique; mais voyant le terme encore éloigné, je pris le tems de m'apprivoiser à cette idée, et en attendant je me figurois quelque evenement imprévu qui me tireroit d'embarras. Je résolus pour gagner du tems de faire la plus belle defense qu'il me seroit possible. Bientot ma vanité me dispensa de songer à ma résolution, et dès que je m'apperçus que j'embarrassois quelquefois ceux qui vouloient m'instruire, il ne m'en fallut pas davantage pour chercher à les terrasser tout-à-fait. Je mis même à cette entreprise un zèle bien ridicule: car tandis qu'ils travailloient sur moi je voulus travailler sur eux. Je croyois bonnement qu'il ne falloit que les convaincre, pour les engager à se faire protestans," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 64 – 65. The Pleiade commentary points out the difficulty of determining Rousseau's religion, his early Calvinist upbringing, and his religious alignments in later life and writing, 1263 – 1264. On Rousseau's later moral reform and return to Geneva and Protestantism in 1754, see Cranston, *Noble Savage*, xiii – xiv, 1. For Rousseau and religion, see Burgelin, *Rousseau and Religion in Geneva*.

when Rousseau would be set free "from [his] difficulty" would be when someone gets him out of there, or the priest comes to see the truth he argues. The truth would still set him free, but alas no one is interested in the truth Rousseau has to share. In Rousseau's scene, this is hardly the point; the conversion is detached from the discovery of the truth. He laments his vanity – not for keeping him from the truth as it did for Augustine – but for believing he could "convince them." Because of course, this was not the game. Rousseau's conversion scene is a joke precisely because the struggle is merely a struggle of wills without – even against – the discovery of the truth.

Rousseau presents "the best defense" to buy himself time, but admits his tactic actually acclimates him to the idea of converting to Catholicism. The delay allows him to become accustomed to the idea, and end up in closer proximity to what he initially pushed farther away. Rousseau loses track of this initial tactic of deferral and his vanity seduces him into trying to win the contest. While Rousseau imagined that he and his adversary were equally sparring, and equally had at stake the possibility of being convinced by the other, this was a fool's errand. The struggle in the conversion scene is not a struggle to convert to the truth, let alone the struggle to convert one's will to the truth one knows. The conversion scene in Rousseau is displaced from an internal struggle to a struggle with another authority, in which Rousseau's desire for the truth is met with a plan to subjugate his will. The priests represent a perversion of Augustine's scene, working to subjugate the will, not out of a desire for truth, but without any connection to an epistemological shift.

The adversarial relation Rousseau describes surprises the priests; they were not expecting him to be trouble. After all, he arrives in Turin for the purpose of converting. But this prospect is

not so simple for Rousseau, who would want to have epistemoloical and ethical components to his conversion. He puts this difference in terms of a Protestant or Catholic formation:

> They did not, in other words, find me quite as pliable as they had expected, as regards either my intellect or my strength of will. Protestants in general are better educated than Catholics. This is of necessity so: their respective doctrines demand, of the former, discussion, and of the latter, submission. The Catholic must accept the decision that is made for him, the Protestant must learn to decide.[24]

As Rousseau figures it, the Protestant doctrine is taken up for the Protestant through a training in discussion, the Catholic doctrine is taken up for the Catholic through a training in submission. This configures two modes of changing the will with respect to learning the truth. For the 'catholic,' the truth is accepted through submission. For the 'protestant,' the truth is discovered in discussion, which capitulates a decision. In effect, the protestant would want to convert based on an epistemological change. In Rousseau's scene, he is expected to undertake a conversion without the conversion to truth, by mere submission of his will. The work Rousseau demands is discussion, through which he could be convinced and decide to become a catholic. If Rousseau is going to convert – an ethical and epistemological transformation – he requires some truth for it.

In his scene, the Protestant student expects a back-and-forth, and the Catholic priest is surprised to find the student ready to spar. Rousseau's Protestant education makes the Catholic submission to doctrine difficult:

> An old priest, small but quite venerable, gave the first lecture to the assembled group. For my companions this was an occasion for catechism rather than controversy, and the priest was more concerned with instructing them than with resolving their objections. I was quite a different matter. When my turn came, I stopped him on every point, not sparing him a single objection I could think of to

[24] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 63. "Ils ne trouverent donc pas en moi tout à fait autant de facilité qu'ils en attendoient, ni du côté des lumiéres ni du côté de *la volonté*. Les Protestans sont generalement mieux instruits que les Catholiques. Cela doit être: la doctrine des uns exige la discussion, celle des autres *la soumission*. Le catholique doit adapter la décision qu'on lui donne, le protestant doit apprendre à se décider," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 65.

> make. This prolonged the lecture and made it very boring for the others. The old priest went on at length, became heated, wandered off the point, and at last extricated himself from his difficulties by claiming that he did not know French very well.[25]

In the first lecture a venerable old priest teaches Rousseau's cohort in the Catholic mode. For the other catechumens, who had not been educated in the Protestant doctrine and mode, this makes perfect sense.[26] Rousseau "was quite a different matter" because of his Protestant education. He engages the priest in discussion as though the engagement is meant to be two-sided; as though part of learning, in order to convert, is to be convinced and choose to accept the doctrine; as though the will was converting in connection with a truth. The priest walked in thinking that Rousseau already planned to join him on the other side. By nature of Rousseau's engagement, the priest finds himself having to debate rather than instruct, to convince rather than command. Rousseau's discussion starts interfering with the proper progression of the training. The other students become bored, the priest loses the rhythm, and the lesson goes awry. The doctrine cannot support the engagement of the non-submissive student. The priest eventually has to use language as his excuse, eliminating the medium for engagement and disqualifying the debate.

> The next day, for fear my colleagues would be scandalized by my indiscreet objections, I was put into another room with another and younger priest, who spoke with great eloquence, which is to say in very long sentences, and was as pleased with himself as any learned doctor could be. I did not, however, allow myself to be too intimidated by his imposing countenance but, feeling that I was after all only doing my duty, I began to answer him with some confidence and to strike a blow against him here and there, as and when I could. He tried to demolish me with St Augustine, St Gregory, and the other Church Fathers, but discovered, to his amazement, that I handled them almost as deftly as he did himself; it was not that I had ever read them, nor perhaps had he; but I had

[25] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 63 – 64. "Un vieux prêtre, petit, mais assez vénérable, nous fit en commun la prémiére conférence. Cette conference étoit pour mes camarades un catechisme plustôt qu'une controverse, et il avoit plus à faire à les instruire qu'à resoudre leurs objections. Il n'en fut pas de même avec moi. Quand mon tour vint, je l'arrêtai sur tout, je ne lui sauvai pas une des difficultés que je pus lui faire. Cela rendit la conférence fort longue, et fort ennuyeuse pour les assistans. Mon vieux prêtre parloit beaucoup, s'échauffoit, battoit la campagne, et se tiroit d'affaire en disant qu'il n'entendoit pas bien le françois," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 65.

[26] It also makes perfect sense for the other catechumens for whom the entire endeavor was less than sincere; Rousseau notes some of his fellow converts would fund their travel across Europe by converting in each city, Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 59.

> retained many of the passages included in my Le Sueur, and, as soon as he quoted one at me, rather than contesting his quotation, I would retaliate with another from the same Father, which often perplexed him greatly.[27]

In the scene of his debate with the second priest, Rousseau heightens the tension around making subjects, staging his style of formation against those he is subjected to. Moved to another room, separated from the rest of the students, and sent to an adversary equipped for sparring, Rousseau is matched with a young priest equipped with rhetoric. Rousseau could "strike a blow against him here and there," not from 'eloquence' but from his recall of the texts. The contest comes down to "St Augustine, St Gregory, and the other Church Fathers," as the common reference point and tools of each contestant. Rousseau can debate because he "retained many of the passages" and can "retaliate with another from the same Father," and the victory of this contest goes to the greatest handling, memory of, and retaliation with the texts. Though he has some fight, Rousseau loses the match to the young priest, not because he's wrong, not because he is convinced, but because of an asymmetrical power relation, "he was in a stronger position and because, feeling myself, so to speak, at his mercy, I made the decision… not to push him too far; for I could see well enough that the little old priest had not taken a liking either to me or to my erudition,"[28] and because the young priest gets to dictate the mode of engagement and use of the texts:

> The second reason was that the young priest had been trained and I had not. This meant that he conducted the argument according to a method I could not follow, and that, as soon as he felt himself hard pressed by some unanticipated objection, he would postpone his reply until the next day, claiming that I was deviating from the point at issue. Sometimes he even rejected as spurious all my quotations and,

[27] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 64. "Le lendemain, de peur que mes indiscretes objections ne scandalisassent mes camarades, on me mit à part dans une autre chambre avec un autre prêtre plus jeune, beau parler, c'est à dire faiseur de longues phrases, et content de lui si jamais Docteur le fut. Je ne me laissai pourtant pas trop *subjuguer* à sa mine imposante, et sentant qu'après tout je faisois ma tâche, je me mis à lui répondre avec assez d'assurance et à le bourrer par-ci par-là du mieux que je pus. Il croyoit m'assommer avec St. Augustin, St. Gregoire et les autres peres, et il trouvoit avec une surprise incroyable que je maniois tous ces péres-là presque aussi légérement que lui; ce n'étoit pas que je les eusse jamais lus, ni lui peutêtre; mais j'en avois retenu beaucoup de passags tirés de mon Le Sueur; et sitot qu'il m'en citoit un, sans disputer sur sa citation je lui rispostois par une autre du même pere, et qui souvent l'embarrassoit beaucoup," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 65 – 66.
[28] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 64.

> offering to go and fetch me the book, challenged me to find them. He could see that this exposed him to no great risk, and that, for all my borrowed erudition, I had too little experience of handling books and was too little of a Latinist to be able to find a particular passage in a large volume, even if I was confident that it was there to be found. I even suspected him at times of employing the kind of deceit of which he accused our ministers, which is to say, of fabricating passages in order to extricate himself from some difficulty caused by my objections.[29]

Rousseau points out the style of argument gives the priest an upper hand, holding open the possibility that his reading was correct, but his lack of experience lost the debate. In this passage, the field of power relations outweigh the truth of the doctrine itself. The young priest 'wins' on the grounds of controlling the terms of the debate, more than having the better argument or truth. He does not win the truth game because he has the truth, he wins because he knows the game. Rousseau's conversion is hardly a transformation of his will for the better, let alone a conversion of his will to follow the laws of a truth of which he is convinced.

While Rousseau and the priests contest the mode of training and the true doctrine, they agree on the canon. Augustine is a mutual resource and agreed-upon grounds. The tacit agreement is that the better command of Augustine wins the claim to the discursive space. They use the same texts to try to structure the engagement and to fight over doctrine. If Rousseau reclaims and recasts Augustine, he could win the terms and outcome of the stuggle.

Augustine in the Turin scene might be a figuration of Augustine for the *Confessions*, as a landmark figure, through whom Rousseau will try to gain ground in his fight for himself, by invoking Augustine's text and his reading of Augustine in a creative way against this farce: in

[29] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 64 – 65. "L'autre raison étoit que le jeune avoit de l'étude et que je n'en avois point. Cela faisoit qu'il mettoit dans sa maniére d'argumenter une methode que je ne pouvois pas suivre, et que, sitôt qu'il se sentoit pressé d'une objection imprévue, il la remettoit au lendemain, disant que je sortois du sujet présent. Il rejettoit même quelquefois toutes mes citations soutenant qu'elles étoient fausses, et s'offrant à m'aller chercher le livre, me défioit de les y trouver. Il sentoit qu'il ne risquoit pas grand chose, et qu'avec toute mon érudition d'emprunt, j'étois trop peu exercé à manier les livres, et trop peu latiniste pour trouver un passage dans un gros volume, quand même je serois assuré qu'il y est. Je le soupçonne même d'avoir usé de l'infidélité dont il accusoit les Ministres, et d'avoir fabriqué quelquefois des passages pour se tirer d'une objection qui l'incomodoit," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 66.

the scene, as a young man arguing with a Catholic priest and waging a Protestant discussion against his adversary and immanent conversion. In addition, Rousseau can forge his argument as an older writer, retroactively depicting a scene, still concerned with the question of the subject and truth. As he wagered his argument through invoking Augustine earlier, he might do the same when writing his *Confessions* now. When put on the spot, in revolt against the submission expected of him, the arena returns the rote memory of texts to young Rousseau, "well instructed" and "conversant with a little pamphlet" that he had" "learnt almost by heart" in his youth.[30] Even though he "had more or less forgotten [them] since," the texts "came back" to Rousseau "as the dispute became heated." Rousseau invokes the absorption of the texts and their use, arsenal, and activation in the heat of debate. In effect, resurrecting – in consonance with Augustine – and dissonance with the priests – the ethical function of reading texts in the scene. The scene of his earlier use of Augustine might figure his use of Augustine when writing the *Confessions,* as an image of his *Confessions* text, what he is doing, and the stakes.

In this earlier scene, Rousseau stages his debates, commitment to truth, and claims to Augustine against subjugation. As a public author now, Rousseau repeats the move, reclaiming Augustine for a discursive space that marries his formation back to a conversion to truth. The Catholic conversion scene appears as a farce of the Augustinian scene. The struggle is a subjugation, the truth irrelevant, the will the purvey of priests, the relation to the self irrelevant. In order to change Rousseau, in order to bring about his conversion following the Augustinian conversion scene, he would have to discover the truth and then change course to follow that truth. The Catholic conversion he encounters, however, does not even entertain convincing

[30] Rousseau, *Confessions,* Oxford, 63. "J'avois été bien instruit chez M. Lambercier, et que de plus, j'avois par devers moi un petit magazin fort incomode à ces Messieurs dans *L'Histoire de l'Eglise et de l'empire* que j'avois apprise presque *par coeur* chez mon pére, et depuis à peu près oubliée, mais qui me revint, à mesure que la dispute s'échauffoit," Rousseau, *Confessions,* Pleiade, 65. Consider the theme of internalized truths in his heart from texts, see chapter 5.

Rousseau of the truth, and merely seeks to win a submission of his will. This is absurd to Rousseau because it makes the conversion a farce, there is no credibility in their measure of his changed will following god's law. After his baptism, he is released into the city with a few coins and nowhere to sleep.

The ritual of it: Augustine 2

While the Augustine *Confessions* sets out the scene and the task of conversion, it also stages the truth-telling activities that generate the final capitulation. Some truth-telling activity is needed for Augustine to finally tip the scale between his competing wills, and leave Vanity for Chastity. Book 8 builds a series of truth-telling practices that finally tip the balance. They entail the combined elements of the confession, telling the truth of self, and telling the truth of god. In this book, the truth-telling scenes to match the conversion scene configure, stage, perform, and enact telling-the-truth-of-oneself and the telling-truth-of-Scripture. Augustine's conversion scene at the end of book 8 culminates in his transformation when he 'takes up and reads.' The capitulating moment accumulates its sense from the series of conversion scenes in book 8, which highlight the effects of his conversion scene.

Augustine's own conversion starts with his gaze being forced onto himself, in which he accuses himself and storms against himself. This is a crucial part of the conversion event, but it is catalyzed by hearing a series of stories of conversion. Bearing witness to a series of conversion scenes incites the juridical relation to himself. Augustine describes the effect of hearing the conversion story of Ponticianus:

> Such was Ponticianus' story. But while he spoke, Lord, you were wrenching me back toward myself, taking me away from the place behind my back where I had set myself while I was refusing to look properly at myself. And you placed me before my very eyes so that I could see how vile I was, how deformed and filthy, how besmirched and full of sores. And I did see, and was horrified, and I had

> nowhere to run to away from myself. But if I tried to turn my gaze away from myself he kept on telling his tale, and once again you set me against myself and impressed me upon my own eyes, so that I would find out my own sin and hate it. I knew it all right, but I was pretending I did not, and was suppressing and forgetting it.[31]

When put before his own eyes to see himself properly, Augustine sees how "vile I was, how deformed and filthy, how besmirched and full of sores." Augustine describes he could put himself behind his own back before, out of sight. Upon hearing the story, God "wrenches" him to turn around and "impressed me upon my own eyes" so he "did see, and was horrified." The confrontation forces a change in Augustine: "set against" himself, he finally comes to hate his "own sin." The sin which plagues him is finally confronted, seen, and hated.

As the story endures, it holds Augustine in this position of exposure and change. Recall that the strength of his concupiscence had forged into a chain that bound him because of its duration over time. What activity, on earth, could he do, that would start to chip away at the force of his concupiscent will, and start to create the space for him to start acting – over time – with his new will. In listening to the story, Augustine is held *against* the concupiscent will. If Augustine tries to resist, "if I tried to turn my gaze away from myself… he kept on telling his tale…once again you set me against myself." Much as he would like to turn away, the continuation of the story keeps turning Augustine back towards himself, sustaining his exposure: "I was being gnawed from within and completely overwhelmed by a dreadful sense of shame, while Ponticianus was recounting his story."[32] By the end of the story, Augustine cannot snap back around, but is left with this new orientation, set against himself:

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[31] "Narrabat haec Ponticianus. Tu autem, domine, inter verba eius retorquebas me ad me ipsum, auferens me a dorso meo, ubi me posueram dum nollem me attendere, et constituebas me ante faciem meam, ut viderem quam turpis essem, quam distortus et sordidus, maculous et ulcerosus. Et videbam et horrebam, et quo a me fugerem non erat. Sed si conabar avertere a me aspectum, narrabat ille quod narrabat, et tu me rursus opponebas mihi et impingebas me in oculos meos, ut invenirem iniquitatem meam et odissem. Noveram eam, sed dissimulabam et cohibebam et obliviscebar," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII. 7. (16), 387.
[32] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII 7. (18), 389 – 391.

> When his story, and the reason for his coming, were concluded, he went his way, and I turned to myself. What did I not accuse myself of? With what rods of condemnation did I not lash my soul…it resisted, recoiled, but did not excuse itself. Every argument was exhausted and refuted. All that was left was a wordless agitation, and my soul shuddered as if it were death to be restrained from its lax habits, though in fact they were making it disintegrate into death.[33]

Once he hates his sin, Augustine adopts a new relation to the self – "set against himself" – with a juridical mode: "What did I not accuse myself of?" Now that Augustine has been horrified at what he sees, he addesses himself as accuser and accused. Augustine-author recalls adopting the position of judgment towards himself, in which knowing and loving the truth makes him see his habits as "making [his soul] disintegrate into death." The self who remains attached to the lower things, and "shuddered as if it were death to be restrained from its lax habits" stands accused, but opens the transformation because he "resisted, recoiled, but did not excuse itself." In the moment, exposed, accused, vile Augustine finds himself at a pivot, in a frenzy of indetermination, that runs through his whole being: "all that was left was a wordless agitation, and my soul shuddered."

Luckily, Augustine already knew that he should "be in a covenant" with god, and it was just the problem of his inability to give up his temporal attachments which prevented him from being so. The conversion scene is the story of the change of his wants, an ethical problem, which coheres with the epistemological discovery, that god is the highest good. The conversion story, in other words, is the story of the earlier epistemological discovery finally capitulating into an ethical change in his self. Naturally, ethical practices of truth participate in this scene, the

[33] "Terminato autem sermone et causa qua venerat, abiit ille, et ego ad me. Quae non in me dixi? Quibus sententiarum veberibus non flagellavi animam meam, ut sequeretur me conantem post te ire? Et renitebatur, recusabat, et non se excusabat. Consumpta erant et convicta argumenta omnia. Remanserat muta trepidatio et quasi mortem reformidabat restringi a fluxu *consuetudinis*, quo tabescebat in mortem," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII 7. (18), 389 – 391, (italics mine).

confession weaves together the exercises of bearing witness to the truth, revealing the truth of himself, and adopting the truth for oneself as a rational principle of action.

Bearing witness to the conversion stories of others starts to address the ethical question from the first chapter: how to accomplish the relation to god, how to want god above all else? The opening of book 8 reiterates the task at hand. Convinced of the truth, he still needed to transform himself and his will to follow it:

> Your words were firmly implanted in my heart, and you encompassed me on every side. I was now convinced of your eternal life, although I had seen it only as a mystery and like a reflected image. As for every doubt about imperishable substance, because every kind of substance is derived from it, it was taken from me. *Now I longed to be more firmly established in you rather than more convinced about you*. But concerning my earthly life everything was in a state of flux: my heart was yet to be cleansed of its old leaven. The Way himself, my Savior, won favor with me, and yet I was still hesitating to pass through his narrow gate.[34]

Though convinced of the Christian doctrine and god as 'eternal life,' he has still not had an ethical shift, where god's truth determines his mode of life. He is still "in flux," his "heart uncleaned of its old leaven." Stumped and unable to get fom here to there on his own, god inspires the next stop on his journey: "you put an idea into my mind, and it seemed good in my sight: to make my way to Simplicianus, who seemed to me to be your good servant, for your grace shone in him."[35] He visits Simplicianus – not for an epistemological discovery, i.e., not to learn a new doctrine which will help him change. He visits Simplicianus for an ethical discovery – that is, to learn how to adopt a new way of living:

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[34] "Inhaeserant praecordiis meis verba tua, et undique circumvallabar abs te. De vita tua aeterna certus eram, quamvis eam in aenigmate et quasi per speculum videram; dubitatio tamen omnis de incorruptibili substantia, quod ab illa esset omnis substantia, ablata mihi erat, *nec certior de te sed stabilior in te esse cupiebam*. De mea vero temporali vita nutabant omnia et mundandum erat *cor* a fermento veteri. Et placebat via ipse salvator, et ire per eius angustias adhuc pigebat," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII 1. (1), 355.

[35] "Mihi bonus apparebat servus tuus et lucebat in eo gratia tua," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII 1. (1), 355 – 356. Simplicianus was the bishop of Milan in 397 and mentor of Ambrose, O'Donnell, *Commentary III*, 6. On writing habits, intellectual connections, and Neoplatonism in the Milan circle including Ambrose and Simplicianus, see Solignac, *Oeuvres 14*, 529 – 536. On the Milan circle and Augustine's conversion, see Brown, *Augustine: a Biography*, 69 – 107. On Ambrose and rituals of public penance, see Ambrose, *Penance*, 31 – 50.

> I had heard that his life had been completely devoted to you even from his youth. By now he was grown old, and I thought he would be well-versed and widely experienced because of the long years he had spent in the worthy task of pursuing a life you would approve: and so it proved. I wanted him, when I laid my perplexities before him, to bring forth for me what would be the appropriate way forward for someone in my condition, so that I could become fit to walk in your way.[36]

In lieu of his writings, theories, or information, Augustine seeks out Simplicianus' practice, behavior, and mode of living. On these grounds, Augustine expects that, "when I laid my perplexities before him," Simplicianus will be able "to bring forth for me what would be the appropriate way forward for someone in my condition, so that I could become fit to walk in your way." When Augustine arrives, and starts telling Simplicianus about the Neoplatonic texts he is reading, Simplicianus tells him about the life of their translator:

> But when I recounted how I had read certain Neoplatonist books that Victorinus, the former professor of rhetoric at Rome, who, so I hear, had died a Christian, had translated into the Latin language… he urged me to accept the humility of Christ, which is hidden from the wise and revealed to babes, he recalled Victorinus himself.[37]

When Simplicianus gives Augustine the counsel he is seeking on how to adopt another mode of life, he gives Augustine a story of an exemplary figure as a route to adopting a way of life. In Simplicianus telling Augustine the story of Victorinus, he assumes the principle Augustine has implied above: there is a connection between the exposure to an example and its effect in the listener. The Victorinus story also shows the efficacy of the example as a vehicle for adopting a mode of life. Augustine recounts the effect it had on him to hear the story of Victorinus, writing:

> But when your servant Simplicianus recounted all this to me about Victorinus, I was on fire with enthusiasm to follow his example. Indeed that was why he had told the story… [Victorinus] seems to me to be as courageous as he was fortunate,

[36] "A iuventute sua devotissime tibi viveret; iam vero tunc senuerat et longa aetate in tam bono studio sectandae vitae tuae multa expertus, multa edoctus mihi videbatur: et vere sic erat. Unde mihi ut proferret volebam conferenti secum aestus meos quis esset aptus modus sic affecto ut ego eram ad ambulandum in via tua," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII 1. (1), 357.
[37] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb, VIII 2. (3), 359. For a comparison of the theology of the trinity and the soul in Victorinus and Augustine, see Hadot, *Études de Patristique*, 283 – 319; For Hadot on Victorinus, see, *Marius Victorinus: Recherches sur son vie et son oeuvre*.

> because he found an opportunity of becoming open to you. I myself was longing for this very thing, yet I was bound: not by someone else's iron chains but by my own iron will.[38]

The example creates an effect in Augustine: Simplicianus telling him the story of Victorinus' transformation incites one in Augustine. This passage invokes the effect of the conversion story in the one witnessing it. The Victorinus story culminates in his public confession of faith, Augustine and Simplicianus each in his turn note the figure serves as an example to model or inspire change in those exposed to it. The example of Victoriunus indicates to Augustine how he "bec[ame] open to you. I myself was longing for this very thing."

The story of Victorinus' conversion also illustrates the precipitating effect of text.[39] To the question: "O Lord, Lord, you have bowed the heavens and come down, you have touched the mountains and made them smoke: by what means did you infiltrate his heart?" he answers:

> As Simplicianus told the story, Victorinus was reading the Holy Scriptures and thoroughly examining all the Christian texts and searching through them… He drew strength from reading and listening and was afraid of being disowned by Christ in the presence of his holy angels if he remained afraid to confess him openly before other people. In his own eyes he stood guilty of a serious charge: being ashamed of the sacrament of humility that is your Word's, and not being ashamed of the blasphemous rites of the proud demons.[40]

If god has the capacity to infiltrate a human heart at any moment, the question recalls the reverse problem: what happened for god to infiltrate the heart 'now'? If it's not a problem of god's ability changing moment by moment, it's instead a question of god's timing with respect to

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[38] "Sed ubi mihi homo tuus Simplicianus de Victorino ista narravit, exarsi ad imitandum: ad hoc enim et ille narraverat… non mihi fortior quam felicior visus est, quia invenit occasionem vacandi tibi, cur rei ego suspirabam, ligatus *non ferro alieno sed mea ferrea voluntate*," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII 5. (10), 373, (italics mine).

[39] Augustine weaves the exercise of reading as a spiritual exercise into the practice of confession. Hadot treats reading as a form of spiritual execise in "Spiritual Exercises," *Philosophy as a way of life*, especially 101 – 105, 135; Foucault delineates the Greco-Roman and Christian textual exercises according to the differences of their ethical schema, see Foucault, "Self-writing," *Ethics*, 207 – 221. On Augustine, reading as an ethical exercise, and the conversion scene, see Stock, *Augustine the Reader*, 75 – 111. Hadot addresses Augustine's conversion scene, the structure of the *Confessions*, and reading as spitirual exercise in, "Quelques thèmes fondamentaux des *Confessions* de Saint Augustin," *Études de Patristique*, 319 - 323.

[40] "Legebat, sicut ait Simplicianus, sanctam scipturam omnesque christianas litteras investigabat studiosissime et perscrutabatur," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII. 2. (4), 361 – 363.

the heart infiltrated. Augustine answers that Victorinus's reading opened his heart: "Victorinus was reading the Holy Scriptures and thoroughly examining all the Christian texts and searching through them." The infiltration is accomplished in a moment when the heart turns towards or opens itself to god by reading the Scriptures.

The story of Victorinus holds out hope for others, as Augustine exclaims, implores, perhaps even intercesses for the reader as well, calling for himself and the reader to "return to" god like Victorinus…*if only we had a text to incite us in the same way…*

> Rouse yourself to action, O Lord, summon and call us, kindle and capture us, set us on fire, make yourself desirable to us: let us fall in love, let us run to you! Surely many people return to you from a deeper hell of blindness than Victorinus, and draw near, and are illuminated when they are given the light?[41]

The end of the Victorinus story incorporates the function of the text with the effects in the witness. The text of the Scripture offers a medium of inspiration that sparks the transformation of the one converting in the scene. Victorinus was reading the Scriptures when he finally decides to confess his faith publicly. The confession of his own story participates in the truth-telling ritual as well. Besides the confrontation with the truth of oneself embedded in the struggle of the conversion, the telling of the conversion story holds out the possibility of the truth-telling effecting a conversion in others.

The narrative pattern intensifies as the text approaches Augustine's own conversion moment. In another conversion story, this one immediately preceding Augustine's own, reading plays a part – and prefigures these elements in his own conversion scene. Augustine not only witnesses this next story, he portrays its role in his own conversion, and records its parallel elements to his own scene.

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[41] "Age, domine, fac, excita et revoca nos, accende et rape, flagra, dulcesce: amemus, curamus," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII 4. (9), 371.

Augustine tells the story of the Milanese who converts to Christianity upon reading the *Life of Antony*:

> During their stroll this other pair happened to chance upon a dwelling where some of your servants were living, men poor in spirit, and the kingdom of heaven consists of such people. There the two of them discovered a book containing the life of Antony. One of them began to read it and to be amazed, and to be kindled; and while the reading was going on he was thinking how to adopt such a way of life, to abandon his imperial service and serve you.
>
> 'If I want to become a friend of God, look: I can become one immediately!'
> So he spoke, and, struggling to give birth to this new life, he turned his eyes back to the pages. And he went on reading and was inwardly changed, where you looked on, and his mind shook off the world, as quickly became apparent. For while he was reading and reflecting on his heart's fluctuations, he stormed at himself sporadically and determined and decided upon a better course. And now he belongs to you.[42]

In the story, reading is again an effective aspect of the transformation. The conversion of the Milanese starts from when he "discovered a book containing the life of Antony." As he reads the book he starts "to be amazed, and to be kindled." Reading the text inspires a kind of enthusiasm, fire, or kindling in the reader. The exposure to the text sparks an affective register that incites an attention to oneself. Augustine goes on: "while the reading was going on he was thinking how to adopt such a way of life, to abandon his imperial service and serve you." His question becomes how to adopt this way of life. Reading not only initiates the enthusiasm for god, holds a new approach to oneself, and turns desires on the habits of one's life, reading causes the transformation: he "suddenly felt himself full of a holy love and clear-headed sense of remorse." The text gives an example to follow, "If I want to become a friend of God, look: I can become one immediately," and precipitates the change: "struggling to give birth to this new life, he

[42] "Illos vagabundos inruisse in quandam casam ubi habitabant quidam servi tui spiritu pauperes, qualium est regnum caelorum, et invenisse ibi codicem in quo scripta erat vita Antonii. Quam legere coepit unus eorum et mirari et accendi, et inter legendum meditari arripere talem vitam et relicta militia saeculari servire tibi," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII (15), 383.
"'Amicus autem dei, si voluero, ecce nunc fio.' Dixit hoc et turbidus parturitione novae vitae reddidit oculos paginis. Et legebat et mutabatur intus, ubi tu videbas, et exuebatur mundo mens eius, ut mox apparuit. Namque dum legit et volvit fluctus *cordis sui*, infremuit aliquando et discrevit decrevitque meliora, iamque tuus," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb VIII (15), 385.

turned his eyes back to the pages. And he went on reading and was inwardly changed, where you looked on, and his mind shook off the world, as quickly became apparent."

Augustine concludes this passage: "For while he was reading and reflecting on his heart's fluctuations, he stormed at himself sporadically and determined and decided upon a better course. And now he belongs to you." The final effect and status of the Milanese at the end of the story is that he finally belongs to god; reading the *Vita Antonii* was part of the conversion, causing him to reflect on his heart's fluctuations, storm at himself, and decide on the better course. The text, its truth, and its exposure of himself sparks a transformation of the self.

In the scene, Augustine is relaying the story told to him by Ponticianus, which inspires his own conversion right on its heels. Notably, this story has an important position as it sets up the story of his own conversion, told before the readers of his text. Ponticianus's story inspires an enthusiasm *and* gives a model that pushes Augustine to this experience. Consider the relationship between this scene and the prefiguration of the effect Augustine's text has on its audience. The model – Ponticianus telling to Augustine, then Augustine telling to us – allows the effect of the story to travel down the chain and effect the readers much as Ponticianus effects Augustine.

On his definition of freedom, the conversion stories help break his chain and win him freedom, and his story is set up to do the same. In considering the series of conversion scenes and their witnesses, Augustine's scene is part of a chain that stretches from the *Life of Antony*, to Athanasius (its author), the Milanese, Poniticanus (who tells the story), Augustine, to Augustine's witness – Alypius and us. In this chain, stories – and texts – spark conversions.

Finally, in his own conversion scene, reading is also, famously, crucial. Augustine writes:

> These were my words, and in grief of heart I wept bitterly. And look! – from the house next door I hear a voice – I don't know whether it is a boy or a girl – singing some words over and over: 'Pick it up and read it, pick it up and read it!' Immediately my expression transformed…I checked the flow of my tears and got

> up. I understood it as nothing short of divine providence that I was being ordered to open the book and read the first passage I came cross. I had heard of Antony, how he had been challenged by a reading from the gospel which he happened to encounter, as if what he was reading was being spoken for himself: 'Go, sell everything you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in the heavens: and come, follow me!' Straightaway that oracle had converted him to you. In great excitement I returned to the place where Alypius was sitting, for when I stood up I had put down a volume of the apostle down there. I snatched it up, opened it, and read silently the first chapter that my eyes lit upon: 'Not in partying and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and shamelessness, not in fighting and jealousy, but clothe yourself in the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh concerning physical desires.' I neither wanted nor needed to read further. Immediately, the end of the sentence was like a light of sanctuary poured into my heart; every shadow of doubt melted away.[43]

Already raging against himself, he hears a voice telling him "tolle lege," take up and read. Augustine recounts, "immediately my expression transformed." At the direction to take up and read, the affective storm quells, and Augustine's energy reroutes itself towards the text. The storm opened Augustine towards the possibility of reception in a moment.

Reading is an activity through which Augustine can open his heart to its transformation by and to god, and god can infiltrate it from out there in the eternal. In reading, the eternal truth of the Scripture can intervene in a heart when this new habit makes it receptive. The function of the reading is prefigured in the Milanese reading the *Life of Antony,* and recalled here by Augustine to configure the function of the reading. The earlier conversion story becomes the

[43] "Flebam amarissima contritione *cordis mei*. Et ecce audio vocem… 'tolle lege, tolle lege.' Statimque mutato vultu…repressoque impetu lacrimarum surrexi, nihil aliud interpretans divinitus mihi iuberi nisi ut aperirem codicem et legerem quod primum caput invenissem. Audieram enim de Antonio quod ex evangelica lectione cui forte supervenerat admonitus fuerit, tamquam sibi diceretur quod legebatur…et tali oraculo confestim ad te esse conversum. Itaque concitus redii in eum ubi sedebat Alypius: ibi enim posueram codicem apostoli cum inde surrexeram. Arripui, aperui, et lege in silentio capitulum quo primum coniecti sunt oculi mei… nec ultra volui legere nec opus erat. Statim quippe cum fine huiusce sententiae quasi luce securitatis infusa *cordi meo* omnes dubitationis tenebrae diffugerunt," Augustine, *Confessions,* Loeb, VIII 12. (28) – (29), 409 – 411. The passage from Romans reads: "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God had appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad…One must be subject, not only because of wrath, but also because of conscience…Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law…Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake up from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires," Romans 13:1 – 14, pgs. 2133 – 2134. On the figure of Paul in the conversion scene and the composition of book 8 of Augustine's *Confessio*ns, see O'Donnell, *Commentary III,* 3.

model for Augustine's reading of Paul in his conversion scene. In this comparison, the reading "challenges him," occurs as a happenstance encounter, presents itself in a disruptive entry into his life, and the passage was read 'as if' it spoke to him directly, giving a specific directive to him, as the "oracle had converted him to you."

In the arc of the passage, Augustine hears a command to read, remembers (as we do too) Antony and his conversion, and runs to read the first passage that shows itself, enabling him to adopt the better way of life. Augustine returns to where he left the volume with the writings of Paul by Alypius and, as instructed, picks it up, "opened it, and read silently the first chapter that my eyes lit upon." As the Antony passage speak to the Milanese directly, Augustine feels the passage speak directly to his worry about his concupiscence, and tell him to "clothe yourself in the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh concerning physical desires." Upon reading the passage, he "neither wanted nor needed to read further. Immediately, the end of the sentence was like a light of sanctuary poured into my heart; every shadow of doubt melted away." In the scene, Alypius bears witness to the conversion, prefiguring our own witness to the scene as well.

The function of the text might also indicate part of the shift from Part I to Part II, the role of the conversion as a pivot between them, and the operation of the confession as an active ritual of discourse throughout. In the conversion scene, the first struggle, his exposure to the truth, and the hard look at himself are recounted in a confession of himself in all his sin, attachments to the lower, and chain of habit. Hearing stories of conversion scenes helps sustain a new relation to himself under a juridical image: he accuses himself. And in exposure to the truth through texts he tips between the old will and new will into a conversion to god. His suspension between Chastity and Vanity is broken when he reads the text and god's intervention can hit his open heart. The

transformation of the self also tips the balance of the confession in the scene of conversion: from a confession of his sins sparked and storming from exposure to the truth of texts, to a confession of the truth of texts proclaimed and praised by one turned from sin to god. The confession continues across the confessions with all elements in play through the conversion scene, but the 'break' in the text reflects this recombination of the elements according to the transformation of the self. The *Confessions* will shift from staging, performing, and enacting the confession of his sins to the ongoing truth-telling subject-forming act of reading Scriptures, though they are bound together throughout. As the scene has staged the operation of the reading practice in his own formation, the elements are assembled into a unified operation. The tripartite confession depends on all these elements, and just as they are combined in the staging of confession and *Confessions* in part I, they remain combined in the confession of the *Confessions* in part II.

The break: Rousseau 2

Despite young Rousseau's conversion scene representing an irony of Augustine's conversion scene, his *Confessions* also invokes a shift in his own interaction with truth – and text – in a way that follows the Augustinian scene. As Augustine's exposure to truth grounds his ethical transformation, young Rousseau's 'conversion' scene insists that his earlier, Protestant internalization of texts grounds his form of subjectivity. In the Rousseau case, however, this means that his young 'conversion' was a farce, unconnected to truth, and hardly a model for it. In the Rousseau text, there is also a transformation in the truth-telling, reflected in a 'break' in the middle of the text, that remedies the original debt. Rousseau 'now' claims a commitment to truth and truth-telling as an ethical practice; his own practices of truth are the cornerstone of his portrait and the work his *Confessions* stages. However, the obfuscation of truth in the Rousseau *Confession* is not the bloat of sin, but the interference of others. Against these obfuscations,

Rousseau writes his confessions to the public. In the Part II, the author-Rousseau represents the *Confessions* as the work of telling the truth to the public.

In part II, Rousseau describes a transformation that matches the 'actual sin' he stages. In the ribbon scene with Marion, his temptation by a ribbon and fondness for Marion give way to the actual crime: the lie falsely accusing Marion, and not confessing his guilt. This episode generates a burden of remorse that impels him to write this *Confessions*. The confession promises to restitute his debt by truth-telling publicly where he failed to do so in this original scene. In Rousseau's book 8, he sets out the obligation to truth-tell publicly with respect to the new innocent-accused, Rousseau himself. Where the ribbon scene corrects the record for Marion, the *Confessions* corrects the record for Rousseau. However, this is not presented as a mere testimony of her innocence and his innocence. The *Confessions* is presented as a truth-telling that (could) rectifiy the deficit of truth, figured first in the mis-judgment by the jury in the ribbon scene, and now in Part II, the misjudgment by the public of 'Rousseau now.' Rousseau tells the truth of himself as a confession which restitutes the debt of untruth only he can correct.

The transformation from young Rousseau to Rousseau 'now' lies in this resolve to tell the truth to the public that has passed a false judgment on him, now that he is public and condemned. The *Confessions* represent the result of his resolve to tell the truth to the public against all subjugations and deceit. Notably, the resolve comes out of his poor health as occasion to live according to his principles.[44]

[44] The scene of his own death occasions a strong invocation of an ethical theme from the ancient tradition. In search of the *vitam impendere vero* (also inspired by Juvenal's *Satires*, on critiquing someone with ability to exercise *parrhēsia* not doing so out of a lack of courage, see Kelly, *Rousseau as Author*, 1), Rousseau commits to ethical principles against public opinion. The limit scene of his death has an entirely different ethical function than the Christian one, for example, in the close of Chateaubriand's *Memoires*: "The scenes of tomorrow do not concern me; they call for other painters: it is your turrn, gentlemen! As I write these last words, on 16 November 1841, my window, which looks west over the gardens of the Foreign Missions, is open: it is six o'clock in the morning; I can see the pale and swollen moon; it is sinking over the spire of the Invalides scarcely touched by the first golden ray from the east: one might imagine that the old world was ending and the new beginning. I behold the light of a dawn whose sunrise I shall never see. It only remains for me to sit down at the edge of my grave: then I shall descend boldly, crucifix in hand, into eternity," 377 – 378. Instead of passing into eternity crucifix in hand, Rousseau stages the scene as an

> In his report to Mme Dupin on the state of my health, Morand expressed the opinion that I would not last six months. These remarks were relayed to me and made me reflect so seriously on my position and on the folly of sacrificing the pleasure and repose of the few days that remained to me that the tyranny of a profession for which I felt only repugnance. Besides, how could I reconcile the stern principles which I had just adopted with a position that was so inconsistent with them: I would cut a fine figure, would I not, a cashier to a tax-collector preaching disinterestedness and poverty? These ideas combined so forcibly and, in conjunction with the fever, caused such a ferment in my head that nothing since has ever been able to eradicate them; and during my convalescence, restored to my right mind, I reaffirmed the principles I had espoused during my delirium. I renounced for ever any thought of fortune or preferment. Determined to spend the little time that remained to me in independence and poverty, I concentrated all my inner strength on breaking free from the shackles of public opinion and on doing courageously, and without troubling myself about the judgments of others, whatever seemed to me to be right. The obstacles I was confronted with and the efforts I made to triumph over them are beyond belief. I succeeded as well as it was possible to do, and better than I had myself hoped. If only I had been able to shake off the yoke of friendship as easily as that of public opinion.[45]

The 'conversion' not only causes him to change his profession, it instills a resolve to live according to his principles irrespective of public opinion. While he resolves to live freely, independently, and hopefully out of public opinion, he is unfortunately a very public person. Even as he discourages his public figurehood, he cannot evade it completely, describing:

> The success of my first publications had made me fashionable. The condition of life I had chose for myself excited the public's curiosity; they wanted to know this bizarre man, who courted no one and who cared for nothing except for living free and happy in his own chosen way; which was enough, of course, to ensure that he could no longer do so.[46]

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occasion to resurrect the Greco-Roman theme of *parrhēsia:* "I seized the occasion that was offered me to demonstrate to the public how, even against a sovereign, an individual can defend the cause of truth," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 356.

[45] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 352. "En rendant compte à Mme Dupin de mon état, Morand lui déclara que dans six mois je ne serois pas en vie. Ce discours qui me parvint me fit faire de serieuses reflexions sur mon état et sur la bétise de sacrifier le repos et l'agrément du peu de jours qui me restoient à vivre à *l'assujetissement* d'un emploi pour lequel je ne me sentois que du dégout. D'ailleurs comment accorder les sévéres principes que je venois d'adopter avec un état qui s'y rapportoit si peu, et n'aurois-je pas bonne grace, Caissier d'un Receveur général des finances à prêcheur le desintéressement et la pauvreté? Ces idées fermentérent si bien dans ma tête avec la fiévre, elles s'y combinérent avec tant de force, que rien depuis lors ne les en put arracher, et durant ma convalscence je me confirmai de sens froid dans les résolutions que j'avois prises dans mon délire. Je renonçai pour jamais à tout projet de fortune et d'avancement. Déteminé à passer dans l'indépendance et la pauvreté le peu de tems qui me restoit à vivre, j'appliquai toutes les forces de mon ame *à briser les fers de l'opinion*, et à faire avec courage tout ce qui me paroissoit bien, sans m'embarrasser aucunement du jugement des hommes. Les obstacles que j'eus à combattre et les efforts que je fis pour en triompher sont incroyables. Je reussis autant qu'il étoit possible, et plus que je n'avois espéré moi-même. Si j'avois aussi bien secoué le joug de l'amitié que celui de l'opinion," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 362.

[46] Rousseau, Confessions, Oxford, 357. "Les diverses maniéres de vivre auxquelles ils *m'assujetissoient*. Le succés de mes premiers Ecrits m'avoit mis à la mode. L'état que j'avois pris excitoit la curiosité: L'on vouloit connoitre cet homme bizarre qui ne recherchoit personne et ne se soucioit de rien que de vivre libre et heureux à sa maniére," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 367.

Unfortunately, Rousseau is publicly opined upon. And while he would be happy to live privately irrespective of public opinion, doing so publicly leads to misunderstandings of this 'Rousseau.' In effect, he has to confess publicly in order to defend the truth because a false image of him already exists. Much like in the ribbon scene, the people weighing in are leveling false accusations, and much like in the ribbon scene, Rousseau is the person who has the truth of the matter, and could state it. This is how he sets up the writing of the *Confessions*:

> I owe too much to the truth to owe more to anyone else, if I am to be known properly, I must be known as I was in all my relations with others, good or bad… I want always to be truthful and just, to speak all the good that I can of other people, and only to speak evil of them in as far as it affects me and as I am forced to relate it…. My confessions are not written for publication during my lifetime… if I were master of my destiny and of that of this work, it would not see the light of day until long after my death and theirs. But my powerful oppressors, terrified of the truth, have gone to such lengths to erase its every last trace that I am forced to preserve it by taking every measure that is permitted by right at its most exacting and justice at its most severe. If my memory were certain to be extinguished with me, rather than compromising anyone I would suffer without murmur an opprobrium that, although unjust, would be transient; but since all my name must live on, I must try to transmit with it the memory of the unfortunate man that bore it as he really was, and not as his unjust enemies work ceaselessly to portray him.[47]

From this position, we might read the 'break' in Rousseau's *Confessions* as a reflection of the transition of his truth-telling from the recollections of his young life in obscurity to his

[47] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 390 – 391. "Mes confessions ne sont point faites pour paroitre de mon vivant ni de celui des personnes interessées. Si j'étois le maitre de ma destinée et de celle de cet écrit il ne verroit le jour que longtems après ma mort et la leur. Mais les efforts que la terreur de la vérité fait faire à mes puissans oppresseurs pour en effacer les traces, me forcent à faire pour les conserver tout ce que me permettent le droit le plus exact et la plus sévére justice. Si ma memoie devoit s'éteindre avec moi, plustot que de compromettre personne je souffrirois un opprobre injuste et passager sans murmure: mais puisqu'enfin mon nom doit vivre, je dois tâcher de transmettre avec lui le souvenir de l'homme infortuné qui le porta, tel qu'il fut réellement, et non tel que d'injustes ennemis travaillent sans relâche à le peindre," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 400. In effect, Rousseau claims a commitment to reclaim the signature 'Rousseau' which now dictates his life, will remain for posterity, and is misrepresented in the public domain. Rousseau's publishing practices work at the same project. Though the smooth functioning of the systems of publication, censorship, and authorship depended on anonymous publication, Rousseau insists on publishing his texts under his name, even inserting his name into the titles, which creates a wrench in the system, a headache for his publishers, and legal ramifications. His *Emile* and *Social Contract* are censored and Rousseau is exiled from France in 1762, Christopher Kelly pins this commitment to the reform of his ethical principles in 1753, *Rousseau as Author*, 17, that echo the ethical posture of *parrhēsia*: an insistence on speaking truth irrespective of personal risk, for the public good, truth-telling as a moral example, against flattery (in anonymous authorship to powerful) or lies (personal vendettas in anonymous authorship).

public life as the author Rousseau. Writing as the miserable public figure 'now' on the miserable effects of the public (mis)understanding of him has a different mode, but stages and performs the same confession.

Part I ends the adventures of his young obscurity, "I left Savoy with my system of music, much as I had once left Turin with my Hero's fountain," finishing book 6 with only this cap:

> Such were the faults and errors of my youth. I have told their story with a fidelity with which my heart is content. If later, in mature years, I won honour for certain virtues, I would have related these too with equal frankness, for such was my design. But I must stop here. Time may unveil many things. If my memoirs reach posterity, perhaps one day my readers will discover what it was that I had still to say. Then they will know why I am silent.[48]

Finishing up the tale of young, obscure Rousseau, the delivery of the truth by the author now is silenced at first. Ominously, Rousseau forebodes that if posterity learns the whole of his memoirs, then they would "know why I am silent," staging the very presence of the text as under threat. The truth seems to appear against the will of the public – or whoever it was who kept him silent – until now. Rousseau's break represents the arrest of his confession, connected to the end of his youth and the enemies which silence him. In the break, there is a suspension between two paths. This paragraph floats like an allegory:[49]

> These notebooks, full of errors of every kind and which I have not even had time to read, are enough to set on the right track any lover of truth, and to provide him with the means to ascertain it through his own enquiries. Unfortunately it seems to me unlikely and even impossible that they will escape the vigilance of my enemies. If they should fall into the hands of an honest man [*or into those of M. de Choiseul's friends, if they reach M. de Coideul himself, I will not think the honour of my memory to be beyond recourse. But O heaven, protector of the innocent, defend these last testimonies to my innocence from the hands of*

[48] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 266. "Telles one été les erreurs et les fautes de ma jeunesse. J'en ai narré l'histoire avec une fidélité dont *mon coeur* est content. Si dans la suite j'honorai mon age mur de quelques vertus, je les aurois dites avec la même franchise, et c'étoit mon dessein. Mais il faut m'arrêter ici. Le tems peut lever bien les voiles. Si ma mémoire parvient à la postérité, peut être un jour elle apprendra ce que j'avois à dire. Alors on saura pourquoi je me tais," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 272.

[49] In the Pleiade, *Collected Writings*, and Oxford editions, the text includes this note fom the Geneva manuscipt, the paragraph hangs suspended on its own pages between Part I and the beginning of Part II. The final lines are crossed out, the Pleiade commentary suggests the composition and its erasure dates the writing to November 1767, Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 1370.

> *Mesdames de Bouffers, de Verdelin, and their friends. Shield at least from these two furies, to whom you abandoned him during his lifetime, the memory of an unfortunate man.*[50]

Like Augustine's suspension, the Rousseau *Confessions* stages a hiatus between two possible fates that depend on the commitment to truth. Rousseau delivers a text with the truth, and the question is whether 'we' will protect it. For the "lover of truth," the text will allow the 'right track,' will "provide him with the means to ascertain [truth] through his own enquiries," delivering the truth against the misrepresentations of Rousseau inherited from devious middlemen. The text, and its delivery from Rousseau to the public, allows the reader to pursue the truth. On the other hand, 'furies' threaten its exposure of the truth. Rousseau doubts these notebooks "will escape the vigilance of my enemies" and that the truth will come to light for posterity. Enemies would keep the lover of truth from discovering it, replace the truth with lies, and keep this true record from coming into public. Recalling the opening of the text, the 'fate of the notebooks' is in question – not its veracity, its fate – and the fates of the truth and the reader seem at risk as well.

Rousseau cries out against the injustice that might be done if these texts fall into the hand of his enemies. He hopes, "I will not think the honour of my memory to be beyond recourse" if the notebooks "fall into the hands of an honest man." The fate of the notebooks is connected to what the reader does with the text in their hand. At the moment of suspension, the text (like Augustine's moment of suspension) turns to god[51] in two elocutions with parallel parts:

[50] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 268. "Ces cahiers pleins de fautes de toute espéce et que je n'ai pas meme le tems de relire suffisent pour mettre tout ami de la vérité sur sa trace, et lui donner les moyens de s'en assurer par ses propres informations. Malheuresusement il me paroit difficile et meme impossible qu'ils échapent à la vigilance de mes ennemis. S'ils tombent entre les mains d'un honnête homme," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 273.
[51] The outcome of this suspension depends on god defending the truth against those who attack Rousseau.

But O heaven, protector of the innocent,

defend	*these last testimonies to my innocence*	*from the hands of Mesdames de Bouffers, de Verdelin, and their friends.*
Shield	*the memory of an unfortunate man*	*at least from these two furies, to whom you abandoned him during his lifetime*

Rousseau asks 'heaven' to 'defend' and 'shield' the texts (testimonies and memory) from these enemies. The juridical sense extends from the epithet for god, "protector the innocent," to the calls for his intervention, to "defend" and "shield." Rousseau is not the accuser and accused of himself, as Augustine deploys the juridical in the relation to himself, to come into concert with the truth of god. In the formulation here, Rousseau calls on god to defend himself-the-innocent against his unjust-accusers, at whose feet he lays the subjugation he suffers. Like Augustine, he suffers his subjugation due to the deficit of truth. But for Rousseau, this deficit is perpetrated by enemies against himself and his public, and he calls on god to help him in his project of delivering the truth against their threat to it.

For the innocent, Rousseau implores god to defend his text, the "last testimonies of my innocence" against his persecution at 'the hands' of these Mesdames. Rousseau asks god to defend these testimonies, to keep the evidence safe. Already the victim of the "two furies [who] abandoned him during his lifetime," he asks god to shield his memory for posterity. Interestingly, Rousseau does not plead for these enemies to judge him innocent. Rousseau pleads to god to protect the evidence of his innocence. His problem isn't a trial. The problem is a mistrial. Rousseau has already been persecuted, and by people who seek to hide the truth about him no less. So he's appealing the case, and hoping the evidence stays safe. The veracity of the evidence is moored from the outset through the claim to confession, the book he will present to

god. And as the narrative in the text will demonstrate his innocence, the text also narrates its function as the record of the truth.

The text stages a performance of this drama. The hiatus is framed by silence and confession, with two furies in the middle. The promise of silence and the demonstration of breaking it saturate the hiatus with a dramatic tension. After the break, Part II opens with a direct address of his "taking up my pen" once again. For his part, the commitment to living according to his principles requires him to turn back around and tell the truth to the public. Opening Part II, our author Rousseau begins to write again:

> After two years of silence and of patience, in spite of my resolutions, I take up my pen again. Reader, suspend your judgment on the reasons that force me to this. Before you can judge them, you must have read what I say.[52]

Even as he wanted to leave the public realm behind, the public suffers a deficit of truth. As it goes, the thing they are incorrect about is Rousseau. Being the one who does have the truth that's missing, Rousseau is compelled to tell the truth of himself to the public. Rousseau's commitment to truth requires him to speak publicly, his confession enters the fray as a correction, and so Rousseau instructs, "Reader, suspend your judgment on the reasons that force me to this. Before you can judge them, you must have read what I say." The motives are already imagined when one picks up the autobiography of a public figure. The public version of the story is already visible, before any part of the text is even recorded. But the truth of it – only available in a confession – is not. Rousseau asks the reader to suspend the judgment derived from what's circulating in the public domain, and to take the evidence under consideration with fresh eyes.

[52] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford 269. "Après deux ans de silence et de patience, malgré mes resolutions, je reprends la plume. Lecteur, suspendez vôtre jugement sur les raisons qui m'y forcent. Vous n'en pouvez juger qu'après m'avoir lu," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 277.

On going about this task 'now,' as its public, defamed, miserable, truth-telling author, he sets out the terms for this text. He makes it clear that he is writing as a different person: now he is writing about the miserable public figure as a miserable public figure. He has been robbed of his natural, open, and charming disposition. Rousseau contrasts the 'youth' that was even and moderate, where his "feeble" temperament led to a life mostly characterized by "absence of extremes," depicting a figure that was "indolent" and "tranquil," without particularly high degrees of virtue or vice, reversals or fortune. The virtues he will claim in Part II arise in the face of the extremity of suffering public life. Unlike the obscurity he enjoyed in his youth, this public figure has to share his confessions to avoid the distortions of public image. 'Now,' the work is a truth-telling labor against the forces which try to stop him, for posterity and in devotion to truth. Though his life has become more miserable, he claims the virtues which compel him to tell the truth against the miseries, deceptions, and subjugations of his situation. After his youth, our author declares:

> How different a picture I will soon have to unfold! Destiny, which for thirty years favoured my natural leanings, opposed them for the next thirty, and this perpetual conflict between my situation and my inclinations gave rise, as we shall see, to huge errors, unheard-of misfortunes, and to every virtue, except strength, that can bring honour to adversity.[53]

Suddenly, the circumstances turn and put Rousseau at odds with his natural (mild) tendencies. The circumstances lead to "huge errors" and "unheard-of misfortunes," foreshadowing the excommunication, exile, eviction, and estrangement coming soon in part II. Against the medium life before, which did not call for Rousseau to rise to any occasion, the adversity encountered

[53] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford 269. "Quel tableau different j'aurai bientot à developer! Le sort qui durant trente ans favorisa mes penchans, les contraria durant les trente autres, et de cette opposition continuelle entre ma situation et mes inclinations, on verra naitre des fautes énormes, des malheurs inouis, et toutes les vertus, excepté la force, qui peuvent honorer l'adversité," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 277.

next ends up giving rise to every virtue. With the change in himself, Rousseau also represents the shift in the mode of writing.

The writing 'from memory' has errors, but the truth it tells is unimpeachable. As the "particular object of my confessions is to make known my inner self," the point and function of the text is to convey this inner self, so even if the names and dates are incorrect, he "may make factual omissions, transpositions, errors in dates," this is not what is essential. It is the account of the inner self which is essential, and which cannot be forgotten:

> Guiding me in this undertaking I am left with only one faithful guide upon which I can rely: and that is the chain of feelings that have marked the successive stages of my being and, through them, of the events that were their cause and effect. I easily forget my misfortunes; but I cannot forget my faults, and I forget still less readily my better feelings. Their memory is too dear to me ever to be erased from my heart. I may make factual omissions, transpositions, errors in dates; but I cannot be mistaken about what I felt, not about what my feelings led me to do; and this is what principally concerns me here. The particular object of my confessions is to make known my inner self, exactly as it was in every circumstance of my life. It is the history of my soul that I promised, and to relate it faithfully I require no other memorandum; all I need do, as I have done up until now, is to look inside myself.[54]

This truth is uniquely known by Rousseau – and impossible for him to forget: his own errors and feelings. In a trial of his inner self, Rousseau becomes the only reliable and relevant source, and the confession the only way to deliver or judge the truth of this subject.

[54] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 270. "Tous les papiers que j'avois rassamblés pour suppléer à ma mémoire et me guider dans cette entreprise, passés en d'autres mains ne rentreront plus dans les miennes. Je n'ai qu'un guide fidelle sur lequel je puisse compter; c'est la *chaîne des sentimens* qui ont marqué la succession de mon être, et par eux celle des évenemens qui en ont été la cause ou l'effet. J'oublie aisément mes malheurs, mais je ne puis oublier mes fautes, et j'oublie encor moins mes bons sentimens. Leur souvenir m'est trop cher pour s'effacer jamais de mon *coeur*. Je puis faire des omissions dans les faits, des transpositions, des erreurs de dates; mais je ne puis me tromper sur ce que j'ai senti, ni sur ce que mes sentimens m'ont fait faire; et voila dequoi principalement il s'agit. L'objet propre de mes confessions est de faire connoitre exactement mon interieur dans toutes les situations de ma vie. C'est l'histoire de mon ame que j'ai promise, et pour l'écrire fidellement je n'ai pas besoin d'autres memoires: il me suffit, comme j'ai fait jusqu'au ici, de rentrer au dedans de moi," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 278.

Not hiding any relevant evidence that could support his account of his inner feelings, Rousseau also promises to collect "papers assembled for the purpose of supplementing my memory" when he can, to supplement the "only one faithful guide," his memory:

> There is, however, and very fortunately, an interval of some six or seven years for which I have reliable information provided by a collection of transcribed letters, whose originals are in the hands of M. de Peyrou. This collection, which ends in 1760, covers the whole period of my stay at the Hermitage and of my great quarrel with my so-called friends, a memorable epoch in my life and one that was the source of all my other misfortunes. As regards any more recent original letters I may still have, of which there are not very many, instead of adding them to the end of the collection, already too voluminous for me to be able to hope to conceal it from the Argus-eyes watching me, I will transcribe them into this present account wherever they seem to provide some clarification, whether this is to my advantage or my detriment; for I am not afraid that the reader will forget for a moment that it is my confessions that I am offering, and conclude that it is my apology; but nor should he expect me to conceal the truth when it speaks in my favour.[55]

Rousseau's letters are held out as admissible evidence for the trial in question, and the questions he stages: on the trial of his desires and whether or not they are subjugating, on whether he subjugated others or was subjugated by them, and who told the truth in the story of Rousseau in circulation already. As defender of the truth himself, Rousseau seeks to detail the record of the letters, their dates, and their location, whether they paint him for better or worse.

When Rousseau formulates the reason he would include these letters for the reader, it is because he believes the reader will remember that this is a confession. At this, the reader is obligated to hear the truth of Rousseau whatever it is. It's not that Rousseau has confidence that

[55] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 270. "Il y a cependant, et très heureusement, un intervalle de six à sept ans dont j'ai renseignemens surs dans un recueil transcrit de lettres dont les originaux sont dans les mains de M. du Peyrou. Ce receuil, qui finit en 1760 comprend tout le tems de mon séjour à l'Hermitage, et de ma grande brouillerie avec mes soidisans amis: époque mémorable dans ma vie et qui fut la source de tous mes autres malheurs. A l'égard des lettres originales plus récentes qui peuvent me rester, et qui sont en très petit nombre, au lieu de les transcrire à la suite de receuil, trop volumineux pour que je puisse espérer de le soustraire à la vigilence de mes argus, je les transcrirai dans cet écrit même, lorsqu'elles me paraitront fournir quelque éclaircissement, soit à mon avantage soit à ma charge: car je n'ai pas peur que le lecteur oublie jamais que je fais mes confessions pour croire que je fais mon apologie; mais il ne doit pas s'attendre non plus que je taise la vérité, lorsqu'elle parle en ma faveur," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 278. Du Peyrou brings the letters included with the manuscript to Neuchâtel library in 1794, Pleiade, 1371. The letters are included with Rousseau's *Confessions* in *Collected Writings 5*.

the reader will judge him fairly, or that the reader has good judgment, or that the reader is not trying to harm Rousseau (the possibility remains open). Rousseau is assured that the reader will not mistake the text for a defense, or fail to find in it plenty of faults and errors. But even because these faults are also included, the text is true above all else, and this truth of the text is the criterion of the fulfillment of confession here.

As Rousseau differentiates the mode of writing in Part II, he himself sets down the unifying principle across the text: "my second part has in common with the first only this same veracity."[56] The text is unified despite the transformation of the self and the confession that take place on these grounds: that it constantly tells the truth. While part I was a pleasure to write, each memory "a source of new delight," Rousseau describes himself "freely rephrasing my descriptions until I was content with what I had written." In part II, 'today,' Rousseau's work is difficult, almost impossible, forced it in spite of a heart in anguish. Rousseau presents this confession as a triumph of truth-telling against the forces opposed to it:

> Today my memory and my mind have grown feeble and are almost incapable of any work; it is only by forcing myself and with a heart heavy with anguish that I can continue with my present task. It brings back nothing but misfortunes, treacheries, perfidies, nothing but dismaying and distressing memories. I wish with all my heart that I could consign to the darkness of time everything that I have to say, instead of which, forced in spite of myself to speak, I am again reduced to hiding, to dissembling, to trying to mislead, and to demeaning myself in ways for which I was surely never intended; the ceiling above my head has eyes, the walls all around me have ears; surrounded by spies, subjected to malevolent and vigilant surveillance, anxious and abstracted, I jot down in haste on my paper a few disjointed words which I scarcely have time to reread, still less to correct. I know that, in spite of the immense barriers they heap up endlessly about me, they are nevertheless afraid that the truth will seep out through some crack. How can I help it to penetrate? I do what I can, but with little hope of success.[57]

[56] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 270. "Au reste seconde partie n'a que cette même vérité de commence avec la prémiére," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 279.
[57] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 271. "Aujourdui ma mémoire et ma tête affoiblies me rendent presque incapable de tout travail; je ne m'occupe de celui-ci que par force et le *coeur* serré de détresse. Il ne m'offre que malheurs, trahisons, perfidies, que souvenirs attristans et déchirans. Je voudrois pour tout au monde pouvoir ensevelir dans la nuit des tems ce que j'ai à dire, et forcé de parler malgré moi, je suis reduit encore à me cacher, à ruser, à tâcher de donner le change, à m'avillir aux choses pour

Rousseau imagines leaving all these events in the dark. However, under duress, Rousseau describes the need to speak. Against the wall built around him to stifle and silence the truth, and the "immense barriers they heap up endlessly about" him, Rousseau writes the truth, suffering and enduring the memories, "forced in spite of [him]self to speak." Hardly for his own sake, Rousseau delivers the text to the lover of truth with the warning:

> Let the reader judge if there is material here to compose pretty scenes and to paint them in pleasing colours. I warn anyone, in short, who is thinking of reading this book, that nothing in the course of it can guarantee him against boredom, unless it be the desire to know a man fully, and a sincere love of justice and of truth.[58]

Consider the rearrangement of the juridical scene in the Rousseau 'conversion' from the Augustinian. In the Augustinian conversion, the juridical scene was an accomplishment, a form of relationship that he adopted which allows him to finally – finally – break his subjugation. Adopting this juridical relation took labor, hearing conversion stories that induced his own. The juridical scene allows him to adopt an accusatory relation to his concupiscent desire, and change

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lesquelles j'étois le moins né; les planchers sous lesquels je suis ont des yeux, les murs qui m'entourent ont des oreilles, environné d'espions et de surveillans malveillans et vigilans, inquiet et distrait je jette à la hâte sur le papier quelques mots interrompus qu'à peine j'ai le tems de relire, encore moins de corriger. Je sais que malgré les barriéres immenses qu'on entasse sans cesse autour de moi l'on craint toujours que la vérité ne s'échappe par quelque fissure. Comment m'y prendre pour la faire percer? Je la tente avec peu d'espoir de succés," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 279.
The possibility or impossibility of accomplishing this true portrait and correcting the public image through this text is a dominant theme for criticism, and on our reading, the text stages this as its task. It's paradigmatic of Lejeune's autobiographical pact: the signature on the text claiming an identity between its author, narrator, and protagonist establishes a pact between the author and his audience, Lejeune, *Pact*, 18. Kamuf explains the impossibilities of the signature establishing the singular origin of the text precisely because the signature depends on its iterability which diffuses the origin and undermines the guarantee of this contract. Rousseau's signature ends up representing the impossibility of this project, Kamuf, *Signature Pieces*, 119. Starobinski homes in on the the deficit that haunts Rousseau in his task of laying himself bare but staying ever misunderstood in *Transparency and Obstruction*, and Derrida points out the problem plagues the medium of writing itself, ever mediating and removing Rousseau from his task of self-exposure in *Grammatology*. Indeed, the experiments of Rousseau across his autobiographical writing stage the attempts to find a genre which would make it possible for him to deliver – if not the presence, then the truth – of Rousseau to the reader. Mostefai and Christopher Kelly examine the trope of Rousseau's struggle to deliver the truth as a rhetorical strategy in his public discourse and self-figuration, *Polemique, Rousseau as Author*. In our reading of the *Confessions*, the text stages the attempt to tell the truth of Rousseau as its task, including figurations of these obstacles. Rousseau even ironizes the relation between himself and 'Rousseau' in the text, see following chapters. I am interested in the way the text composes scenes of these obstacles, and even stages its scenes of revealing the obstacles, as part of a truth game, the rules put in place, the effects of accepting their truth-game, and the political openings in their slippages.

[58] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 271. "Qu'on juge si c'est là dequoi faire des tableaux agréeables et leur donner un coloris bien attrayant! J'avertis donc ceux qui voudront commencer cette lecture que rien en la poursuivant ne peut les garantir de l'ennui, si ce n'est le desir d'achever de connoitre un homme, et l'amour sincére de la justice et de la vérité," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 279.

his wanting to love god. This ethical change was the capitulation of his ethical formation (loving truth) to fall in with his epistemological discovery (god as highest truth).

Consider the rearrangement of the elements in the Rousseau scene and the outcome of this juridical scene. In the Rousseau text, his 'conversion' and baptism utterly fail in changing him ethically or epistemologically, which turns out to be lucky enough in that – in his estimation – he was closer to living in ethical concert with the truth than the Catholic priests were anyways. However, Rousseau pitches an ethical transformation connected to truth-telling at the center of his *Confessions*, connected to its pivot from confessing-me-then to me-now-confessing, and which redresses the debt configured in the original scene of sin. As in the Augustine text, the central pivot matches the ethical-epistemological conversion from 'me then' to 'me now.' At Rousseau's conversion, he decides that against the forces which impinge on the truth, and against his mis-representation in the public, he will tell the truth (for the benefit of posterity that the true portrait of his figure will lend). Alas, he warns, his life as a public figure has been full of people obfuscating the truth of Rousseau, and this has led to miserable circumstances. Yet against these odds, pressures, and obstacles, he is in the unique position to tell the truth against the deceits that have been perpetrated, and will do so out of the virtues that have been borne from his trials. Notably, Rousseau's desires – concupiscent or otherwise – have not entered into the scene as an obstacle to truth-telling. As the domain under investigation – his internal feelings – they are perfectly admissible evidence, but this evidence will prove his virtue against the representations of his desires as a scandal. The new formulation creates a juridical scene with rearranged parts. God mediates and the innocent is under attack. Rousseau asks this mediator, god, to protect him and the truth from the attack. The readers are challenged to 'judge' his text in a trial that exposes them in turn: this text is only boring to those who do not love justice and truth.

Chapter 4: Public Trials

As for you, doctor of my inner self, clarify for me what will be the harvest of my efforts. For when the confessions of my past misdeeds – which you have forgiven and covered to make me glad in you, changing my soul through faith and your sacrament – are read about and heard, they animate the heart, to stop it sleeping in despair and saying, 'I can't.' Instead it will keep awake in its love of your mercy and the sweetness of your grace, through which everyone who is weak becomes strong when – through grace – they become aware of their own weakness. It delights good people, too, to hear the past misdeeds of those who are now free of them: they delight not because of the misdeeds, but rather because they existed once, but now are no more.[1]

– Augustine, *Confessions*

This is where my personal relations with Mme d'Houdetot end, relations about which everyone has been able to form a judgment based upon appearances and according to the dispositions of his own heart, but during which the passion that this truly lovable woman inspired in me, the most intense perhaps that any man has ever felt, was ennobled, and always will be, in our own and heaven's eyes by the rare and difficult sacrifices we both of us made to duty, honour, love, and friendship. We were each of us too exalted in the eyes of the other to be willing to degrade ourselves. Only someone unworthy of any esteem whatsoever would consent to losing one of so rare a value, and the very energy of the emotions that might have made us guilty was what prevented us from becoming so.[2]

– Rousseau, *Confessions*

[1] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb X (4), 73.
[2] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 469.

The *Confessions* of Augustine and *Confessions* of Rousseau stage themselves as testimonies in a juridical scene. The conversion scenes have set their authors up as public figures – Augustine, a Christian bishop, Rousseau, a persecuted *philosophe*. The transitions at the center of each text configure the author's confession as bearing witness to the truth before the public of his text. In the 'Parts II,' the texts stage the confessions as public testimonies of public figures before their publics. The public figures still deploy the confession as their rhetorical mode, and through this stage the effects they generate in the field of force relations, in forming themselves and others, through the 'ritual of discourse in which they tell the truth of themselves.' The scenes of their public confessions put the operations of judgment to work: in the Augustine text, by presenting and performing the accusation the truth shines on him, in the Rousseau text, by staging the trial of which he was deprived to reveal the truth that has been hidden. As they include the audience in the scenes of truth-telling, each begins to set the stage for the *Confessions*' effect in their audience as well.

The Juridical Scene

The public addessed by each text is an historical object – Augustine's and Rousseau's texts have had readerships reconstituted in new historical moments or cultural contexts. The publics of each text are also constituted by the *Confessions* – not only in the sense that the public is a domain generated by its occasion of witness, but that the confessions set themselves up – and start doing the work – of making their publics and the subjects in them.[3]

[3] For the public and its generation by a text, see Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*. For example, the Rousseau *Confessions* navigates the 'public' of the figure of 'Rousseau' and the public of his text, animating the function of the text to transform one into the other. In effect, Rousseau's text stages its operation for the 'public.' In the comparison with Rousseau, we can also note the animation of the Augustinian legacy in this public presentation and the operation of confession, raising the intersection with Hacking's notion of "Making Up People" as another operation of the text and the projection it stages of its effects. For historical contexts on publics and truth-tellers, consider Brown, *Power and Persuasion*; Lilti, *The Invention of Celebrity*; and Leventhal, *Reading after Foucault*.

From the outset, the texts have set up a juridical scene for their truth-telling operations. In the famous pear scene, Augustine's theft is presented as breaking the law of god. The scene stages the ethical-epistemological problem in juridical terms: his wanting lower things more than the highest good, the deficit of truth, and perversion of will all bring the violation of god's law. The manifestation of Augustine's concupiscent will is also connected to a juridical scene: the perversion of his will has not yet been turned to love of god; he trades in lies which protect the guilty. In the conversion scene, the guilty Augustine is now accused instead as the truth takes hold. Upon hearing conversion stories and reading the Scripture, the juridical language the narrator has used from the beginning is finally taken up by the protagonist, who 'accuses himself.' Once he has adopted the juridical relation to the self, the scene shifts from the trial to redemption. Once the juridical has been absorbed into his relation to the self, his will turns to love god, he can enjoy the ethical truth-telling practices, and partake of much more pleasant allegorical scenes. Augustine joins Chastity's outstretched arms and leaves Vanity behind. While the figure of Augustine has undergone his conversion, and internalized the juridical relation, he stages these scenes before a public. Keep in mind that bearing witness to conversion and reading Scripture won Augustine his transformation. In this chapter, we can examine how Augustine extends the picture to include the audience of this work, and our juridical scene upon hearing it.

In Rousseau's opening scene, he stands before god and public with the *Confessions* in hand as the testimony of the truth. From its opening, the texts sets up god as judge confirming the truth of the text, then demands the reader 'judge' him on these true *Confessions*.[4] In his scene

[4] Rousseau's juridical scenes resonate with traditions to configure the truth-telling as an ethical and political practice. The echo with the Augustine model also reverberates with the language of trial in the *Confession of Patrick*: "I am never weary of giving thanks to my God, who has kept me safe in the day of my trial," 53. Rousseau also resonates with the ancient tradition, compare Rousseau's claim that the scandal for which he stands condemned was actually a public good to the punishment Socrates thinks he deserves at the end of the *Apology*: "what do I deserve to pay because I have deliberately not led a quiet life but have neglected what occupied most people: wealth, household affairs, the position of general or public orator or other offices, the political clubs and factions that exist in the city? I thought myself too honest to survive if I occupied myself with those things. I

of stealing apples, he is doled out punishments he does not deserve: the juridical scene is imposed on him without cause, and deforms his naturally good will in effect. The juridical scene portrayed in the text is a farce: it cuts off his confession. The *Confessions* exposes the farce by putting this scene on trial before god, and uses it to generate a new scene. In the ribbon scene, Rousseau portrays a scene in which his confession is again constrained, and claims this failure as the sin he confesses in this new juridical scene before the Supreme Judge and fellow men. The farce of the earlier scene is occasion for the new scene. In the conversion scene, he rectifies the problems staged in the above scenes. He declares he will write his *Confessions* against his false public image. The text bears witness to this project. For Rousseau, the deficit of truth results from the failures of the earlier juridical scenes: those putting them in play have obfuscated the truth-telling they ought to reveal. Converted to telling the truth against this deficiency, Rousseau claims to tell the truth to the public, he now stages the trial to do so. The *Confessions* stands as this work, and likewise includes the audience in the new scene it puts into play.

The work is different in each: Augustine internalizes the juridical relation which opens a relation to the truth of god. Rousseau reinstates a juridical scene in which he is tried before a public in order to deliver the truth of Rousseau. Each has stakes for its public. On trial before the public, each text begins with a scene of putting oneself of trial before god: the effect exposes the public to the truth as well and incites the public's own trial by the truth. Augustine opens the

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did not follow that path that would have made me of no use either to you or to myself, but I went to each of you privately and conferred upon him what I say is the greatest benefit, by trying to persuade him not to care for any of his belongings before caring that he should be as good and as wise as possible, not to care for the city's possessions more than for the city itself, and to care for other things in the same way. What do I deserve for being such a man? Some good, men of Athens, if I must truly make an assessment according to my deserts, and something suitable. What is suitable for a poor benefactor who needs leisure to exhort you? Nothing is more suitable, gentlemen, than for such a man to be fed in the Prytaneum" *Apology* 36b-d, p.40. In the *Second Discourse*, Rousseau sets the scene: "my subject concerns man in general, I will try to adopt a language that suits all nations – or, rather, forgetting times and places, considering only the men to whom I speak, I will imagine myself in the Lyceum of Athens, rehearsing the lessons of my masters, with the likes of Plato and of Xenocrates as my judges, and the human race as my audience," Rousseau, *Political Writings*, 62 – 63. On the opening scene of the *Second Discourse* and the ethical schema this puts into play, see Kelly, *Rousseau as Author*, 140 – 166.

juridical relation to the self – lashes showing his failure to love truth – for the readers, that we might have an effect in ourselves like Augustine. Rousseau delivers the truth to his public, freeing them from the failure to see the truth and judge. In laying bare his desire as a chain that bound him to bad habits and kept him from loving truth, Augustine opens a path and incites the readers to expose themselves to truth as well, bear its burden, turn against oneself, and love truth. Rousseau details the truth of a public scandal misconstrued by the public, the moral exemplarity of his exercise of desire, and invites the reader to convert to a love of the truth and the relation to Rousseau which promises it.

Augustine

In book 10, Augustine inserts the audience of his *Confessions* into the scene and stages its effects on the reader. Its opening call to god folds in a reference to these 'witnesses'of his confession:

> You know me: let me know you, let me know even as I am known. You are the strength of my soul; enter into it and shape it to your will, so that you keep and possess it without blemish or wrinkle. This is my hope: so I declare it and rejoice in that hope, because I am rejoicing in a way that does me good. As for the other things of this life, the more people cry over them the less they are actually worth crying over; and more they are worth crying over, the less people actually do. See! You have loved truth, and whoever accomplishes truth comes to the light. I want to accomplish truth in my heart, in making my confession openly before you; but with my pen I want to do so before many witnesses.[5]

From the opening, we are set up to examine the purpose of the confessions before *our* eyes, what the confession to god is doing in front of 'us.'The formulation and performance are ritual: he

[5] "Cognoscam te, cognitor meus, cognoscam sicut et cognitus sum. Virtus animae meae, intra in eam et coapta tibi, ut habeas et possideas sine macula et ruga. Haec est mea spes: ideo loquor et in ea spe gaudeo, quando sanum gaudeo. Cetera vero vitae huius tanto minus flenda quanto magis fletur, et tanto magis flenda quanto minus fletur in eis. Ecce enim veritatem dilexisti, quoniam qui facit eam venit ad lucem. Volo eam facere *in cordo meo coram te in confessione; in stilo autem meo coram multis testibus*," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb X 1. (1), 69. Ruden translates the final clause: "I want to perform the truth in my own heart, in your presence, in my testimony; and with my pen I want to peform it before many witnesses," Ruden, *Confessions*, 277.

declares the benefits of his extension to god and exclaims in a mode of extension to god.[6] Augustine happily stretches towards god instead of the lower things. However, as Augustine establishes this posture, principle, and performance, he also inserts its witness into the picture. Just as he used to be pulled towards these lower things, so other people still cry over worthless things. Drawing together the effects of his truth-telling with his audience, he opens his confession to these witnesses: "I want to accomplish truth in my heart, in making my confession openly before you; but with my pen I want to do so before many witnesses."

Restating the case for the confession,[7] Augustine asks god about these witnesses and their hesitation to confess themselves:

> What have I to do with other people, that they hear my confessions, as if they are going to cure all my weaknesses? They are all inquisitive to know about the lives of others, but lazy when it comes to amending their own. Why do they seek to hear from me who I am, when they do not want to hear from you who they are themselves?[8]

Augustine points out that 'people' are hardly interested in 'amending their own' lives. The hypocrisy of poring over the details of *his* life when they are not interested in amending their own sparks a rhetorical trail. Instead of the question: 'why can they ask me anything about my life, but I cannot ask them anything about theirs,' Augustine asks: 'Why do they seek to hear from me who I am, when they do not want to hear from you who they are themselves?' Augustine does not battle with his audience over an even trade, a confession for a confession,

[6] O'Donnell claims the writing becomes an activity of the mystical ascent learned at Ostia from the opening of book 10, comparing the mystical experience narrated in book 9 with the structure of book 10, which carries along the audience of the text, *Commentary III*, 151.

[7] Augustine points out, "after all, Lord, what is there of myself that could stay hidden before you…even if I did not want to make confession to you? I could hide you from myself: but I cannot hide myself from you…unless I am in you – I am pleasing neither to you nor to myself," *Confessions*, Loeb X 1. (1), 69.

[8] "Quid mihi ergo est cum hominibus, ut audiant confessiones meas, quasi ipsi sanaturi sint omnes languores meos? Curiosum genus ad cognoscendam vitam alienam, desidiosom ad corrigendam suam. Quid a me quaerunt audire qui sim, qui nolunt a te audire qui sint?" Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb X 3. (3), 71. O'Donnell claims the move places authority in the speaker, *Commentary III*, 159. On our lens, it's only 'authority' of the speaker to the extent that the speaker has exposed itself to truth; the text configures the authority of the speaker as the site of bearing witness to someone who exposed themselves to god's truth.

solicited through exchange. Comparison solicits our confession: Augustine's confession to god invites our confession to god. The set up presents the audience with the burden of comparing their interest in reading Augustine's truth, revealed in throwing himself open to god, to their own willingness – or unwillingness – to throw themselves open to god. The move makes the reader consider the 'truth of themselves' that would be opened by this turn.

Notice how the composition does not position judgment between the author and audience: Augustine does not accuse the audience of not confessing, he accuses himself of loving sin. He does not ask them to confess, he asks god – in front of them – why they wouldn't. He even argues that he could not judge the truth of the truths they tell; like his own, the confession of truth is given to god. God verifies the confession. Augustine writes, "And when they hear from me personally about myself, how do they know whether I am telling the truth, since no one knows what motivates another person, except for the spirit of that person within themselves?"[9] The audience cannot judge whether his confession is true, but this is irrelevant. The truth of oneself is manifested in confession because it is given to god. Augustine explains: "But if they hear about themselves from you, they will not be able to say, 'The Lord is lying,' After all, what does hearing from you about themselves *mean*, if not knowing themselves?"[10] In effect of each person 'hearing from' god about themselves, the 'truth' of the 'truth of each person' is not in question. The question is instead whether each will turn to god and confront the truth of themselves. This problem does not discourage Augustine from making his confession publicly,[11] and the public confession to his witnesses holds out the possibility of changing them.

[9] "Et unde sciunt, cum a me ipso de me ipso audiunt, an verum dicam, quandoquidem nemo scit hominum quid agatur in homine, nisi spiritus hominis qui in ipso est?" Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb X 3. (3), 71.
[10] "Si autem a te audiant de se ipsis, non poterunt dicere, 'mentitur dominus.' Quid est enim a te audire de se nisi cognoscere se?" Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb X 3. (3), 71.
[11] Augustine writes: "Because love belies all things, at any rate among those whom it unites and bonds to itself, I too, Lord, will therefore go on confessing to you so that others can hear. I cannot prove to them that I am telling the truth. But as for those whose ears love has made open to me, they believe me;" "Sed quia *caritas* omnia credit, inter eos utique quos conexos sibimet unum

In setting the scene and confessing himself to god, Augustine opens the effects of this confession for those who hear it:

> What will be the harvest of my efforts. For when the confessions of my past misdeeds – which you have forgiven and covered to make me glad in you, changing my soul through faith and your sacrament – are read about and heard, they animate the heart, to stop it sleeping in despair and saying, 'I can't.' Instead it will keep awake in its love of your mercy and the sweetness of your grace, through which everyone who is weak becomes strong when – through grace – they become aware of their own weakness. It delights good people, too, to hear the past misdeeds of those who are now free of them: they delight not because of the misdeeds, but rather because they existed once, but now are no more.[12]

As he tells it, the confession of "past misdeeds" opens a relationship to god that heals Augustine. He extends the benefit to others: the confession can "animate the heart, to stop sleeping in despair," to stop saying "I can't" and start keeping "awake in its love of your mercy." Bearing witness to his confession sparks a transformation in the audience. For those who are weak it could make them strong, and for those free of misdeeds, it gives them 'delight.' Just as the story of other Christian converts sparks his own, Augustine confesses before us to change us – if we are those "whose ears love has made open to me."[13] His confessions create a groundswell of emotions to carry these listeners and ultimately form a community.

This is the harvest of Augustine's confession: the formation of himself in relation to god, and the effects of making this confession publicly before a community:

> This is the harvest of my confessions, not as the kind of person I once was, but the person I am now: that I make this confession not only before you in secret exultation combined with trembling, and in secret sorrow combined with hope; but also in the hearing of those sons of men who are believers, companions in my joy and sharers in the transience of humanity. These are my fellow citizens and

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facit, ego quoque, domine, etiam, sic tibi confiteor ut audiant homines, quibus demonstrare non possum an vera confitear. Sed credunt mihi quorum mihi aures *caritas* aperit," *Confessions*, Loeb X 3. (3), 71.

[12] "Quo fructu ista faciam, eliqua mihi. Nam confessiones praeteritorum malorum meorum, quae remisisti et texisti ut beares me in te, mutans animam mean fide et sacramento tuo, cum leguntur et audiuntur, excitant *cor* ne dormiat in desperatione et dicat, 'non possum,' sed evigilet in amore misericordiae tuae et dulcedine gratiae tuae, qua potens est omnis infirmus qui sibi per ipsam fit conscius infirmitatis suae. Et delectat bonos audire praeterita mala eorum qui iam carent eis, nec ideo delectat quia mala sunt, sed quia fuerunt et non sunt," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb X (4), 73.

[13] "Quorum mihi aures *caritas* aperit," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb X 3. (3), 73.

> my fellow travelers, who go before me and who follow after, and who have a share in my life. These people are your servants and my brothers: and it is your will that they be your sons and my masters, for you have ordered me to serve them if I want to abide with you.[14]

Augustine calls those who hear the confessions – and believe them because they love god – "my fellow citizens and my fellow travelers," and saturates the community with relations, with obligations before god, and claims to him: "There people are your servants and my brothers: and it is your will that they be your sons and my masters, for you have ordered me to serve them if I want to abide with you in accordance with your ways." The witnesses listening to the confession Augustine presents 'now' as a public bishop are bound together in a community, served by Augustine, and altogether in accordance with god's ways.

While the relations among Augustine and his community are cast in terms of service, family, and citizenship, the relation of each member to god is cast in terms of obedience and redemption. The juridical scene reappears: not as the accusation of the one confessing by his audience (Augustine is not accused by his readers, nor his fellows judged by Augustine), but as the accusation against the one confessing by the truth.

> To such people as you command me to serve I shall explain not who I once was, but the kind of person I now am, and who I shall remain. Even so, I do not judge myself. This is the way I should be heard. After all, Lord, you are the one who judges me. Even if no human individual knows what is proper to that individual except their spirit (which dwells within them), nevertheless there is a part of each person that not even that person's spirit within them can know. You, though, know everything about that person, Lord, for you made them.[15]

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[14] "Hic est fructus confessionum mearum, non qualis fuerim sed qualis sim, ut hoc confitear non tantum coram te secreta exultatione cum tremore et secreto maerore cum spe, sed etiam in auribus credentium filiorum hominum, sociorum gaudii mei et consortium mortalitatis meae, civium meorum et mecum peregrinorum, praecedentium et consequentium et comitum vitae meae. Hi sunt servi tui, fratres mei, quos filios tuos esse voluisti dominos meos, quibus iussisti ut serviam, si volo tecum de te vivere," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb X 4. (6), 77. O'Donnell notes the pastoral theme in the passage, *Commentary III*, 161. Foucault emphasizes the economy of souls in pastoral power, the field of force relations generated by and generating the economy of sin, confession, and salvation, Foucault, *Security, Territoy, Population*, 192 – 193. The *Confessions* text configures its operation working in this economy. To do so, we might also consider how the text uses the 'economy of glory,' in which self-figurations in the texts trade in 'glory' as a rhetorical and political currency, Morrissey, *Economy of Glory*. While the author directs the glory generated through the text to god, the glory directed to god by the text supports its operation in the economy of souls, which Foucault points out, is laden with operations of power.

[15] "Indicabo ergo talibus qualibus iubes ut serviam, non quis fuerim, sed quis iam sim et quis adhuc sim; sed neque me ipsum diiudico. Sic itaque audiar. Tu enim, domine, diiudicas me, quia etsi nemo scit hominum quae sunt hominis, nisi spiritus hominis

While I raise the juridical scene to understand the operations of the confessions, it is necessary to consider the nature of the judgment. In this passage, Augustine does not present a scene of judgment in which one tells god what god does not know, or in which something comes to light from his own discernment. In this formulation, the scene entails an exposure of oneself to god. As ever, this exposure does not change anything in god's knowledge of the truth. The purpose of the exposure is the transformation of the self that occurs through it. In other words, the judgement is the scene of exposing oneself to the truth which illuminates oneself.

The principle might be explained through Augustine's passage on the *veritas lucens*. While the illumination of the truth of the self, and the confrontation with the truth of oneself, and the confession of the truth of oneself are boons for Augustine, they pose a forbidding obstacle. The desire to know, love, and follow truth can be overruled by the prospect of having this light shone on the self. Acted out in his own earlier confession scene, Augustine explains the hesitation and aversion to the truth, and the desire to protect oneself from this exposure:

> Why does truth spawn hatred? Why does a person who belongs to you, and who foretells what is true, become an enemy of others – even though those other people love the blessed life, which is none other than enjoyment of the truth? It must be because they love the truth, but in a way that any of them who love something else still long for the thing that they love to be the truth: and because they do not want to make a mistake, they are unwilling to be convinced that they are in the wrong. So they hate the truth, on account of the thing that they love in place of truth. They love truth when it shines out, but they hate it when it shows them up as being in the wrong. Because they do not want to be deceived, yet are willing to deceive others, they love truth when it shows itself, and they hate it when it shows them up. And so truth will have its revenge upon them. All those who are unwilling for truth to reveal them in their real colors will be exposed perforce: whereas truth will not disclose itself to them.[16]

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qui in ipso est, tamen est aliquid hominis quod nec ipse scit spiritus hominis qui in ipso est. tu autem, domine, scis eius omnia, quia fecisti eum," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb X 4. (6) – 5. (7), 77-79.

[16] "Cur autem veritas parit odium et inimicus eis factus est homo tuus verum praedicans, cum ametur beata vita, quae non est nisi gaudium de veritate, nisi quia sic amatur veritas ut, quicumque aliud amant, hoc quod amant velint esse veritatem, et quia falli nollent, nolunt convinci quod falsi sint? Itaque propter eam rem oderunt veritatem, quam pro veritate amant. *Amant eam lucentem, oderunt eam redarguentem*. Quia enim falli nolunt et fallere volunt, amant eam cum se ipsa indicat, et oderunt eam cum eos ipsos indicat. Inde retribuet eis ut, qui se ab ea manifestari nolunt, et eos nolentes manifestet et eis ipsa non sit

People who claim to "love the blessed life, which is none other than enjoyment of the truth" can declare someone who "belongs to you, and who foretells what is true" an enemy. Augustine explains that truth spawns such hatred because those who claim to want the blessed life cannot actually accept the truth if they are still attached to lower things, and the truth exposes this. In this scene, those who only claim to love truth have another priority that distorts their ability to see the truth. Instead, they "long for the thing that they love to be the truth." As it goes, they might love something lower than the truth, and the attachment to this prevents seeing the truth.

The critique is that people do not love the truth no matter what it is and no matter what constraints it makes on them or sins it reveals. Whatever 'loves' they already have (which, if not the truth, must be the lower things) are commitments they cannot shake, or cannot concede are wrong. They do not want to be wrong; so when a truth proves them wrong, they hate it. Between the "love of the truth" on the one hand, and the "hatred of the truth" that shows them to be wrong, the description raises the ethical concern of the truth: it does not merely show up and reveal itself – *veritas lucens*. The truth also reveals 'me' – *veritas redarguens*. The truth reveals, exposes, and effects me: it can render me right or mistaken, exacting revenge or sparking conversion. The encounter with the truth is ethical, seen or unseen, accepted or rejected, by a subject exposed for the truth to disclose itself.

In the end, Augustine holds out this hope:

> And so, and so – so the human mind, even though it wants to stay hidden, blind and feeble, shameful and unfit, wants nothing to stay hidden from itself. The very opposite is its reward: that the human mind cannot be concealed from the truth, whereas truth itself remains concealed from that mind. Yet even while it is in that pitiful state it prefers the enjoyment of things that are true, rather than falsehoods.

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manifesta," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb X (34), 129. Ruden translates: "they love the truth when it discloses itself but hate it when it discloses them. For this reason, the truth will give them their due, forcibly revealing all those unwilling to be revealed, but not itself being revealed to them," Ruden, *Confessions*, 310. I am endebted to Marion's readings of the *veritas lucens* and *veritas redarguens*. For Marion's interpretation of the relation to truth, see Marion, *Self's Place*, 101 – 145.

> So it will be blessed if – without any troublesome interference – it comes to rejoice only in that genuine truth in which all individual truths partake.[17]

Even when people want to resist the truth, or hide themselves from it, this is impossible. And this is fortunate, because it is in the opening to the truth that the blessed life and enjoyment of god are held out as possibilities. Augustine's *Confessions* can help. The witnesses are offered a model and means for their own ethical-epistemological transformation in the shape of the confession that stages and acts out Augustine's exposure to the truth before a public.

Rousseau

One of Rousseau's most notorious scandals is his authorship of *Julie* and suspected affair with Sophie d'Houdetot. The kernel of the issue is that the *Julie* is an epistolary novel about a scandalous relationship, which takes place roughly in the space where Rousseau developed a scandalous attachment to Sophie.[18] On the possibility that the novel betrays evidence of an affair with Sophie, Rousseau is accused on a number of counts: she was married and mistress to his friend; the sister-in-law of his patron Mme d'Épinay, whom he jilted to be with her; while also neglecting Thérèse and her mother, whom he had dragged out to the country without supporting. To make matters worse, the opening pages of the text create an ambiguity in the fictional or real status of the story, casting intrigue around Rousseau's identity with its hero, and confirming the worst suspicions of his enemies, judges, and supposed friends.[19]

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[17] "Sic, sic, etiam sic animus humanus, etiam sic caecus et languidus, turpis atque indecens latere vult, se autem ut lateat aliquid non vult. Contra illi redditur, ut ipse non lateat veritatem, ipsum autem veritas lateat. Tamen etiam sic, dum miser est, veris mavult gaudere quam falsis. Beatus ergo erit, si nulla interpellante molestia, de ipsa – per quam vera sunt omnia – sola veritate gaudebit," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb X (34), 129 – 131.

[18] For a biographical account of Rousseau's time at the Hermitage, see Cranston, *Noble Savage*, 21 – 54, on the relationship between Rousseau and d'Houdetot, the scandal, subsequent fallings out, and correspondences, see *Noble Savage*, 55 – 103.

[19] On the ambiguity generated by the way Rousseau positions himself in the editor's preface to *Julie*, See Kelly, *Rousseau As Author*, 24 – 25.

In his *Confessions,* Rousseau writes to his public as a man already condemned. On this count, Rousseau delivers the confession that was missing from his public mistrial. In the confession, he shines the truth of himself known only through his confession, which shows up the public that has already judged him. In this negotiation, Rousseau's destitute situation suddenly becomes a force in his accusation and exposure of his public.

I will treat the progression of passages where Rousseau builds his case. The account in the *Confessions* of writing *Julie* and his relation to Sophie confess the origins of his writing and the nature of his relation to Sophie. In the process, he stages a trial for himself so he can declare the confession before the public, and, in effect, accomplish the effects of its truth-telling. I will examine the internal state Rousseau describes before he begins writing, during his writing, and in his time with Sophie. By the end, Rousseau transforms the confession and stages the ideal reception of his text – loving Rousseau.

At the time, Rousseau describes living in a fairly ideal set of circumstances. His friend Mme d'Épinay built a home for him and Thérèse on her property, free of the pressures and hypocrisies of Paris life he had come to hate, giving him freedom to do as he pleases in peace. With his companion Thérèse and his project set out, he could live happily and freely at his 'Hermitage.'[20] Alas, Rousseau describes, against all appearances, he was not free to do as he pleased, because his time could be commanded at any moment by his patron Mme d'Épinay. His writing project is abandoned and his relationship with Thérèse is poisoned by his mother-in-law. These constraints make life impossible for Rousseau, who refuses to subjugate anyone else to his will and finds himself bound against his will to constraints from others. In other words, Rousseau again finds himself in a situation of subjugation. Because Rousseau – consistent as ever in this

[20] On the friendships among Diderot, d'Épinay, and Grimm before the Hermitage, see Rousseau, *Confessions,* Book 8; Cranston, *Noble Savage,* 13 – 20.

principle – refuses to impinge on anyone else, he turns to the realm of imagination as a space in which he can enjoy himself, without putting constraints on others, while enjoying freedom from constraints on himself. The *Julie* begins in this imagined realm.

Rousseau Alone

Though "living in delightful solitude, remote from any other dwelling; master in my own house, I could live there as I chose, without having to submit to anyone's control," the self-mastery depicted is limited by constraints of friendships, relationships, his patron, and the visiting public: "this same situation imposed duties on me, pleasurable to fulfil, but indispensable. My whole freedom was precarious: more constrained than if I had been under orders, I was supposed to be so of my own volition. There was not a single day when I could say to myself on rising: I will use this day exactly as I please."[21] Where supposedly acting of his "own volition': the premise belies his actual constraints. This tension leads to a misjudgment of him: if Rousseau were completely free, one would wonder at the problem. The recalibration of the problems of freedom and constraint around the subjugation borne out of social relations correct the idea of freedom and the misinterpretation of Rousseau's situation, showing how Rousseau was in fact constrained even at the Hermitage. Thérèse eludes him due to external constraints in the shape of her mother, friends, and family. While he expects friends to bind themselves to him with the same esteem that he does to them without subjugating his will to theirs, Rousseau claims they have a "determination to control all my desires," the cardinal sin for Rousseau, and become "more of a torment than a pleasure to me, because of their obstinacy,

[21] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 415. "J'avois une demeure isolée dans une solitude charmante; maitre chez moi j'y pouvois vivre à ma mode sans que personne eut à m'y controller: mais cette habitation m'imposait des devoirs, doux à remplir, mais indispensables. Toute ma liberté n'étoit que précaire; plus *asservi* que par des ordres, je devois l'être par ma *volonté*: je n'avois pas un seul jour dont en me levant je pusse dire: j'employerai ce jour comme il me plaira," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 425.

their perversity even, in opposing all my tastes, my inclinations, my way of life."[22] Besides his personal relations, Rousseau claims, "I was subject not only to the demands made on me by Mme d'Épinay's arrangements, but also, and more importunately still, to those imposed on me by the public and by chance callers."[23] Rousseau groups the 'public' into the list of those who constrain him, his body, his time: Mme d'Épinay, Thérèse's mother, his friends. Even out of adoration, callers seeking his time and attention join in binding his constraints. Even before the public judges him guilty, it starts to be culpable in his chain of misfortunes.[24]

The public has a second accusation. Not only ruining his chance of freedom, we judged him for the novel he writes to escape these constraints. In the scene, Rousseau stands as the innocent accused: at the Hermitage, so worthy of love and so deprived of it, about to write a lovely epistolary novel. Once, he escaped the public constraint in writing *Julie,* but we blamed him for this. To correct a public misjudgment of him, Rousseau the author scribbles away his confessions, in order to get any freedom again, because the constraints are already so heavy, and the judgments of *Julie* so untrue and unjust. Rousseau still cannot do what he wants with his time, and we are culpable. In the scene of telling the truth now, putting himself on the stand and staging a confession in the trial of himself, Rousseau exposes the public and holds open the freedom that truth promises for both us and Rousseau. Hopefully, we will not be culpable again.

[22] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 415. "Cependant cette amitié m'étoit plus tourmentante que douce, par leur obstination, par leur affectation même à contrarier tous mes gouts, mes penchans, ma maniére de vivre, tellement qu'il me suffisoit de paroitre desirer une chose qui n'interessoit que moi seul, et qui ne dependoit pas d'eux, pour les voir tous se liguer à l'instant-même pour me contraindre d'y renoncer. Cette obstination de me controller en tout dans mes fantaisies, d'autant plus injuste que loin de controller les leurs je ne m'en informois pas même, me devint si cruellement onéreuse qu'enfin je ne recevois pas une de leurs lettres sans sentir en l'ouvrant un certain effroi qui n'étoit que trop justifié par sa lecture," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 425.
[23] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 415. "Outre ma dépendence des arrangements de Mme d'Épinay, j'en avois une autre bien plus importune du public et des survenans. La distance où j'étois de Paris n'empêchoit pas qu'il ne me vint journellement des tas de desoeuvrés qui ne sachant que faire de leur tems prodigoient le mien sans aucun scruple," *Confessions*, Pleiade, 425.
[24] The 'chain' Augustine invokes before his conversion persists for Rousseau in the 'misfortunes' that still plague him, consider, "small links joined themselves together into the bond I called my chain" Augustine, Confessions, Loeb VIII 5. (10), 373, and Rousseau, "the long chain of my misfortunes" *Confessions*, Oxford, 340.

At the Hermitage, Rousseau escapes into imagination to find freedom while suffering an excess of feeling and a deficit of object. He cries out, asking how it was possible that he never "found a friend who was all my own, a true friend, such as I felt I had myself been made to be" nor ever "have burned with its flame for some definable object" considering the fact that he had such a "naturally expansive soul."[25] Of course, we know why he 'never found an object'; it is because in all of his relations his feeling were met with constraints. Once again, Rousseau's feelings are not the source of the problem, but the way others generate from them constraints on Rousseau. But still, he feels the press of time,[26] the sense that his natural feelings indicate destiny ordains for him to experience them fully, and though he even relishes shedding tears,[27] finds a way to enjoy his passions without causing subjugation.

Rousseau turns to his imagination: "during the loveliest season of the year, in the month of June, beneath the fresh boughs, to the singing of the nightingale and the babbling of the streams," his memories populate his thinking with "all the objects that had filled me with emotion when I was young": old acquaintances, affairs, and "the dinner at the Chateau de Thônes and of my encounter with the two charming girls, which had taken place during the same season and in somewhat similar place to that in which I now found myself." The collection conjures up a scene in which Rousseau imagines himself surrounded by the figures: "I saw myself surrounded by a *seraglio of houris* composed of my old acquaintances, to whom I was drawn by desires that were not new to me either."[28] While saturated with desire, the scene has a

[25] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 416. "Comment se pouvait-il qu'avec une ame naturellement expansive, pour qui vivre c'étoit aimer, je n'eusse pas trouvé jusqu'alors un ami tout à moi, un véritable ami, moi qui me sentois si bien fait pour l'être? Comment se pouvait-il qu'avec des sens si combustibles, avec un *coeur* tout pétri d'amour je n'eusse pas du moins une fois brulé de sa flamme pour un objet déterminé?" Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 426.
[26] On the theme of death as an impetus for ethical practice, consider Foucault's interpretations of Greco-Roman *premeditatio malorum*, the influence of the Latin tradition for Rousseau, the invocation at the opening of book 8 dedicating his life to truth for posterity in light of his poor health, and, also, the opening passage addressing the supreme judge as the scene of the confession.
[27] This rhetorical move *verifies* his claim to sentiment, Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 416.
[28] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 416 – 417.

moral sense as Rousseau composes it. He turns to memory to avoid subjugating those around him, or submitting himself to the subjugations of others. He finds an exercise to bear his torments: the scenes are innocent in their origin and innocent in their recall. Rousseau insists "innocence" characterized the scenes of desire he enjoys, described as "sweet" and "sweeter still by the innocence with which it was pervaded."[29] Both in the moment and in the narrative, the scenes are absent sin, not subjugating anyone by impinging on them, or obfuscating the truth. He insists on their positive effects in him, not giving rise to temptations, but a space to happily exercise his passions.

The separation between desire and subjugation holds firm through this passage. Rousseau didn't "reach the point of forgetting my age and my situation," despite the "amorous intoxication" inspired by these memories. In full appreciation of the social constraints and how they operate, he does not "flatter… myself that I could still inspire love…I did not hope for this, I did not even desire it."[30] Thus while disturbing our image of Rousseau as the "grave citizen of Geneva, the austere Jean-Jacques," he maintains his innocence even when he is overtaken by passions and returns to the "the passionate shepherd of old."[31] The passion may "seize" him, but he hardly deseves the "unforeseen and terrible crisis of misfortune into which it precipitated me."[32] For Rousseau, the subject of desire need not be a subject of law to be free.

[29] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 417. "*Mon sang* s'allume et petille, la tête me tourne malgré mes cheveux déja grisonnans, et voila le grave Citoyen de Genève, voila l'austére Jean Jacques à près de quarante cinq ans redevenu tout à coup le berger extravagant. L'ivresse dont je fus saisi, quoique si prompte et si folle, fut si durable et si forte, qu'il n'a pas moins fallu pour m'en guérir que la crise imprévue et terrible des malheurs où elle m'a précipité. Cette ivresse, à quelque point qu'elle fut portée n'alla pourtant pas jusqu'à me faire oublier mon âge et ma situation," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 427.
[30] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 417.
[31] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 417.
[32] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 417.

Julie

Before Rousseau tells us of writing as a solution to his "intoxication," he arrests our position as reader-judge and challenges our comfortable role on the bench with: "What, in this situation, did I do?"[33] Rousseau pulls the reader out of their place, and plops them in a position next to Rousseau. Staggering the flow – and power relations – of the discourse, the flip halts the stream of the confessional speech, the positions of 'listener' and 'speaker,' and brings the reader to judgment. If we would do worse than Rousseau, we have to exalt him for having found a sensitive and sensible, non-constraining response to this situation. Lonely and intoxicated with emotion, "since real beings were beyond my reach," Rousseau "plunged into the realms of fantasy and, seeing nothing in existence that was worthy of my rapture… sought nourishment for it within an ideal world that my inventive imagination had soon peopled with creatures after my own heart."[34]

In the world of fantasy, Rousseau is not only free from constraints, but free to "drink deep of the most delicious sentiments ever to enter the heart of man."[35] Rousseau perfectly enjoys the imagined company: "I invented for myself whole companies of perfect creatures, whose virtue was as celestial as their beauty, and of true, tender, and faithful friends, such as I had never known here below." Besides these perfect creatures, the "true, tender, and faithful friends" Rousseau also imagines for himself, "such as I had never known here below," offers a welcome separation from the impingements of the people around him. He is happier to stay "soaring in the empyrean, in the midst of the charming objects by which I had surrounded

[33] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 417.
[34] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 417. "L'impossibilité d'atteindre aux êtres réels me jetta dans le pays des chiméres, et ne voyant rien d'existant qui fut digne de mon délire, je le nourris dans un monde idéal que mon imagination créatrice eut bientot peuplé d'êtres selon mon *coeur*," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 427.
[35] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 417 – 418.

myself."[36] When someone interrupts his reverie, he is ripped from his space of free enjoyment into the world of constraints.

In his imagined scenes, Rousseau invents societies in which the irruption of third parties also poses no impingement. In his enchanted world, he "pictured to myself love and friendship, those two idols of my heart, in the most ravishing of guises,"[37] two women, with a friendship between them. When adding St Preux, he imagines: "neither rivalry, nor quarreling, nor jealousy, because it costs me dear to imagine painful feelings, and because I did not want to mar this happy scene with anything that might dishonour nature."[38] Rousseau's theme of threes reinvents the juridical scene, where the third party acts as judge of the relation. Rousseau imagines an ideal situation (like de Warens and Anet[39]) in which the love between two is confirmed by the third party, who loves as well, but more importantly who does not use the love relation to judge, condemn, punish, and subjugate those in it. As Rousseau debunks the accusations against him, he prefigures a new response, and starts building a moral tale.

This is the origin of Julie, who Rousseau starts building a scene around, giving the most fitting location to her moral ideal: "anxious to place my characters in a setting that was worthy of them, I reviewed one by one all the loveliest places I had seen during my travels, but could find no groves fresh enough, no countryside touching enough for my liking."[40] He settles on the most ideal spot he can remember ("imagination, wearied with inventing"), the lake by Mme de Warens birthplace, which has the power to "ravish the senses, move the heart, and uplift the soul, prevailed in the end, and I installed my young wards in Vevey."[41] Rousseau has to write down

[36] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 418.
[37] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 420.
[38] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 420.
[39] On Mme de Warens and Claude Anet, see Rousseau, *Confessions*, books 2 – 4; Cranston, *Early Life*.
[40] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 420 – 421.
[41] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 421. "Pour placer mes personnages dans un séjour qui leur convint…Le contraste des positions, la richesse et la varieté des sites, la magnificence, la majesté et l'ensemble qui *ravit les sens, émeut le coeur, élève*

the situations he imagines when he is "seized with the impulse to set down on paper some of the situations they suggested to me."[42] While these writings are eventually collected and reassembled into the novel *Julie,* they began as "random" "jotting" of "letters," "without sequence or continuity, and, when I decided to thread them together, was often greatly puzzled as to how this might be done."[43] Writing springs from his internal realm, its affective effects in him, the pleasure he takes in the company of the imagined companions. Rousseau rebuts the idea that anything in his social world inspired this book: it was written to escape it. With no sequential logic to the stories, scenes, and letters – even to Rousseau himself; there was no narrative to discover, no secret story behind the text. Rousseau's *Confessions* reveals that the confessions of the scandalous text only reveal a turn to fantasy, and refuses the confusion of his desire with sin.

Rousseau answers the accusations for writing these fictional scenes: that they are scandalous, and that it is inconsistent for Rousseau to write them after he has publicly argued a case against fiction,[44] defending this writing with three points: first, that he "reserved for myself the right to decide later on whether or not I would show my work to anyone else; for I did not as yet suppose that I would go so far as to publish it."[45] Rousseau responds to "the shame I felt at having to contradict myself so obviously and so publicly" with the full affective spectrum of a penitent, he "reproaches himself," "blushes," "vexed."[46] But he is not vexed by his desires

l'ame, achevérent de me déterminer, et j'établis à Vevai mes jeunes pupilles," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 431. The Pleiade commentary notes the chronology of *Julie* and the relationship between genres of writing moral exercise, 1481.

[42] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 421.

[43] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 421.

[44] Rousseau argued against Geneva opening a theater and fiction as a mode of moral improvement in the *Letter to d'Alembert* (1758).

[45] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 425.

[46] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 425. "Mon grand ebarras étoit la honte de me démentir ainsi moi-même si nettement et si hautement. Après les principes sévéres que je venois d'établir avec tant de fracas, après les maximes austéres que j'avois si fortement prêchées, après tant d'invectives mordantes contre les livres efféminés qui respiroient l'amour et la molesse, pouvoit-on rien imaginer de plus inattendu, de plus choquant, que de me voir tout d'un coup m'inscrire de ma propre main parmi les auteurs de ces livres que j'avois si durement censurés? Je sentois cette inconsequence dans toute sa force, je me la reprochois, j'en rougissois, je m'en dépitois: mais tout cela ne put suffire pour me ramener à la raison. *Subjugué* completement il fallut me soumettre à tout risque, et me résoudre à braver le qu'en dira-t-on; sauf à délibérer dans la suite si je me resoudrois à monter mon ouvrage ou non: car je ne supposois pas encore que j'en vinsse à le publier," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 434 – 435.

themselves, or in the pleasure he takes from them. With the *contradiction* as the sin to confess, the remedy is a confession with *consistency*, which apologizes for inconsistency (not desire) and takes consistency in telling his true sentiments as its remedy. Second, that he had no choice but to write it because his sentiment was too strong, and that writing actually restored his reason, "I blushed for it, I was vexed by it; but none of this was enough to restore me to reason," the writing serves a personal moral benefit, and, finally, that the writings served a public moral benefit. After submitting to the seduction of these ideals figures which overtake his will, and writing these scenes, Rousseau claims, "this was certainly the best use to which such follies could have been put; my love of the good, which is never absent from my heart, turned them to useful ends, from which mortality itself might have benefited."[47] Down to its 'voluptuous scenes,' which "would have lost their charm if the gentle palette of innocence had been missing," Rousseau explains text demonstrates moral principles:

> A girl who gives way to weakness is an object of pity, whom love may make interesting and who is often no less lovable; but who can witness without indignation the spectacle of fashionable morals? And is there anything more revolting than the arrogance of the faithless wife who, openly trampling underfoot her every duty, claims that her husband should be overcome with gratitude for the tender mercy she is showing him in choosing not to get caught in the act?[48]

Even in the case of succumbing to passions, the greater moral problem for Rousseau is deceit, and claiming credit for perpetrating a deceit is an outrage. The moral problem posed by the "faithless wife," is the "arrogance" of wanting credit for "choosing not to get caught in the act." More than the affair, Rousseau criticises awarding credit for discretion. This is consistent; it would grate Rousseau that people honor a moral code which actually harms one another, but

[47] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 425. "C'étoit assurement le meilleur parti qui se put tirer de mes folies: l'amour du bien, qui n'est jamais sorti de *mon coeur* les tourna vers des objets utiles et dont la morale eut pu faire son profit. Mes tableaux voluptueux auroient perdu toutes leurs graces si le doux coloris de l'innocence y eut manqué," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 435.
[48] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 425.

would be discreet about it, and get credit for both in turn. The figure of the faithless wife demonstrates this principle, claiming credit for "gratitude" and "tender mercy" while "trampling underfoot her every duty" because she has fulfilled that higher standard of "fashionable morals": discretion, appearance, artifice. Clearly, if Rousseau thinks this is a moral failing, the *Confessions* responds to this with a full performance of its inverse: no discretion, full honesty, refusal to deceive or harm.

While the perfect beings of Rousseau's imagination are too remote to accomplish moral instructions, he can use figures such as Julie for public benefit:

> Perfect beings are not to be found in nature and the lessons they offer are too remote from us. But that a young woman, born with a heart as tender as it is sincere, should allow herself, while still a girl, to be conquered by love and should then, as a woman, rediscover the strength to conquer it in turn and become virtuous again, whoever tells you that such a portrait, in its totality, is scandalous and profitless is a liar and a hypocrite; do not listen to him.[49]

In contrast to fashionable morals, Rousseau's true sentiments have hit upon ideal figures, which demonstrate moral principles. Rousseau distinguishes between the "pitiable" girl conquered by love out of weakness, and the lesson offered by the "sincere" young girl who lets herself be conquered by love, not out of weakness, but out of moral virtue with a tender heart. In *Julie*, Rousseau offers the story as a moral tale for public benefit[50] because she is not a pitiable girl who falls in love out of weakness, but a sincere girl who lets herself be conquered by love, then, "as a woman, rediscover[s] the strength to conquer it in turn and become virtuous again." The wife who was given over to love is not doomed, but the potential hero. This hero was not one who kept her affair and lied about it; it was a wife whose love affair was part of the story and

[49] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 425. "Qu'une jeune personne *née avec un coeur aussi tendre qu'honnête* se laisse vaincre à l'amour étant fille, et retrouve étant femme des forces pour le vaincre à son tour et redevenir vertueuse: quiconque vous dira que ce tableau dans sa totalité est scandaleux n'est pas utile, est un menteur et un hypocrite; ne l'écoutez pas," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 435. Rousseau throws the accusation of 'scandal' against his novel back against those who call it scandalous. On the scandal *Julie* caused when it was published in 1761, see Cranston, *Noble Savage*, 247 – 277.
[50] On Rousseau's moral tales, see Cranston, *Romantic Movement*, 12 – 14; Kelly, *Rousseau as Author*, 98 – 115.

precipitates her virtue. In effect, Rousseau couples virtue with desire, and introduces desire as part of the cultivation of the moral self.

As for Rousseau, writing the text has a moral benefit. In writing the text, he finally finds a peaceful contentment, offering: "the pleasantest and most peaceful season I had spent in France since my arrival…I savoured, more than I had ever done before or have since, that independent, even, and simple existence whose value could only be increased for me by the pleasure it brought me," during which he composes this writing, "during my moments of fond delirium I had composed for the later parts of *Julie* several letters that are pervaded with the rapture I felt while writing them,"[51] contradicting any narrative that he would be looking for an affair with Sophie. Once he has the *Julie*, he claims to be content.

As to the public of the *Julie*, reading the text has a moral benefit. Not only in offering an examplary picture, but in offering a test in the exposure of its reader. Rousseau claims only a bad seed would calls this portrait "scandalous and profitless," and that this mis-evaluation of the text actually reveals that person "a liar and a hypocrite." The passages of *Julie* are not only testaments to his sentiment, Rousseau wagers they reveal the true sentiments of the reader: "Anyone who can read these two letters without feeling his heart soften and melt with the same emotion that dictated them to me should shut the book: he is no judge in matters of sentiment."[52] He invites the reader to submit itself to the test of reading *Julie*. Like the *veritas redarguens*, exposure to it will reveal ourselves. The effect, however, is not the exposure of ourselves, conversion to the love of god, accomplished by leaving our desires. The effect is to reveal

[51] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 428 – 429.
[52] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 428 – 429. "Quiconque en lisant ces deux lettes ne sent pas amolir et fondre *son coeur* dans l'attendrissement qui me les dicta, doit fermer le livre; il n'est pas fait pour juger des choses de sentiment," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 438.

whether we feel the sentiment; we pass the test only if we do. Passing the test does not qualify us as a community of converts, passing the test qualifies us to judge Rousseau.

Sophie d'Houdetot

One external figure, instead of crashing in and disrupting the happy flow of his reveries, arrives like a fiction,[53] slips into his imagined realm, and pulls it back into the social field where force relations plague him. Contained within his imagination, the fictions allow him the pleasure of company, enjoyment of love and friendship, absent relations to others and the force they would exert on him. However, the fictions become liabilities, and open the door for Rousseau's subjugation again when they let others to irrupt into his world and drag his desires again into the domain of external relations. Sophie creates a connective tissue where his desires are pulled out into the external relations to others, and in effect makes him subject to these again.

Yet Sophie is a real-life figure who matches the ideals of love and friendship, and Rousseau finally finds a companion with whom he can enjoy his passions free of subjugaton. Rousseau has also set the scene of these ideal relations having a moral and exemplary value. In the scenes, Rousseau can enjoy passions, return to reason, and avoid subjugation for himself and others. In sharing the scenes, Rousseau can offer moral tales for his readers. If the *Julie* was the fictional representation of the exemplary relations among these moral ideals, the scenes with Sophie may be the representations of real exemplary moral relations.[54] If Sophie is a real-life

[53] "This visit had about it the air of a novel," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 422. "Cette visite eut un peu l'air d'un début de roman. Elle s'égara dans la route. Son cocher, quittant le chemin qui tournoit, voulut traverser en droiture du moulin de Clairvaux à l'Hermitage: son carousse s'embourba dans le fond du vallon; elle voulut descendre et faire le reste du trajet à pied," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 432.

[54] Christopher Kelly points to the function of the *Julie* as a moral fable aimed at inciting a change in its audience, Kelly, *Rousseau as Author*, 98 – 115, and the *Confessions* generating a moral effect in its reader, Kelly, *Rousseau's Exemplary Life*. In the opening of *Manon Lescaut*, the author removes himself twice from the story of passions enclosed, staging a narrator who heard the account from its protagonist, and who warns the reader *against* trusting the protagonist and being seduced by the story, Prévost, 3 – 11. The *Confessions* stages an identity between the author, narrator, and protagonist, claiming the story within as his own, and presents it as a – not cautionary, but exemplary – moral tale.

figure who holds this same moral exemplarity, and Rousseau is a real-life figure who holds this moral exemplarity, then the scenes of their relation would be real-life moral examples for the audience. Like his novel, the scenes Rousseau enjoys are offered to the reader – not just for our judgment, but for our benefit.

By the time Sophie arrives on the scene in earnest, Rousseau has established the period was even enough, and the *Julie* is fully accounted for. The *Julie* cannot be evidence of their affair because it was written before she moved in the next season.[55] The story of his relation to Sophie has another function. It is not the confessional account of an affair which is narrated in the *Julie*. It is the account of moral exemplarity lived by Rousseau, evinced in his relation to Sophie. The text does not merely deliver a confession of his true feelings, it presents scenes of confessions which stage the moral benefit of hearing Rousseau's confession, and opens the option to the reader of receiving this *Confessions* as Sophie does in the scenes.

Rousseau gives Sophie credit for a gamut of virtues: sweetness of soul, prudence, and strength, but highlights her truthfulness: "she was above all so straightforward in all her dealings, and so faithful in her relations with others, that even her enemies had no reason to avoid her."[56] Rousseau paints Sophie as a truth-teller with a heart "incapable of hatred."[57] Her speech about others is frank, and consistent across contexts.[58] Rousseau describes Sophie "could never conceal what she was thinking from anyone nor suppress a single one of her feelings, and I am convinced that she talked about her lover even to her husband as she talked about him to her friends, her

[55] The Pleiade commentary disputes this timeline.
[56] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 429. "Elle étoit surtout d'une telle sureté dans le commerce, d'une telle fidélité dans la société que ses ennemis-mêmes n'avoient pas besoin de se cacher d'elle," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 439.
[57] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 429. "Elle n'avoit pas un *coeur* qui peut haïr," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 439.
[58] He paints Sophie with ethical attributes of *parrhēsia*.

acquaintances, and to all the world alike."[59] In the trio of Rousseau, d'Épinay, and Sophie, Sophie would not speak ill of d'Épinay. In the trio Sophie, husband, and lover, she is likewise so earnest that she would even speak to them about the other. Sophie is the model and what (should have been the) success story of the truth-teller, and the happy society which it can create.

Rousseau builds a defense of Sophie on the grounds of these virtues, building a case for his own defense as well as another truth-teller with a heart "incapable of hatred." The scandal for which they are accused is represented as a misapprehension of their actual virtue. Alas, they were judged for the love Rousseau will represent as a virtue, by those like d'Épinay who use their honesty against them. Sophie becomes a model – whose true speech and good heart allow a better society – and d'Épinay (and Grimm) the embodiment of the social as it stands – its deficit of truth, and excesses of subjugation.

Rousseau imagines a little society of St Lambert, Sophie, and himself that would be a "pleasure to all three." In this trio, the third party does not judge, but supports the affections, and allows for the formation of a happy society:

> It was partly, as I understood it, out of inclination, but in particular to please M. de Saint-Lambert that she had to come to see me. He had urged her to do so, and he was right in thinking that the friendship that was beginning to develop between us would give pleasure to all three. She knew that I had been told of their liaison, and since this meant that she could talk freely to me about him, it was natural that she should enjoy being with me.[60]

This possibility is opened by the frankness of its members, which Sophie exhibits, and which Rousseau gives to us in these *Confessions* as well. In the figure of St Lambert, the text prefigures a (new) audience response to Rousseau's relationship to Sophie. Instead of the judgment of their

[59] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 429 – 30. "Elle ne pouvoit ni déguiser ce qu'elle pensoit à personne, ni même containdre aucun de ses sentimens, et je suis persuadé qu'elle parloit de son amant à son mari même, comme elle en parloit à ses amis, à ses connoissances et à tout le monde indifféremment," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 439.
[60] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 430. "C'étoit un peu par gout à ce que j'ai pu croire, mais beaucoup pour complaire à St. Lambert qu'elle venoit me voir. Il l'y avoit exhortée, et il avoit raison de croire que l'amitié qui commençoit à s'établir entre nous rendroit cette société agréable à tous les trois," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 440.

relation as an illicit affair, we might derive benefit from the society of *parrhēsiasts* Rousseau opens to us. The figure of St Lambert reserves our position, prefiguring our reception of the confession.

Only with this argument in place does Rousseau confess his love of Sophie, as the real extension of the ideal figures of his imagination. He maintains that he falls in love with Sophie only because his eyes are 'enchanted' by the love he is already intoxicated with before she arrives. His love of love directed at 'Julie' now extends to the very real Sophie: "She came; I saw her; I was intoxicated by a love that had no object, this intoxication enchanted my eyes, my eyes found this object in her; I saw my Julie in Mme d'Houdetot, and soon I saw only Mme d'Houdetot, but clothed in all the perfections with which I had just adorned the idol of my heart."[61] Rousseau's love for Sophie is exempted from the judgment of low earthly attachments, and arises from his love of his idols – love and friendship – and her sharing in these virtues. Its exposure to judgment has already been prefigured as a mistake (if you're not moved by the novel, if you judge things jealously d'Épinay does). As the scene is set, Sophie holds out the promise of a welcoming social for Rousseau (while Grimm looms as a threat of the actual one).

By the time Rousseau has set it up in this way, the only downside of his relation to Julie is the pain it causes to himself: "without my noticing it and without her noticing it, she inspired me to feel for her everything that she expressed for her lover. I burned – but how late, alas, and how cruelly – with a passion as ardent as it was ill-fated for a woman whose heart was full of someone else!"[62] Rousseau manages to describe his passion for Julie in terms that both glorify

[61] Rousseau, *Confessions,* Oxford, 430. "Elle vint, je la vis, j'étois ivre d'amour sans objet, cette ivresse fascina mes yeux, cet objet se fixa sur elle, je vis ma Julie en Mme d'Houdetot, et bientot je ne vis plus que Mme d'Houdetot, mais revétue de toutes les perfections dont je venois d'orner *l'idole de mon coeur*," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 440.
[62] Rousseau, *Confessions,* Oxford, 430 – 431. "Sans que je m'en apperçûsse et sans qu'elle s'en apperceut elle m'inspira pour elle-même tout ce qu'elle exprimoit pour son amant. Helas! Ce fut bien tard, ce fut bien cruellement, bruler d'une passion non moins vive que malheureuse, pour une femme dont le coeur étoit plein d'un autre amour!" Rousseau, *Confessions,* Pleiade, 440.

his desire for her and abstain from any sin which would require a confession. From its origins, Rousseau's love is an accident, evidence of his merit, and a suffering. The sentimentality of his heart, the activity of his imagination, and the virtue and love of Julie end up leading Rousseau into a tragic, unrequited romantic disaster. And while it was unrequited and blameless, the love portrays a model of sentimental affection.

While Rousseau is surprised by his accidental love, "it was only after she had gone that, trying to think about Julie once more, I was startled at being able to think only of Mme d'Houdetot," he laments it even before we can judge him: "the scales fell from my eyes; I felt my misfortune, I deplored it."[63] Rousseau doubles down on his defense: this realization was not only unhappy, it lead him to take precautions. In light of his realization, Rousseau "hesitated for a long time as to how I should behave in her presence, as if true love left us with sufficient reason to carry out such resolutions."[64] At first not knowing how to behave, and trying to make resolutions as to how he will approach this problem and behave in her company, Rousseau undercuts the possibility by pointing out that "love" hardly leaves enough "sufficient reason" to carry these out. Sophie visits him before he can make resolutions anyways, and his shame at this love for her "reduced me in her presence to silence and trembling; I dared neither open my mouth nor raise my eyes; I was in a state of indescribable agitation." Rousseau's speech and tranquility are both perturbed by his love for Sophie. When Sophie notices his agitation, he "decided to confess it and to leave her to guess its cause; which was in effect to reveal it."[65]

[63] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 431. "Ce ne fut qu'après son départ que, voulant penser à Julie je fus frappé de ne pouvoir plus penser qu'à Mme d'Houdetot. Alors mes yeux se desillérent; je sentis mon malheur, j'en gémis, mais je n'en prévis pas les suites. J'hésitai longtems sur la maniére dont je me conduirois avec elle, comme si l'amour véritable laissoit assez de raison pour suivre des délibérations. Je n'étois pas déterminé quand elle revint me prendre au dépourvu. Pour lors j'étois instruit. La honte compagne du mal me rendit muet tremblant devant elle; je n'osois la bouche ni lever les yeux; j'étois dans un trouble inexprimable qu'il étoit impossible qu'elle ne vit pas. Je pris le parti de lui avouer, et de lui en laisser deviner la cause: c'étoit la lui dire assez clairement," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 441.
[64] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 431.
[65] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 431.

Rousseau depicts two scenes of confession between himself and Sophie. At a glance, Rousseau describes the confession of desire that is so prototypically cliché by the time of Foucault and harks back so loudly to Augustine. Rousseau's desire represents a culpability, he has to declare it in speech to be judged, condemned, and cured of it. However, his 'confession' transforms into a moral example through the scenes which stage responses to the confession. The scenes 'fill in' the role of the listener who judges the confession, and portray the moral exemplarity of these two who have been unjustly judged by this public. The public is behind the curve, he has to give the audience a 'confession' because they passed a judgement without knowing anything about the matter. The scenes of confession truth-tell against the punishment, ignorance, and subjugations suffered. As moral exemplar, Rousseau's confession should be met by this audience on the model of Sophie instead of d'Épinay.

As to the innocents-accused, the *Confessions* recounts the blamelessness of Rousseau and Sophie, starting from Sophie's response: "If I had been young and agreeable, and if Mme d'Houdetot had subsequently given way to weakness, I would blame her here for her conduct. But since neither of these things was so, I can only applaud and admire it. The course of action she chose was both generous and prudent."[66] Not only does this relieve the burden of guilt from Sophie (and from him), it turns the table so that he is, even in the moment of his own confession, one to judge others. Sophie is "generous and prudent," his judgment "can only applaud and admire it," and she did not, at his confession, "give way to weakness." Rousseau outlines praise of her conduct with respect to St Lambert, who offers the audience a point of identification in this passage:

[66] Rousseau, *Confessions,* Oxford, 431. "Si…Mme d'Houdetot eut été foible, je blamerois ici sa conduite; mais tout cela n'étant pas, je ne puis que l'applaudir et l'admirer. Le parti qu'elle prit étoit également celui de la générosité et de la prudence," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 441.

> She could not stop seeing me abruptly without explaining her reasons to Saint-Lambert, who had himself persuaded her to visit me; this would have been to risk breaking up a friendship and perhaps causing a scandal too, which she wanted to avoid. She respected me and wished me well. She pitied me in my folly; without wishing to encourage it, she was sorry for it and wished to cure me of it. She was anxious to persevere, both for her lover and for herself, the friendship of a man whom she valued; she talked of nothing with greater pleasure than of the intimate and easy companionship that the three of us would enjoy when I had returned to my senses; nor did she always confine herself to friendly exhortations, but did not spare me, if the need arose, the harsher reproaches I so richly deserved.[67]

While the confession might have caused embarassment, Sophie persists in her friendship with Rousseau for the benefit of forming and keeping their society.[68] Sophie and Rousseau both agree that his love for her is wrong, and she behaves prudently in choosing a course of action that will spurn his advances without causing a scandal or ruining his friendship with St Lambert. At his confession, she doesn't want to encourage his love for her and "wished to cure me of it."[69] They agree that his love is unfortunate and Sophie tries to create a friendship between them in the commitment to a "intimate and easy companionship that the three of us would enjoy when I had returned to my senses." Sophie is unimpeachable in her approach, meeting his love for her with "friendly exhortations" or "harsher reproaches." In her truthfulness and good-heartedness, Sophie functions not just as the loved, but also as his confessor and judge, who executes her offices perfectly. Rousseau claims he also gives himself these reproaches when alone:

> I spared myself them even less. As soon as I found myself alone again I recovered my senses. I was the calmer for having spoken: a love that is known to the woman who inspires it is easier to bear. The vehemence with which I reproached myself would certainly have cured me of mine, if such a thing had been possible.[70]

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[67] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 431. "Elle ne pouvoit s'éloigner brusquement de moi sans en dire la cause à St. Lambert qui l'avoit lui-même engagée à me voir; c'étoit exposer deux amis à une rupture et peut-être à un éclat qu'elle vouloit éviter. Elle avoit pour moi de l'estime et de la bienveillance. Elle eut pitié de ma folie; sans la flatter elle la plaignit et tâcha de m'en guérir. Elle étoit bien aise de conserver à son amant et à elle-même un ami dont elle faisoit cas: elle ne me parloit de rien avec plus de plaisir que de l'intime et douce societé que nous pouvois former entre nous trois, quand je serois devenu raisonnable; elle ne se bornoit pas toujours à ces exhortations amicales, et ne m'épargnoit pas au besoin les reproches plus durs que j'avois bien mérités," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 441.

[68] As the *Confessions* sits in our hands, we too could gain free society with Rousseau of constraints if we accept embarassment.

[69] This maintains a medical vocabulary that is present in the history of confession from Lateran IV and the Council of Trent.

[70] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 431 – 432. "Je me les épargnois encore moins moi-même," *Confessions*, Pleiade, 441.

The reproach he gives himself is so strong, in fact, that if one could be cured by reproach, his own would have already done the trick. Rousseau compounds this claim with a list of the other strategies he tries to transform his desires.

> What powerful motives did I not summon to help me suppress it! My principles, sentiments, and morals, my sense of shame, my horror of disloyalty, of crime, of abusing the trust of a friend, the absurdity moreover, at my age, of succumbing to the most insane passion for someone whose heart, engaged elsewhere, could neither offer me anything in return nor allow me any hope; a passion which, besides, far from having anything to gain from constancy, was becoming every day less bearable.[71]

Rousseau runs a gamut of attempts to change the nature of his desire: invoking strategies that rely on affective, moral, and legal relations to the self and others, but failing in all these attempts. Finally, he invokes one last one, which is finally effective. Rousseau changes his feelings by painting a picture for himself – as he does for us – of the three of them in such a way that his love for Sophie seems absurd. His age, Sophie's engaged heart, and its unbearability all make "succumbing to the most insane passion" an absurdity. The exercise transforms the problem of his desire.[72] Representing his passion to himself, not as a moral failing, but as an absurdity, points out the harmlessness of his affection. Instead of a juridical scene that accuses himself of the desires and negates them, Rousseau paints a scene of his own desires that frees everyone from the subjugations they could exert. Rousseau does not have to lose his desires, he just has to cut off the constraints around them, and preserve the moral promise of their potential virtue. In painting a scene, Rousseau can release himself from the constraints and maintain the desires:

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[71] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 432. "Quels puissans motifs n'appellai-je point à mon aide pour l'étouffer? Mes moeurs, mes sentiments, mes principes, la honte, l'infidélité, le crime, l'abus d'un dépot confié par l'amitié: le ridicule enfin de bruler à mon age de la passion la plus extavagante, pour un objet dont le coeur préoccupé ne pouvoit ni me rendre aucun retour ni me laisser aucun espoir: passion de plus qui loin d'avoir rien à gagner par la constance, devenoit moins souffrable de jour en jour," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 441.

[72] Consider the Stoic exercise of representing desires to oneself as fleeting as a way to change them and regain self-mastery.

> Who would have thought that this last consideration, which ought to have added weight to all the others, should have been the one to dispel them? Why such scruples, I thought, over a folly that hurts no one but myself? Am I some young beau, whose attentions Mme d'Houdetot need fear? Anyone would think, seeing my air of conceited remorse, that she was in danger of yielding to my seductive ways, my gallant manner and dress. My poor Jean-Jacques, you need fear no more, but love to your heart's content and with an easy conscience: no sighs of yours could threaten Saint-Lambert.[73]

Rousseau shares a lesson with us which recapitulates the effect of the 'fruit-stealing' scene. Instead of focusing on: "such scruples, I thought, over a folly that hurts no one but myself," Rousseau re-locates 'the problem' on to what extent he subjugates others or not. Rousseau's desire poses no threat. With himself the only threatened party (we have somehow forgotten Sophie), Rousseau's desire is uncoupled from sin. Rousseau both 'solves the problem' and lets himself "love to his heart's content with an easy conscience" by mocking his worry that this desire could actually threaten St Lambert. Shifting the problem to the security of St Lambert's possession of Sophie, Rousseau mocks the confession of his 'evil' 'shame' of loving Sophie in the voice of the confessor who would hear his over-worried confession, who would reply to him: are you "some young beau, whose attentions Mme d'Houdetot need fear?" and frees himself: "anyone would think, seeing my air of conceited remorse, that she was in danger of yielding to my seductive ways, my gallant manner and dress. My poor Jean-Jacques, you need fear no more." Rousseau mocks himself for being so worried – and in effect anyone else who would worry about it – because he is not going to be able to seduce her. He speaks in the voice of the confessor to the confessing Rousseau, "love to your heart's content and with an easy conscience."

[73] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 432. "Qui croiroit que cette derniére considération qui devoit ajouter du poids à toutes les autres fut celle qui les éluda? Quel scruple, pensai-je, puis-je me faire d'une folie nuisible à moi seul? Suis-je donc un jeune Cavalier fort à craindre pour Mme d'Houdetot? Ne diroit-on pas à mes présomptueux remords que ma galanterie, mon air, ma parure vont la séduire? Eh pauvre Jean Jaques aime à ton aise en sureté de conscience, et ne crains pas tes soupirs nuisent à St. Lambert," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 441 – 442.

In the second scene, Rousseau gives a new picture of confession, when he confesses to Sophie after they have developed an intimate friendship while each "intoxicated with love, she for her lover, I for her":

> Each was the other's tender confidant, and so alike were our feelings that it was impossible that they should not in some way become entangled; and yet, dangerous though this ardour was, never for one moment did she forget herself; and as for me, I protest – I swear – that if, led astray at times by my senses, I tried to persuade her to be unfaithful, I never really desired this.[74]

Rousseau describes the relation: they served as the confidant of the other, a privileged person who knew the truth of the other's sentiments. The confession becomes the manner of speech – not between penitent and confessor – but between confidants, a medium of intimacy. Rousseau admits that their respective feelings would "become entangled," and on these grounds the "ardour" was "dangerous." However, he maintains that they were shy of impropriety for two reasons. First, as ever, he maintains a diligence in Sophie's behavior: "never for one moment did she forget herself." Rousseau also lays claim to credit for their staying-shy of impropriety, because, he claims "I protest – I swear – that if, led astray at times by my senses, I tried to persuade her to be unfaithful, I never really desired this." Rousseau cannot rely on facts like his age and Sophie's attachment to prove this claim. This time, he grounds this claim about what he "really desired" on the nature of his attraction to Sophie, recalling its origins in his attachments to virtue and Julie. Rousseau argues,

> The very vehemence of my passion kept it contained within itself. I had made a duty of self-denial and this had exalted my soul…The idol of my heart was adorned, in my eyes, with every shining virtue; to sully its divine image would have been to destroy it. I could have committed the crime itself, it had a hundred times been committed in my heart; but degrade my Sophie? Ah, that could never be! No, no, as I told her a hundred times myself; had it been within my power to

[74] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 434. "Tendres confidens l'un de l'autre, nos sentimens avoient tant de apport, qu'il étoit impossible qu'ils ne se mélassent pas en quelque chose; et toutefois, au milieu de cette dangeous ivresse, jamais elle ne s'est oubliée un moment, et moi je proteste, je jure, que si quelquefois égaré par mes sens j'at tenté de la rendre infidelle, jamais je ne l'ai véritablement desiré," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 444.

> achieve satisfaction, had she of her own free will put herself at my disposal, I would, except for during a few brief moments of delirium, have refused happiness at such a price. I loved her too much to want to possess her.[75]

Because Sophie, "the idol of my heart was adorned, in my eyes, with every shining virtue," Rousseau could not really desire her because "to sully its divine image would have been to destroy it." Rousseau's love for Sophie is a result of this divine image of her, her adornment with all these virtues. Precisely what makes him love her is what would be destroyed by "possessing her." So even as he tries to persuade her, he wouldn't desire to bring this about: "I could have committed the crime itself, it had a hundred times been committed in my heart; but degrade my Sophie? Ah, that could never be!" For Rousseau, the sin lies not in imagination, or desire, but in the effect on the other. Even if Sophie succumbed "of her own free will," Rousseau maintains that this degradation was a higher "price" than the "happiness" this would offer. His love for Sophie is connected to her virtue, which effectively makes an affair with her impossible.

Rousseau has set up two aspects before the culminating scene: that his desire does not threaten subjugation, and that he loves her too much to possess her. When he does seduce Sophie, she wins a moral benefit, making Rousseau the seducer a hero! In the second scene, when Rousseau declares his true feelings to Sophie in "a language that was worthy of it," he transforms the scene of his indiscretion into a scene of merit: an "immortal memory of innocence and joy!":

> It was in this grove that, seated beside her on a turf-seat beneath an acacia tree heavy with blossom, I found, to express the ferment of my heart, a language that was worthy of it. This was for the first and the only time in my life; but I was sublime, if one can thus describe that delicious and seductive ardour which only the tenderest, the most urgent passion can inspire in the human heart. What

[75] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 434. "La véhémence de ma passion la contenoit par elle-même. Le devoir des privations avoit exalté mon ame. L'éclat de toutes les vertus ornoit à mes yeux l'idole de mon coeur; en souiller la divine image eut été l'anéantir. J'aurois pu commettre le crime, il a cent fois été commis dans mon coeur: mais avilir ma Sophie! Ah cela se pouvoit-il jamais! Non non je le lui ai cent fois dit à elle-même; eussai-je été le maitre de me satisfaire, sa propre volonté l'eut-elle mise à ma discretion, hors quelques courts moments de délire, j'aurois refusé d'être heureux à ce prix. Je l'aimois trop pour vouloir la posséder," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 444.

> intoxicating tears I shed into her lap! How many, in spite of herself, I wrung from her![76]

Rousseau, in this happy memory of innocence and joy, describes the confession of his feelings – now in a language appropriate to it – which can effect a transformation in the heart which *hears* it and which, in the case of Sophie, can cause her to 'involuntarily' exclaim a reciprocal expression.

Note the effect of hearing the confession – for Sophie – for Rousseau – and for the reader. Rousseau's speech of his true feelings to Sophie is perhaps an image of the general operation of this text. Perhaps the first confession of his feelings sets out a first operation, confessing the evil he did, and responding with: 'sleep easy, Jean-Jacques.' He jumps into the chair of the witness of his confessions – which we thought was us and god – and gives the judgment on him in our place. This is a move where he delineates whether the evil was really so bad, and speaks – in the voice of the confessor – that it was not.

Then, when Rousseau does go on to state his feelings in the language that is appropriate to them, in the scene with Sophie, he portrays the response by the virtuous audience. This expression of his true feelings is in the language suiting them: not the 'confession' as it was before, of shame of evil, but the 'confession' of his true feelings (much like the one Rousseau presents here – the portrait of a man in all its truth). The response to this articulation of his true sentiments is modeled by Sophie, she feels an 'ardour' inspired in the heart that hears his confession. The heart of Sophie, listening to this language – the proper confession of his feelings – responds with ardour for Rousseau. As Rousseau has already broken apart the previous idea of

[76] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 434. "Souvenir immortel d'innocence et de jouissance! Ce fut dans ce bosquet qu'assis avec elle sur un banc de gason sous un Acacia tout chargé de fleurs, je trouvai pour rendre les mouvements *de mon coeur* un langage vraiment digne d'eux. Ce fut la prémiére et l'unique fois de ma vie; mais je fus sublime, si l'on peut nommer ainsi tout ce que l'amour le plus tendre et le plus ardent peut porter d'aimable et de séduisant dans un coeur d'homme. Que d'enivrantes larmes je versai sur ses genoux! Que je lui en fis verser malgré elle!" Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 444.

confession, and put this one as a model in its place, here, *Sophie* becomes the model for us on how to hear Rousseau's confession. Rousseau describes his confession moves Sophie's heart[77]:

> What intoxicating tears I shed into her lap! How many, in spite of herself, I wrung from her! At last she cried out, in a transport of involuntary feeling: 'No, no man was ever so lovable, and no lover has ever loved like you! But your friend Saint-Lambert is listening, and my heart cannot love twice.' Sighing, I fell silent; I embraced her, with what rapture! But that was all.[78]

Rousseau exalts this as a memory of "innocence and joy" in which the effect of his language appropriate to his true feelings had an 'intoxicating' effect on the one listening. Sophie cries out "No, no man was ever so lovable, and no lover has ever loved like you" about Rousseau at the end of the confession. Because Sophie is the ideal, her response models the virtuous response to his confession. When Rousseau stages the response of a moral exemplar, he stages a model response for the reader of this *Confessions*.

The Rousseau confession moves someone; Rousseau just flips whom:

> She had been alone for six months, for both her lover and husband were far away; I had seen her almost every day for three, and still the love of a third person stood between us. We had had supper on our own together, we were alone in a wood by moonlight and, after two hours of the most intense and tender conversation, she emerged from that wood and from the arms of her friend, in the middle of the night, as intact, as pure in body and heart as when she had entered it. Reader, weigh up all these circumstances; I will say no more.[79]

Even as Sophie is seduced by Rousseau's declaration, which 'inspires an ardour' in her, she "emerged from that wood and from the arms of her friend, in the middle of the night, as intact, as pure in body and heart as when she had entered it." Rousseau comforts us, to the extent

[77] Unlike scenes which block the truth and fail to move a heart to love truth – as Rousseau's barbarous heart resists Marion.
[78] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 434 – 435. "Enfin dans un transport *involuntaire* elle s'écria: Non, jamais homme ne fut si aimable, et jamais amant n'aima comme vous! Mais votre ami St. Lambert nous écoute, et mon coeur ne sauroit aimer deux fois. Je me tus en soupirant; je l'embrassai: quel embrassement! Mais ce fut tout," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 444 (italics mine), The involuntary exclamation of Sophie could undercut the claim of his project, that his truth-telling does not impinge on the will of others, in perhaps another irony exceeding his confession. Or the moral tale shows the virtue of the expressions of *coeurs.*
[79] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 435. "Elle sortit au milieu de la nuit de ce bosquet et des bras de son ami aussi intacte, aussi pure de corps et de coeur qu'elle y étoit entrée. Lecteur, pesez toutes ces circomstances; je n'ajoûterai rien de plus," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 445.

that we like Sophie are hearing the true declaration of his sentiments, that we are in good hands. We can be seduced happily, we will exit the seduction "pure in body and heart." If the defense we might expect is that he did not transgress, nor did Sophie, this story could have read: we did nothing wrong, here are the rules, here is what we did. But this is not the rhetorical tac of the text. Instead, we read a scene of confession, in which Rousseau's confession seduces someone. But instead of this being a transgression itself, Rousseau argues that this offers his audience a moral benefit. Like Sophie and Julie, we should trust him and be seduced, hearing the declaration of his sentiments that yield a love of Rousseau and confirmation of our virtue. The reader is challenged to listen to Rousseau's true feelings, which will be a lesson in and indication of our virtue as well.

This account leaves us to judge: "Reader, weigh up all these circumstances." As he stages the confession, we are hardly a secure 'authority' when he invites us to 'judge.' We are 'fellow men gathered about Rousseau,' challenged to say, 'I was better than that man.' The judgment of the audience on the *Confession*, however, is not *negated* by the text. It is *incited* by Rousseau to opposite effect: to love[80] him.

Public, Judges

While there is nothing to confess 'to us' vis-à-vis his relation to Sophie, Rousseau highlights the irony that their relation nevertheless was "the last happy days meted out to me on earth; there now begins the long tissue of my life's misfortunes, during which little respite will

[80] The affective aspects of confession can be drawn from the early penitential practices, consider the affective manifestation in *exomologēsis*, Foucault, "Christianity and Confession;" Tertullian, *On Penance*; Ambrose, *On Penance*. The theme of the 'heart' through the Augustine and Rousseau *Confessions* trades in their affect as a site of formation and deploys affect in the projection of the effects of the confession. Chadwick notes Augustine invents use of 'heart' in Romantic sense, *Augustine*, 2, see also Cranston, *The Romantic Movement*. The function of affect in these inventions of 'autobiogaphy' and the 'modern self' might also raise the confession as a context to examine the economy of affect in modern autobiography, life-writing, and literature, especially in the game forged between the manifestation of affect and the incitement of affect in the reader. Consider Lynch, *Loving Literature*, on the affective economy of writing figures and their public reception, and Felski, *Character*, on the role of affect and critique in literary criticism.

be found."[81] The misfortunes come, predictably by this point, from the judgments of his relation to Sophie – not from the relation itself. Rousseau figures two judges and judgments of the relation, which prefigure our possible judgments for or against him and Sophie. As he moves to depict the two judgments, by Grimm/d'Épinay on one hand, and St Lambert on the other, his *Confessions* before 'us' invite the reader to judge as well:

> Judge then if I was able to hide for long my love for Mme d'Houdetot… Our intimacy was clear for all to see, for we made no secret or mystery of it. Its nature was not such as to make this necessary, and, since Mme d'Houdetot felt the tenderest friendship for me, with which she had no reason to reproach herself, since I felt for her a respect that no one knew better than I to be wholly justified, since she was candid, absent-minded, impulsive, while I was truthful, awkward, proud, impatient, and intemperate, we laid ourselves much more open to attack, lulled by our false sense of security, than if we really had been guilty.[82]

Rousseau claims their honesty leaves him and Sophie even more vulnerable to attack than if they had been guilty, because it was not the evil of a relation that makes it subject to (ill) judgment, it is the honesty about it before a bad judge. The relationship comes under scrutiny in the first place because they were so indiscreet about their relationship, which, of course for Rousseau, only proves their virtue of truthfulness: "as we have seen, never throughout the whole of my life has my heart, as transparent as crystal, been able to hide for a single moment any feeling of any intensity that has taken refuge there."[83] Their honesty and lack of guile left their (innocent) relationship open to view to judge, albeit poorly.

The first ill-judge of Rousseau and Sophie is in the figure of d'Épinay, and by extension Grimm. Rousseau describes how he and Sophie:

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[81] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 436.
[82] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 436. "Qu'on juge s'il me fut possible de cacher longtems mon amour pour Mme d'Houdetot. Notre intimité frapoit tous les yeux, nous n'y mettions ni secret ni mistére. Elle n'étoit pas de nature à en avoir besoin, et comme Mme d'Houdetot avoit pour moi l'amitié la plus tendre qu'elle ne se reprochoit point, que j'avois pour elle une estime dont personne ne connoissoit mieux que moi toute la justice; elle franche, distraite, étoudie; mon vrai, maladroit, fier, impatient, emporté; nous donnions encore sur nous dans nôtre trompeuse sécurité beaucoup plus de prises que nous n'aurions fait si nous eussions été coupables," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 446.
[83] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 436.

> We both of us went to La Chevrette, we often found ourselves there together, sometimes even by arrangement. We carried on there as we always did, talking of love and duty, of our mutual friend, our innocent plans, while walking alone together every day in the park just outside Mme d'Épinay's apartment and beneath her very windows, from where, observing us continually and fancying herself defied, she fed, through her eyes, the rage and indignation she felt in her heart.[84]

The source of the trouble, in culmination, is not Rousseau's affair (or not affair), it's the incorrect, unjust, judgment of him, which, we can note, is wagered without the benefit of his confession. Mme d'Épinay is the villain in the story, whose judgment of Rousseau and Sophie is borne out of jealousy, and which cannot be taken as true or fair. Rousseau is – needless to say – unimpressed by her response, and goes about setting out an evidentiary record of the subjugation and humiliation she causes Sophie and Rousseau. Upon learning of the plots she hatches to gather incriminating proof from Rousseau's letters,[85] Rousseau is incensed by her invasion and explains to the audience this reason for yelling at her. Here, in delivering his account to the public, he claims he is finally filling in the details that he would not even dare to write at the time for fear of her 'scheming':

> There was nothing that the vengefulness of an implacable and scheming woman did not make me fear on behalf of whoever might find herself its object. It was to avoid such a calamity that I had spoken only of suspicions in my letters, and so that I might be spared from having to offer proofs. It is true that this made my outbursts the more inexcusable, since mere suspicions would never have justified my treating a woman, and especially one who was a friend, as I had just treated Mme d'Épinay. But this is where the great and noble task begins, which I have worthily fulfilled, of expiating my secret faults and failings by taking upon myself the responsibility for still graver faults, of which I was incapable, and which I never committed.[86]

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[84] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 436.
[85] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 439.
[86] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 443. "Il n'y avoit rien que la vengeance d'une femme implacable et intriguante ne me fit craindre pour celle qui en seroit l'objet. C'étoit pour prévenir ce malheur que je n'avois parlé que de soupçons dans mes lettres afin d'être dispensé d'enoncer mes preuves. Il est vrai que cela rendoit mes emportements plus inexcusables, nuls simples soupçons ne pouvant m'autoriser à traiter une femme et surtout une amie comme je venois de traiter Mme d'Épinay. Mais ici commence la grande et noble tâche que j'ai dignement remplie, d'expier mes fautes et mes foiblesses cachées, en me chargeant de fautes plus graves dont j'étois incapable, et que je ne commis jamais," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 453 – 454.

The account of this interaction also gives a corrective to a popular misunderstanding of him. Not, in this case, with Sophie, but pertaining to the scandal of his break with d'Épinay. While his falling out with Mme d'Épinay was interpreted in one way, and exercised an unfair judgment on Rousseau, his account clarifies what he really did wrong, and exonerates himself from false accusations: "this is where the great and noble task begins, which I have worthily fulfilled, of expiating my secret faults and failings by taking upon myself the responsibility for still graver faults, of which I was incapable, and which I never committed."

In contrast to the reaction of Mme d'Épinay, Rousseau also describes the judgment of none other than St Lambert. Rousseau makes the extraordinary move to confess everything to this character and relay to us his judgment of the situation. He describes the appeal to St Lambert himself: "I was so grieved by Mme d'Houdetot's growing coldness towards me, and so convinced that I had done nothing to merit it, that I took the extraordinary step of complaining to St Lambert himself. I wrote to him, and, while waiting to see what effect my letter would have, threw myself into distractions."[87] Rousseau writes a full confession to St Lambert, as he puts it, because he is "convinced that [he] had done nothing to merit" Sophie's coldness towards him, and has trust in St Lambert as a judge of the situation. We can note the extraordinarily useful function of this character. To the accusation that Rousseau violated his friendship with St Lambert, his testimony could wholly refute this accusation against Rousseau. When waiting to hear back from him, Rousseau goes so far as to claim:

> I believed that the only way to repair the wrong I had done this latter was by unburdening my heart to him without reservation, and I resolved to make a full confession to him of everything that did not compromise his mistress. I have no doubt that this decision was another trap laid for me by my passion so that I might be kept close to her; but I am certain too that I would have flung myself unreservedly into the arms of her lover, that I would have submitted myself

[87] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 453.

> wholeheartedly to his direction, and that I would have pushed my frankness with him as far as it could be taken.[88]

When St Lambert receives his letter, "my generous friend did not leave me for long in this dejected state." Rousseau receives a letter in reply which:

> brought me the consolation, of which I was in much need at the time, of being full of marks of esteem and friendship, which gave me the courage and the strength to merit them. From that moment on, I did my duty; whereas it is certainly the case that if Saint-Lambert had proved less sensible, less magnanimous, less honourable, I would have been irretrievably lost.[89]

Not only is St Lambert a perfect judge of the relation, he inspires Rousseau to act dutifully. When Rousseau does see Sophie again, he carries the letter from St Lambert – this generous and unjudging judge – in his pocket to moderate his behavior towards her.

> Saint-Lambert's letter was in my pocket, I reread it several times on the way. This letter served as my shield against my own weakness. I made a resolution, which I kept, to regard Mme d'Houdetot henceforward as nothing more than my friend and the mistress of my friend, and I spent four or five hours alone with her in a state of delicious calm, infinitely preferable, even from the point of view of pleasure, to those fits of burning fever from which I had always before suffered in her presence. Since she knew only too well that my heart was unchanged, she was sensible of the effort I had made to regain control of myself; she respected me the more for it, and I had the pleasure of seeing that her friendship for me was not extinguished. She told me of the imminent return of Saint-Lambert, who, although recovered well enough from his attack, was no longer in a fit state to endure the rigours of war and was leaving the service in order to come and live peacefully by her side. We formed the charming project of an intimate society composed of the three of us, whose fulfilment we could reasonably hope would be a lasting one since it was based on every sentiment that unites sensitive and upright hearts, and since between the three of us we combined enough learning and accomplishments to be self-sufficient and not to need any contribution from outside. Alas! while abandoning myself to hopes of so sweet an existence, I little dreamt of the one

[88] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 463. "Je crus ne pouvoir bien réparer mes torts envers ce dernier qu'en lui déchargeant mon *coeur* sans réserve, et je résolus de lui faire pleinement mes *confessions* en tout ce qui ne compromettoit pas sa maitresse. Je ne doute pas que ce choix ne fut encore un piége de ma passion, pour me tenir plus rapproché d'elle; mais il est certain que je me serois jetté dans le bras de son amant sans réserve, que je me serois mis pleinement sous sa conduite et que j'aurois poussé la franchise aussi loin qu'elle pouvoit aller," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 474.

[89] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 468. "Cette réponse m'apporta des consolations dont j'avois grand besoin dans ce moment-là, par les témoignages d'estime et d'amitié dont elle étoit pleine, et qui me donnérent le courage et la force de les mériter. Dès ce moment je fis mon devoir; mais il est constant que si St. Lambert se fut trouvé moins sense, moins généreux, moins honnête homme, j'étois perdu sans retour," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 478.

> that awaited me. We then discussed my present situation with regard to Mme d'Épinay.[90]

In the end, beginning with the virtuous relation between Rousseau and Sophie and thanks to the fair and generous judgment of it by St Lambert, they can still imagine an "intimate society composed of the three of us, whose fulfilment we could reasonably hope would be a lasting one since it was based on every sentiment that unites sensitive and upright hearts."

St Lambert's and d'Épinay's judgments of their relation offer opposing possibilities. St Lambert's judgment was not only more accurate, it also benefitted and improved Rousseau's behavior, and moves in the direction of the foundation of an ideal society. d'Épinay's response, in contrast, is prejudiced and fractures the relations between them, as well as Rousseau's relations to others. Rousseau objects not only to the incorrect judgment of the relation, but the injustice of this judgment and the ill-effects it has on him. He moves from the Hermitage – not out of necessity, but certainly as a result – and loses the patron and home he had there with Thérèse.

The (ill) effects of the (mis)judgment of his (good) relation to Sophie (actually unknown) by these (malicious) actors brings about the end of their relationship and Rousseau's happiness. When parting with Sophie and discussing his break with Grimm and d'Épinay, Rousseau records that Sophie was worried about retribution:

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[90] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 468. "J'avois la lettre de St. Lambert dans ma poche; je la relus plusieurs fois en marchant. Cette lettre me servit d'égide contre ma foiblesse. Je fis et tins la résolution de ne voir plus en Mme d'Houdetot que mon amie et la maitresse de mon ami; je passai tête-à-tête avec elle quatre ou cinq heures dans un calme délicieux, préférable infiniment, même quand à la jouïssance, à ces accés de fiévre ardente que jusqu'alors j'avois eus auprès d'elle. Comme elle savoit trop que *mon coeur n'étoit pas changé*, elle fut sensible aux efforts que j'avois faits pour me vaincre; elle m'en estima davantage, et j'eus le plaisir de voir que son amitié pour moi n'étoit point éteinte. Elle m'annonca le prochain retour de St. Lambert, qui, quoiqu'assez bien rétabli de son attaque, n'étoit plus en état de soutenir les fatigues de la guerre, et quittoit le service pour venir vivre pailiblement auprès d'elle. Nous formames le projet charmant d'une étroite societé entre nous trois, et nous pouvions espérer que l'execution de ce projet seroit durable, vu que tous les sentimens qui peuvent *unir des coeurs sensibles et droits* en faisoient la base, et que nous rassemblions à nous trois assez de talens et de connoissances pour nous suffire à nous-mêmes et n'avoir besoin d'aucun supplément étranger. Helas! En me livrant à l'espoir d'une si douce vie je ne songeois guére à celle qui m'attendoit," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 479.

> She beseeched me at all costs to avoid any fuss, and to soften my refusal with reasons so plausible as to preclude the unjustified suspicion that it might have anything to do with her. I told her that it was no easy task that she was imposing on me; but that, determined to atone for my wrongs at the cost of even my reputation, I meant to put hers first in everything that honour would permit. The reader will soon know how well I fulfilled this undertaking…
>
> This is where my personal relations with Mme d'Houdetot end, relations about which everyone has been able to form a judgment based upon appearances and according to the dispositions of his own heart, but during which the passion that this truly loveable woman inspired in me, the most intense perhaps that any man has ever felt, was ennobled, and always will be, in our own and heaven's eyes by the rare and difficult sacrifices we both of us made to duty, honour, love, and friendship. We were each of us too exalted in the eyes of the other to be willing to degrade ourselves. Only someone unworthy of any esteem whatsoever would consent to losing one of so rare a value, and the very energy of the emotions that might have made us guilty was what prevented us from becoming so.[91]

Rousseau explicitly addresses the problem of confession addressed in this story, which is namely that the public record of what happened was a*lready completely* understood by the actors involved to have political effects. They debate, as they act, the public judgment of them. Rousseau will mobilize this and confess that part of the reason he is so ill-judged was that, in this moment, he misrepresented himself in order to protect others. Already in play are the force relations of the confession as a public rhetorical operation, negotiating reputation, the tribunal of public reason, claims to truth, and above all, the very real effects of these for each subject. The confession is understood as a political tool. And Rousseau was abstaining from it, accepting the lot he was going to get for not taking advantage of this tool, in order to protect others.

[91] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 469. "Elle me conjura d'éviter tout eclat à quelque prix que ce put être, et de pallier mon refus de raisons assez plausibles pour éloigner l'injuste soupçon qu'elle put y avoir part. Je lui dis qu'elle ne m'imposoit pas une tâche aisée; mais que résolu d'expier mes torts au prix même de ma réputation, je voulois donner la préférence à la sienne en tout ce que l'honneur me permettoit d'enduer. On connoitra bientôt si j'ai su remplir cet engagement…
"Ici finissent mes liaisons personnelles avec Mme d'Houdetot. Liaisons dont chacun a pu juger sur les apparences *selon les dispositions de son propre coeur*, mais dans lesquelles la passion que m'inspira cette aimable femme, passion la plus vive peut-être qu'aucun homme ait jamais sentie s'honorera toujours entre le Ciel et nous des rares et pénibles sacrifices faits par tous deux au devoir, à l'honneur, à l'amour et à l'amitié. Nous nous étions trop élévés aux yeux l'un de l'autre pour pouvoir nous avilir aisément. Il faudoit être indigne de toute estime pour se resoudre à en perdre une de si haut prix, et l'énergie même des sentiments qui pouvoient nous rendre coupables fut ce qui nous empêcha de le devenir," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 480.

Rousseau is left with the task of not making anyone's life difficult, not ruining anyone's reputation, explaining a falling-out, and taking a bullet for others:

> After they had gone I found myself in great perplexity as to how to fulfil so many pressing and contradictory duties, all of them the consequence of my own imprudence. If I had been in my usual state of mind, all I would have needed to do after the trip to Geneva had been suggested and rejected was to keep quiet, and all would have been well. But, foolishly, I had made an issue of it, which could not be left as it was, and I could only avoid having to offer further explanations by leaving the Hermitage; which is what I had just promised Mme d'Houdetot I would not do, not, at least, for the time being. She had further insisted that I offer my so-called friends some excuse for refusing to go to Geneva, so that no one could impute this refusal to her. And yet I could not reveal the real reason without insulting Mme d'Épinay, to whom I certainly owed a debt of gratitude after all she had done for me. Taken all in all, I found myself in the harsh but inescapable dilemma of having to fail either Mme d'Épinay or Mme de Houdetot or myself. I chose to do this last. I did so openly, wholeheartedly, and unwaveringly, and with a magnanimity that ought surely to have been enough to wash me clean of the errors that had reduced me to this extremity.[92]

Rousseau describes this choice as a sacrifice and points out that his ruin was brought about because the people who did know the details of the situation (Grimm), used Rousseau's sacrifice to ruin his reputation. In the end, this determined the public judgment of him, which is not only incorrect, but also unjust, and in effect, a sin perpetrated by 'us' readers, his public. Not only does Grimm ruin Rousseau's reputation, he misleads the public and puts Rousseau's blood on our hands.

> This sacrifice, which my enemies were able to turn to their own advantage, and for which they had perhaps been waiting, has been the ruin of my reputation and has deprived me, through their efforts, of public esteem; but it has restored to me my own and been a consolation to me in my wretchedness. It was not the last

[92] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 470. "Après leur départ je me trouvai dans un grand embarras pour remplir tant de devoirs pressans et contradictoires, suites de mes imprudences. Si j'eusse été dans mon état naturel, après la proposition et le refus de ce voyage de Genève, je n'avois qu'à rester tranquille et tout étoit dit. Mais j'en avois sotement fait une affaire qui ne pouvoit rester dans l'état où elle étoit, et je ne pouvois me dispenser de toute ulterieure explication qu'en quittant l'Hermitage, ce que je venois de promettre à Mme d'Houdetot de ne pas faire, au moins pour le moment présent. De plus, elle avoit éxigé que l'excusasse auprès de mes soi-disans amis le refus de ce voyage, afin qu'on me lui imputât pas ce refus. Cependant je n'en pouvois alléguer la véritable cause, sans outrager Mme d'Épinay à qui je devois certainement de la renconnoissance après tout ce qu'elle avoit fait pour moi. Tout bien considéré, je me trouvai dans la dure mais indispensable alternative, de manquer à Mme d'Épinay, à Mme d'Houdetot, ou à moi-même, et je pris le dernier parti. Je le pris hautement, pleinement, sans tergiverser, et avec une générosité digne assurément de laver les fautes qui m'avoient réduit à cette extrémité," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 480 – 481.

> time, as we shall see, that I made such sacrifices, nor was it the last time that others took advantage of them in order to bring me down.[93]

Much as with Mme de Wares and Anet, Marion and the Comte, Thérèse and Inspector, Rousseau's relation to Sophie also enjoys a judge. Rousseau's desire for Sophie enjoys two judges: on the one hand, Mme d'Épinay (and Grimm), and on the other, St Lambert. These two judges contrast modes of response to the relation. If, in the case of Claude Anet, the relation between Rousseau and Mme de Warens is observed by one who does not judge according to social norms, but whose acceptance and understanding of the goodness of the relation allows them to all enter into a society, his life with Mme de Warens may not just be the model for his relationship, but (before the death of Anet at least), also the model judge. In contrast, the scene with Marion portrayed another relation of affection, and figured a judge in the scene as well. However, where Anet judges the scene well (yielding a happy society for all of them), the Comte judges Rousseau poorly, and creates a disastrous outcome for both him and Marion.

The same pattern operates in the second part. There are the judges who judge unfavorably (and ruin everyone) and the judges who judge wisely (and generate these possibilities of a just society). His relation to Thérèse is judged by her mother (and Grimm) and thereby they are robbed of it, his relation to d'Épinay (though not desirous according to Rousseau) is judged by Grimm who ends up destroying, undeservedly, Rousseau's life at the Hermitage. His relation with Sophie, finally, is also judged unfavorably by judges d'Épinay (and Grimm), and in effect of this incorrect negative judgment, his relationship to Sophie and life at the Hermitage end. However, in the Sophie story, Rousseau presents this possible-other judgment. In the figure of St

[93] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 470. "Ce sacrifice, dont mes ennemis ont su tirer parti, et qu'ils attendoient peut-être, a fait la ruine de ma réputation et m'a ôté par leurs soins l'estime publique; mais il m'a rendu la mienne et m'a consolé dans mes malheurs. Ce n'est pas la derniére fois, comme on verra, que j'ai fait de pareils sacrifices, ni la derniére aussi qu'on s'en est prévalu pour m'accambler," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 481.

Lambert, the judge of their relationship does as Claude Anet, affirming Rousseau and allowing a happy society amongst them.

After the transformation in which he is suddenly a public figure with no deference to fashionable morals, Rousseau demonstrates the goodness of his desire and the ill-effects of the (public) mis-judgments on them. These interactions were publicly mis-judged. That is to say, judged not by whether they were subjugating, but by whether they were following social norms. He refutes the terms and the damages assumed in the public eye, and through these figures demonstrates instead: how good his passions are, how little they hurt anyone else, how wrong the public assumptions about them were, how beneficial to hear his account to judge the truth, and how beneficial to hear his true sentiments for our moral life.

In these scenes, the *Confessions* prefigure the judgments of this audience, looking anew at his affair with Sophie – but now with the benefit of the *Confessions*. We can either judge it pooly, like Grimm and d'Épinay, or well, like St Lambert. However, we are warned, our judgment of the scenes illuminates something about ourselves: we will be revealed as feelers of sentiment and lovers of truth, or jealous deceivers, based on our response to the text.

Beyond judging as Grimm/d'Épinay or Saint-Lambert, there is also the possibility of hearing Rousseau's declarations of sentiment, his confessions, like Sophie. Sophie does not arrest her relation to Rousseau upon hearing the confessions of feeling, but acts as a moral exemplar, protecting the possibility of an intimate society. In the scene, upon hearing his confession, Sophie loves the one who tells the truth, and in effect, Sophie not only wins the benefit of bearing witness to the truth, her reception to it reveals her virtue. If St Lambert and d'Épinay/Grimm represent the judges of the relation, Sophie represents the other in the relation, the one listening to his true feelings. The audience can also identify with this role. After all, in

addressing the *Confessions* to a public, Rousseau makes everyone a possible judge of these relations, but he also makes everyone the intimate confessor of his inner feelings. In the figure of Sophie, the text stages the best response to the confession of Rousseau: to be seduced.

Chapter Five: Time, Text

Clear away from our eyes the cloud under which you have hidden them. There is your evidence, which equips little ones with wisdom. From the mouths of babes and sucklings, O my God, bring your praise to perfection. We know of no other books so capable of bringing down pride, of bringing down the enemy, the defender who – by defending his own sins – refuses to give in and be reconciled to you. I do not know, Lord, I do not know any other writings of such purity that they could persuade me into confessing, and make my neck submit to your yoke, and appeal to me to worship you with no thought of reward. Let me understand these Scriptures, good Father, grant this to me (even though I am far beneath them), because you have made them strong for the sake of those of us who dwell below.[1]

– Augustine, *Confessions*

Some days later I at last had the pleasure of the visit that Diderot had so often promised but omitted to make. It could not have come at a better moment; Diderot was my oldest friend, he was almost the only one that remained; my pleasure at seeing him under these circumstances may be judged. My heart was full and I poured it out to him. I enlightened him on a good many facts that had been kept from him, disguised, or invented. I told him everything that I was permitted to tell him of what had happened. I made no pretense of concealing from him what he knew only too well, that a passion as unfortunate as it was insane had been the instrument of my ruin; but I never conceded that Mme d'Houdetot knew about it, or at least that I had declared it; I told him of the unworthy manoeuvres by means of which Mme d'Épinay had tried to get hold of the perfectly innocent letters her sister-in-law had written to me. I wanted him to hear these details from the lips of those very people whom she had tried to seduce into helping her. Thérèse did this scrupulously; but imagine my feelings when it was her mother's turn, and I heard her declare and maintain that 'no such thing had to her knowledge occurred.' Those were the terms she used and she never deviated from them. Not four days previously she had herself repeated this story to me, and now she was denying it to my face and in front of my friend. This incident seemed to me decisive.[2]

– Rousseau, *Confessions*

[1] Augustine, *Confessions*, XIII (17). Loeb, 365.
[2] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 475 – 476.

The Augustine and the Rousseau *Confessions* perform reading and writing as modes of 'truth-telling' which both form the subject at hand and produce the text in front of us. After the conversions of its author figure, each text stages a transformation of its mode of truth-telling to match the transformation-of-self. In Part II of each, the *Confessions* do the truth-telling by one converted to truth, perfoming the activity of truth-telling after being converted to an ethical position in relation to it – Augustine to loving god, Rousseau to bucking decorum. In the Augustine *Confessions* part II, the exegesis of Scripture is a textual practice – reading and writing – that constitutes the truth-telling activity 'after conversion.' This examination takes the citational practice of the *Confessions* from book I as the ongoing citation-as-truth-telling practice of the converted author. In Rousseau's Part II, the reading and writing practices likewise reflect the truth-telling of the 'converted' author figure. After the middle break, he tells the truth as a public figure before a public, rectifiying the deficit of truth, despite and against his public condemnations. Truth-telling on behalf of the innocent-accused reverses his failure to confess in the ribbon scene. Now, a new innocent has been accused, and Rousseau confesses the truth: defending the innocent and protecting the public from the pain of letting an innocent be condemned. In his Part II, Rousseau clarifies the truth that has been kept from the public. In a truth-telling labor, the author transcribes the letters with a detailed account of his inner feelings during the correspondence. In effect, telling the truth behind the letters that caused his public misrepresentation.

In this chapter, I consider the reading practice of the Augustine *Confessions* as *ethopoietic* work, and that of the Rousseau *Confessions* as a truth-telling exercise, both of which animate the effects of the confessions for their author and audience. For Augustine, the textual practice supports and sustains his conversion to truth. For Rousseau, it manifests the truth before

the public, exercising his ethical principle of truth-telling and saving his fellow men. I will flesh out the operations of the reading and writing practices in the Augustine *Confessions* through an image he paints of the Scriptures and the encounter with them, as well as a brief invocation of the notion of time, and in the Rousseau *Confessions* through the image he paints of his correspondence. In the comparison, we can examine how these written *Confessions* stage reading and writing as an activity of truth-telling sustaining the ethical labor of forming the author himself while also forming the audience and drawing out our role in the ritual of truth-telling.

Augustine reads Scripture

The writing exercises invoked by Pierre Hadot as modes of forming oneself through practices of truth-telling[3] work for Foucault as counterpoints to the Christian exercises. For example, in his brief piece "Self-writing,"[4] Foucault contrasts the notebooks of Marcus Aurelius as an ethopoietic practice – ingesting the truth as a mode of forming oneself, giving oneself these truths as one's own rational principles of action – to Christian texts such as the *Vita Antonii* – in which one tries to discern the truth of oneself as a lurking, dangerous, demon inside to be externalized and purified. Foucault raises the new elements of subject-formation – and its attendant writings – in the Christian practices, especially the hermeneutic operation and self-renunciation. Clearly, in the Augustine *Confessions*, we can see the iteration of these themes in the confession of sins and the submission of his will to god. However, the confession of faith and praise, the readings of Scripture, mode of speaking through scriptural citation, and culmination in

[3] Hadot discusses writing exercises as spiritual exercises, "Spiritual Exercises," *Philosophy as a way of Life*, 81 – 125; and textual exercises as spiritual exercises in Augustine, Hadot, "Quelques thèmes fondamentaux des *Confessions* de Saint Augustin," *Études de Patristique*, 319 – 323. In the introduction to her translation, Ruden describes reading the Augustine Confessions as a similar writing mode to Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*, "Introduction," Ruden, *Confessions*, xl.
[4] Foucault, "Self-writing," *Ethics*, 208 – 221; also Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 355 – 370. In the lineage of Hadot and Foucault, Macé examines reading practices as exercises of the self in contemporary literature, *Facons de lire*.

exegesis all raise the *ethopoietic* operation of the confession of faith.[5] In effect, we might examine the confession of faith, praise, and sin in the Augustine *Confessions* as stitching together techniques of truth-telling into a confessional machinery.

When Augustine begins his reading of Genesis, he instantly jumps to a question that reframes the exegesis around the difference between oneself and god. Instead of comparing god's creation to human creation, Augustine establishes that they are essentially different, recapitualting the problem of separation from god, while again opening the project of getting into relation with god. This is the ethical problem set up from the beginning of the text. The answer staged through the *Confessions* is the work of truth-telling in the confession of sins, praise, and faith. In this final iteration of the arc of confession, Scripture appears as the manifestation of eternal truth in front of us, and reading it offers an exercise of relating to truth. If we can read it over time, as a practice, and get into relation to it, though this reading, we have found a formative truth-telling practice. Reading Scripture holds out the ethical-epistemological work of confession, appropriate to Augustine's convert status.

Augustine's exegesis prefigures this possibility from the beginning. When Augustine refuses to take Genesis 1:1[6] as comparable to human creation, he uses the temporal examples of a craftsman and syllables. For example, a craftsman creates with materials at hand, in a series of steps in succession with beginnings and ends.[7] The creation by god is unlike this, unfettered by any succession or beginning and end.[8] God's speech and ours are not comparable on temporal

[5] On Augustine, Christian reading practices, and hermeneutics, see Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*; Origen, *On First Principles*; Mitchell, *Birth of Christian Hermeneutics*; Clark, *Reading Renunciation*; and Stock, *Augustine as Reader*.
[6] The opening of Genesis on god creating heaven and earth reads: "In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day," Genesis 1:1 – 5, pg. 5.
[7] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb XI 5. (7) – 11. 6. (8), 201 – 203.
[8] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb XI 6. (8), 203. This responds to a question concerning god's creation of heaven and earth that is borne out of a misunderstanding: does creation happen in the moment where god's will changed to want to create, where before it did not? Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb XI 10 (12), 209 – 211. Augustine corrects the underlying logic that generates such a

terms. Human syllables take place in time, in succession, with endings and passing of the voice. The word of god is non-temporal: eternal, always-present, unchanging. Unlike human syllables which pass in time, and human craft which makes things in time, the speech of god and the creation of god are not subject to temporal constraints.[9] However, the Scriptures offer the eternal truth of god in a form that we could read, in time, with finite human syllables. In effect, the entry of the word of god into time, legible in the Scriptures, offer the opportunity to encounter the truth and orient oneself to god despite the difference in temporal condition.

The famous Augustinian notion of time also holds out the possibility of relating to eternal truth from our finite temporal condition. Augustine recasts the experience of time as the distention of the mind, which is an orientation to 'past, present, and future' instead of an orientation to eternal god.[10] Augustine strips the past, present, and future of their existence and delimits them to recollections in the mind. The past is not extant (if it did exist, where is it?) but can be recalled by the impressions that the experience the past event has left in the mind; memory allows the mind to recollect 'past' events.[11] Like the past, the future does not 'exist' 'somewhere else' (where it is present). The 'future' is only the mental capacity of expectation.[12]

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question, noting that the notion of 'before' does not apply to the eternal, which is not characterized by these 'temporal' progressions, Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb XI 11. (16), 215.

[9] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb XI 5. (7), 203. If our creation and language are utterly different from god's, our example proves no problem to the notion that god is able to create the temporal from the eternal word, because our example is irrelevant.

[10] For Augustine's notion of time, see Rosengarten, "Recalcitrant *Distentio*," and Hannan, *On Time: Reading Augustine*. On the experience of time, see O'Donnell, *Commentary III*, 289 – 290; Marion, *Self's Place*, 191 – 229. For Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative*, this passage serves not only as an apt description of temporal experience, but as a cornerstone for understanding the project of creating a narrative as an engagement with this notion of time. My interpretation insists on the ethical stakes of this description of time, and the grid it offers for confession as an exercise to match it. The description of time is framed in terms of the ethical problem of a Christian subject – its sin and separation from god, its state of finitude as a reflection of the fallen state of creation, and the possibility of its recuperation. The temporal experience is framed in terms of an ethical debt and the ethical promise of confession. The formation of a story of his life, or narrative, on this reading, has to be considered in terms of the ethical promise of confession as a redirection of the will, the remission of sin, and an ethical and epistemological activity. On the ethical and political dimensions of confession, the fomation of the narrative is a truth-telling that matches an ethical deficit experienced as the *distentio animi*. Augustine's *Confession* may have a 'unity of plot' – not in the story of the events of his life – but in the image of confession as a transformation of the suject, with an arc of the text representing a narrative of the confession as transformation with reversal and recognition at the conversion demonstrated between the protagonist of the part I becoming the author of the text.

[11] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb XI, 18. (23), 225.

[12] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb XI, 20. (26), 231.

Tellingly, Augustine uses reading a poem to illustrate this: instead of a past, future, and present in which parts of the poem exist, the poem is separated into these dimensions in the mind. Before one begins to read the poem, its entirety is expected in the mind (not: 'it is all existing in the future'). As the poem is read, it passes from 'future' to 'past' with the present as a limit it passes through as it is recited. In the middle of the poem, it is evenly distributed between expectation and memory, and by the end of the recitation, the poem is recalled in the memory and no longer awaiting in the 'expectation.'[13] While past, present, and future may not exist, the mind can recall the events that have passed in the memory, attend to the present passing moment, and expect or anticipate, sometimes from present clues (like the dawn), events (like the sunrise) that have not yet occurred.[14] The tripartite confession might stand in relation to this notion of time as well. The events of his past sins may not have any present existence, but they can be recalled in memory, perhaps even written in text like a poem, whose syllables pass as the audience hears it as well. The possibility the confession offers is for these temporal activities to stretch one towards god, to orient one to truth, to keep the will in submission, to expose the audience to the conversion story and truth of god as well. The confession of sins, for example, would be the activity of truth-telling one makes out of *memoria* for ethical effects.

As confessing the truth of past sins could turn one's orientation away from sin, confessing the truth of god in Scripture – the confession of faith and praise, and reading as an ethical practice – could extend one's orientation to god. Book 11 sets out a reading mode that develops when the confession of self yields the confession of Scripture, when the distention of *memoria* gives way to the absorption in a text that is not subject to the separations into past, present, and future, or rather a text that overwhelms distention with its eternal truth. In the

[13] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb XI, (38), 253.
[14] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb XI, (24), 227 – 229.

opening of book 11, Augustine stages and proclaims the function of his confession of sin precipitating a confession of praise. This is its purpose: god already knows what he will confess, "So why am I regaling you in this way with so many stories about what happened?"[15] The purpose of telling "stories of what happened" is to change Augustine and his audience: to "stimulate my own feelings, and those of my readers, toward you, so that we can all declare, 'great is the Lord and surpassingly worthy of praise.'"[16] Recall the stimulation of feelings in the conversion scene activating his final orientation towards god. When Augustine tells these stories before god, the activity of telling stimulates feelings that open a new activity. The confession of the stories of oneself, that confession of one's sins, opens this second aspect of confession, the praise of god.

The temporal activities could be taken up by confession of self, faith, and praise as an ongoing activity that stretch him towards god. The temporal scene stages this transformation. Augustine reorients himself: "since your mercy is better than life itself, look and see that my life is a kind of distraction."[17] As memory and expectation, life is only distraction. He transforms the experience when he reroutes attention to god's mercy:

> Leaving behind my former times, I recollect myself and follow the One. I forget what is past, and instead of being distracted I reach out, not for what is in the future and so transitory, but for those things which are before me: I press forward, going in the right direction, rather than being distracted, to the prize of my highest calling. There I shall hear the voice of praise and shall contemplate your delight which neither comes into being nor passes away.[18]

[15] "Cur ergo tibi tot rerum narrations digero? Non utique ut per me noveris ea, sed affectum meum excito in te, et eorum qui haec legunt, ut dicamus omnes, 'magnus dominus et laudabilis valde," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb XI, 1. (1), 191.
[16] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb XI, 1. (1), 191. Recall the stimulation of of feelings in the conversion scene: "You redoubled the lashes of fear and shame to stop me from giving up again," Augustine, Confessions, Loeb XI, 8. 11. (25).
[17] "Sed quoniam melior est misericordia tua super vitas, ecce distention est vita mea," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb XI 29. (39), 255.
[18] "Et a veteribus diebus conligar sequens unum: praeterita oblitus, non in ea quae futura et transitura sunt, sed in ea quae ante sunt non distentus sed extentus, non secundum distentionem sed secundum intentionem sequor ad palmam supernae vocationis, ubi audiam vocem laudis et contempler delectationem tuam nec venientem nec praetereuntem," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb XI 29. (39), 255. On Marion's interpretation of the formation of the self in relation to the eternal, see *Self's Place*, 282 – 288.

The temporal experience is shifting: *memoria* of the past does not orient him to it, the events are told in order to stimulate feelings to god and praise of him. New activities populate the space. This opportunity recasts the "the drops of time [as] worth a lot"[19] because they offer the space for "meditating on your law, and confessing to you how much I know of it and what ignorance I still possess, the beginning of your enlightening me, and the last traces of my darkness."[20] Instead of feeling a poem slip by, Augustine paints a picture of the confession (of himself and god, sins and faith) occupying his experience, and thereby transforming it into a space to cultivate a relation to god. While god's "nod of approval sends the moments of time speeding past," Augustine asks for some of this time, "bestow a portion," to be given to an activity, "meditations upon the secrets of our law." Augustine asks to spend some of this time to meditate on the law (i.e. Scripture), and asks that god not "shut it away against those who knock."[21] The hope is to devote some of this time to practices that will open a relation to god.

The reading of Scriptures is the reading practice that allows an extended exercise in meditating on the eternal truth. After his confession of sin, stimulating feelings, conversion to god, now he calls on god for the activity of confessing the truth in the books (which, of course, he has been actively 'doing' from the opening of the text):

> You willed for so many dark secrets to be written within the pages of Scripture. Lord, perfect me and reveal to me those woods! Look! Your voice is my delight, your voice above the profusion of pleasures…Let me confess to you whatever I find in your books, and let me hear the voice of praise; and let me drink of you; and let me meditate upon the wonders of our law right from the beginning in which you made heaven and earth.[22]

[19] "Et si sufficio haec enuntiare ex ordine, caro mihi valent stillae temporum," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb XI 2. (2), 193.
[20] "Et olim inardesco meditari in lege tua et in ea tibi confiteri scientiam et imperitiam meam, primordia inluminationis tuae et reliquias tenebrarum mearum, quousque devoretur a fortitudine infirmitas," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb XI 2. (2), 193.
[21] "Tuus est dies et tua est nox; ad nutum tuum momenta transvolant. Largire inde spatium meditationibus nostris in abdita legis tuae, neque adversus pulsantes claudas eam," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb XI 2. (3), 195. Cf. 'knock' at 12. 1. (1) and 13. 38.
[22] "O domine, perfice me et revela mihi eas. Ecce vox tua gaudium meum, vox tua super affluentiam voluptatum. Da quod amo: amo enim, et hoc tu dedisti. Ne dona tua deseras nec herbam tuam spernas sitientem. Confitear tibi quidquid invenero in libris tuis et audiam vocem laudis, et te bibam et considerem mirabilia de lege tua ab usque principio in quo fecisti caelum et terram usque ad regnum tecum perpetuum sanctae civitatis tuae," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb XI 2. (3), 195.

In the end, reading the pages of Scripture, confessing what is in the books, and meditating on the wonders of the law from the beginning of Genesis is the reading practice answering this call. Rather than distend himself to past or future, he can fill drops of time with meditation on Scripture and exercise his orientation to god. Reading Scripture offers a practice to do the ethical labor of telling the eternal truth. Our author can delight in the "voice" of god and the "voice of praise." He performs this truth-telling in front of his audience, exposing us to the truth as well.

Augustine paints the scene of meditating on Scripture, the text floating above in the firmament, like pigment smeared across the insides of italian domes. He asks how we could deny "God…made for us an authoritative firmament above us in the form of your holy Scriptures" using the metaphor "like a skin, you stretched out the firmament that is your book."[23] Stretching out the book in the heavens like a firmament gives the eternal words a form that we can read. The Scripture is a medium through which Augustine can encounter the eternal word despite his temporal condition. By contrast, Augustine imagines the beings above this finite condition enjoying the word of god without needing its temporal expression:

> There are other waters above this firmament, I believe; they are immortal and set apart from earthly corruption. Let them praise your name, let them praise you – your hosts of angels above the heavens, who have no need to look up to this firmament, and learn, from reading it, to recognize your Word. For they always behold your face, and without spoken syllables taking time to pronounce, that is where they read what your eternal will decides. There they are read, they make their choice, and they love: they read eternally, and what they read never passes away, for, by choosing and loving, they read the very changelessness of your resolution. Their book is never closed, and their scroll is never rolled up: for you yourself are their book and their scroll for ever. You have given them a place above this firmament that you established over the weakness of the peoples dwelling below, so that they could look up and recognize your mercy and your truth declaring your existence in time – you, who made time itself! For your mercy, Lord, abides in heaven and your truth reaches up to the clouds. The clouds pass away; but heaven abides. The preachers of your word pass from this life to

[23] "Aut quis nisi tu, deus noster, fecisti nobis firmamantum auctoritatis super nos in scriptua tua divina?" Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb XIII 15. (16), 363.

> another life; and still your Scripture is stretched out over your peoples, to the end of the age. Both heaven and earth shall pass away, but your words will not pass away: the skin will be rolled up, and the grass over which it was stretched out will pass away, together with all its bright splendor, but your Word abides eternally.[24]

For the angels, unseparated from god by the divide between the eternal and creation, there is no need to look up at the scroll. They abide in the eternal and can encounter the word in an atemporal mode. In contrast to our own experience, such eternal beings can read the word "without spoken syllables taking time to pronounce." However, the word also appears in the form of Scripture: stretched out over us like a firmament, unfurled like a skin or scroll, the eternal word taking on a form that we can read in time, with "spoken syllables taking time to pronounce." This concession is actually a boon. When the Scripture is spread out above, the eternal word manifests itself in time, and temporal beings can encounter the eternal word of god. Below the firmament, creaturely humans can "recognize your mercy and your truth declaring your existence in time." The fact that we can, in time, pronounce the syllables of the eternal word offers us a chance to encounter the word of eternal god, to actually do an activity with it, to read it. This opens an exercise of confession though which the speaker can be transformed through speaking the truth – say, in a confession of faith.

Speaking the truth in Scripture is a sustained aspect of the confession throughout the *Confessions*. The 'author' who 'has converted' speaks the truth of Scripture constantly from the beginning of the text. The truth of Scripture is not just represented by the text, the text stages its

[24] "Sunt aliae aquae super hoc firmamentum, credo, immortales et a terrena coruptione secretae. Laudent nomen tuum, laudent te supercaelestes populi angelorum tuorum, qui non opus habent suspicere firmamentum hoc et legendo cognoscere verbum tuum. Vident enim faciem tuam semper, et ibi legunt sine syllabis temporum quid velit aeterna voluntas tua. Legunt eligunt et diligunt; semper legunt et numquam praeterit quod legunt. Eligendo enim et diligendo legunt ipsam incommutabilitatem consilii tui. Non clauditur codex eorum nec plicatur liber eorum, quia tu ipse illis hoc es et es in aeternum, quia super hoc firmamentum ordinasti eos, quod firmasti super infirmitatem inferiorum populorum, ubi suspicerent et cognoscerent misericordiam tuam temporaliter enuntiantem te, qui fecisti tempora. In caelo enim, domine, misericordia tua et veritas tua usque ad nubes. Transuerunt nubes, caelum autem manet. Transeunt praedicatores verbi tui ex hac vita in aliam vitam, scriptura vero tua usque in finem saeculi super populos extenditur. Sed et caelum et terra transibunt, sermones autem tui non transibunt, quoniam et pellis plicabitur et faenum super quod extendebatur cum claritate sua praeteriet, verbum autem tuum manet in aeternum," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb XIII (18), 365 – 7.

own telling-the-truth of it. It 'speaks' the Scripture as a part of its confession, its language is integrated as his own.[25] Augustine's mode of confessing cites, repeats, writes, reads and exegetes the Scripture. Like the *ethopoetic* practices, the Scripture has become (and continues to become) an internalized and confessed truth for oneself. This continues to form oneself in relation to that truth, and places Scripture as an integrated part of the truth-telling confession. When the eternal truth takes shape in a text that has syllables we can pronounce in time, we have occasion to tell the eternal truth in time as an opportunity to transform oneself in relation to that truth. The textual practices extend the author's exposure to the truths in the Scripture, and sustain the work of the confession.

For his part, Augustine casts his eyes on this painting, calls us to look with him, and marvels at the effects of this gaze:

> Let us behold the heavens, Lord, the works of your fingers. Clear away from our eyes the cloud under which you have hidden them. There is your evidence, which equips little ones with wisdom. From the mouths of babes and sucklings, O my God, bring your praise to perfection. We know of no other books so capable of bringing down pride, of bringing down the enemy, the defender who – by defending his own sins – refuses to give in and be reconciled to you. I do not know, Lord, I do not know any other writings of such purity that they could persuade me into confessing, and make my neck submit to your yoke, and appeal to me to worship you with no thought of reward. Let me understand these Scriptures, good Father, grant this to me (even though I am far beneath them), because you have made them strong for the sake of those of us who dwell below.[26]

Scripture holds out the promise of ethical transformation to its witnesses. Bearing witness to this firmament "equips little ones with wisdom" and "bring[s god's] praise to perfection" "from the

[25] The metaphor of ingestion and digestion from Seneca illustrate the idea, see Seneca, Letter 84; Foucault, "Self-writing, *Ethics*, 213. Mitchell notes the use of the metaphor to digest Scripture in Gregory of Nyssa, *Birth of Hermeneutics*, 95.
[26] "Videamus, domine, caelos, opera digitorum tuorum; disserena oculis nostris nubilum quo subtexisti eos. Ibi est testimonium tuum sapientiam praestans parvulis. Perfice, deus meus, laudem tuam ex ore infantium et lactantium. Neque enim novimus alios libros ita destruentes superbiam, ita destruentes inimicum et defensorem resistentem reconciliationi tuae defendo peccata sua. Non novi, domine, non novi alia tam casta eloquia, quae sic mihi persuaderent confessionem et lenirent cervicem meam iugo tuo et invitarent colere te gratis. Intellegam ea, pater bone, da mihi hoc subterposito, quia subterpositis solidasti ea," Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb XIII (17), 365.

mouths of babes and sucklings." In effect of reading these books, the subject is transformed from "defending his sins" to "being reconciled to" god. This is the central ethical-epistemological task laid out by the text, which comes to a conclusion in reading Scripture, as the enduring work to accomplish this feat.

Before his conversion, Augustine describes being unable to let go of his attachment to sin until reading in the Milan garden capitulates a change in himself. Here too, the books are "capable of bringing down pride, of bringing down the enemy, the defender who – by defending his own sins – refuses to give in and be reconciled to you." Recall this was precisely the obstacle to Augustine's own conversion: even after he 'knew' the truth, he needed to transform his wants in light of this truth. In the conversion scene, the encounter with the text – that holds this truth – causes this transformation in himself to come about. The above passage describing the effects of reading Scripture over time after the conversion recapitulates this same movement. Beholding the text incites the confession, Augustine writes it can "persuade me into confessing." As in the conversion scene, the text induces a confession that is an active part of his transfomation, brings his will into submission to god, effects the transformation longed for from the beginning, and depicts an exercise to sustain the orientation to truth.

At this point in the *Confessions*, the scene is not of a young man converting in the garden at Milan – or a bishop recalling his conversion. The scene is of a bishop exegeting the text. But both maintain a unified principle of confession expressed differently with respect to their positions in the *Confessions*. In both scenes, the encounter with the text – which holds the truth of god – can capitulate a change in its witness. The encounter with the text can bring one to worship god, submit his neck to god's yoke, and confess. This is in part because in (both) scenes, the encounter with the text induces confession. In book 8, the reading sparks his conversion,

induced by the confrontation of his sins, and resulting in the confession of faith. In the composition, Augustine reencounters the inspiring text, his dramatic encounter, and the position of peril between Chastity and Vanity. In the scene, he stages the effects of the confessions in the past and mobilizes it in the present activity of confessing. Recall too in the conversion scene the combination of the texts and the personal stories of conversion. The combination of the texts and the stories of other Christian conversions would pass along the effect to the next witness. Just as the confession of one's sin and the confession of faith were connected in these model stories, it was also connected in Augustine's own conversion scene, and is connected in the picture he paints in his confession 'before us.'

The exegesis in book 11 reiterates these moves calibrated to the ethical-epistemological 'work' of 'Augustine' in book 13. In this scene, he has converted but still undertakes the work of stretching himself to god. He is still tasked with orienting himself to god, and deploys confession as a means to do this ethical work. In this case, he also does the practice of reading texts, but the orientation to god takes a different form according to the situation. 'Now' at the 'end of the story' he 'has converted' so the transformation does not entail leaving a life of sin: breaking off the sexual practice with his mistress, stealing fruit, or defending the guilty. Now, the work of orienting himself to god is stretching himself to the eternal god, submitting himself to the yoke, exercising his love of truth through meditation on Scripture. As in the conversion scene, reading accomplishes this work. The work of exegeting the texts, of reading the texts, of beholding the texts, of confessing (himself and faith) is all labor that does this work. It forms him and pulls him towards god. And, just as in the conversion scene, the confession girds the *Confessions:* performs reading the text, exegeting the text, experiencing the stretch of oneself towards god through encountering the text. The scene sets up an effect for the reader. In this confession,

Augustine puts in front of us the Genesis text, the reading of the Genesis text, and the effects of the reading of the Genesis text. That is to say, as 'we' read the *Confessions,* we are exposed to the text and the experience that pulls one to god.

In the end, the *Confessions* works as a coherent whole, with the overall movement encapsulated in each scene, and each scene functioning according to the whole. The reading scene in book 8 is composed by the author of book 11, and the author of the book 11 exegesis is converted through the reading scene in book 8. The two are unified in the way the *Confessions* pulls together the ethical-epistemological labor of confession as subject-forming truth-telling. We might understand it like the principle of Aristotle's *Poetics*, that a composition has a beginning middle and an end, and that each element is essentially bound to the other parts. However, in this case, the beginning middle and ends are not connected to the 'plot' of the events in the temporal anecdotes recounted in the first ten books. The beginning, middle, and ends arc is on the story of the transformation of the self, which is reflected by the composition of the text. The transformation of the self is illustrated in each scene, the mode in which it is told, and the progression of scenes over the text. While each scene captures the ethical-epistemological transformation of the confession, they unfold in a progression that unfolds the story of the transformation. From book 1 to 8 to 13, we check in at different scenes of this arc, through which 'confession' takes effect in the author, 'Augustine.' Each scene stages the transformation the confession makes in him. The text hangs together as a portrait of the truth-telling practice and its effects.

The reading practice depicted and performed in the *Confessions* is a truth-telling labor the author undertakes towards his ethical *telos*, his love of god, relation to truth, and the conversion of his will to follow god's law. The possibility of meditating on the truth of god seems

impossible due to the difference between our finite experience of time and language, but the Scripture offer a temporal, legible, gaze-able, manifestation of the eternal word for our limited temporal view. As such, reading, rereading, writing, and exegeting Scripture offer activities of sustained engagement with the eternal truth, which promise ethical transformation, and extend the possibility out to witnesses of this text as well.

Rousseau's Letters

The textual practices in the Augustine *Confessions* opens a question for the Rousseau *Confessions*: are its reading and writing practices part of the confessional operation, or coherent with the arc of the *Confessions* and its truth-telling–subject-forming scheme? In this section, I will consider the transcription and confession of Rouseau's correspondence with Grimm, Diderot, and d'Épinay[27] as scenes operating in a parallel mode.

Letter writing is a theme throughout the Rousseau *Confessions*. A brief scene from part I might highlight the operation of the transcriptions in Part II. In part I, on the journey from his happy youth with Maman in Les Charmettes to Paris, new system of musical notation in hand, Rousseau devises a bit of mischief: he calls himself 'Dudding' when he meets Mme de Larnage on the road and gives the address of 'his friend Rousseau' for their correspondence. In this scene, the author cues us, the audience, in on the difference between himself and his name. The name, the figure 'Rousseau,' is the fiction. In part I, before he is famous, he can have a flexible relation to this name. 'Now,' in part II, the author is famous, has no space between himself and his name, and he suffers due to the constraints of his relation to it. As it happens, he is a victim of his

[27] For Cranston on the relations among the Rousseau, Grimm, Diderot, and d'Épinay and Rousseau's time at the Hermitage, see *Noble Savage*, 21 – 54. The *Collected Writings 5* volume edited by Christopher Kelly includes the letters Rousseau refers to in the *Confessions* with the text. The Pleiade commentary notes Rousseau's bundles of letters were included with the manuscript Du Peyrou brings to the Neuchâtel library in 1794, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 1371. For letters, see also Rousseau's *Letters to Beaumont* (1762) and *Letters from the Mountain* (1764).

attachment to this name 'Rousseau,' and so are we. Mme de Larnage knew our author immediately, directly, without knowing his actual name, while we the public have suffered a misunderstanding of him because of his name – or rather, because of the way it was unjustly represented. The misleading public image of Rousseau perpetrates the greatest deceit against knowing him, it was put into place without – even against – his own true confessions.

Telling the truth of his correspondence with Mme de Larnage sets up an operation of the scene in this *Confessions* 'now.' The name 'Rousseau' becomes a joke – the audience is in on! – that signals that there is an invention about 'Rousseau': that while it is his name, he is separable from it, and there is a space of negotiation between them. Rousseau continues after this scene to use these names 'Jean-Jacques' and 'Rousseau' over the text,[28] speaking with an ironic distance, and undermining the public figure 'Rousseau' that has been put together by his enemies. This scene opens up a mode of interaction with Rousseau, while posing the danger of overconfidence in capturing him in his name. In this text, the use of his name opens this same space, the danger lies in judging this 'Rousseau' without the real potrait. Our author sets up the *Confessions* as the confession through which the public has the chance to actually know this person, over-and-against the 'knowledge' of this 'Rousseau' out in the public.

The scene creates a mark of trust between the author and audience. By Part II, when he transcribes the letters between Mme d'Épinay, Grimm, and himself, the centerpiece of his public scandal and disrepute, he has already set up the the trust between 'us' readers and our author. While we *were* – before we had this text in hand – the public who had the story of Rousseau from Grimm, *now* we have the confession, the true account, from the person himself. This gives us the chance to cross lines, to see the portrait of 'Rousseau' was false, and to get the truth of the

[28] Recall the 'austere' 'Jean Jacques' in chapter 4: "Mon sang s'allume et petille, la tête me tourne malgré mes cheveux déja grisonnans, et voila le grave Citoyen de Genève, voila l'austére Jean Jacques," Rousseau, *Confessions,* Pleiade, 427.

matter from him directly. This also gives us the chance to see the deception of his enemies against us. In Part II scenes, others try to abuse this space to perpetrate a deceit about Rousseau. One day, Rousseau returns to the Hermitage to find Thérèse upet because d'Épinay came to the house demanding his letters with Sophie. This episode is confirmed by her mother who later denies it in front of Diderot. While the letters support his true account of himself that has been attacked over and over, the scenes illustrate the constant attacks on the truth in the attempts to steal his letters. While the public image becomes the joke, the *Confessions* are serious as sin in establishing his true portrait.[29] Rousseau stretches the truth out to us readers not only to save himself, but to save us from the sin of misjudging him.

To this end, Rousseau stages the transcription of his letters and the detailed account of his inner feelings during the correspondence as a labor of truth-telling before his public. In Part I, young Rousseau was happily obscure: there is no public figure 'Rousseau' to be maligned, or whose misjudgment could cause any ill effect on him. In part II, a public figure, 'Rousseau,' has already been misconstrued, maligned, and publicly misrepresented. This conspiracy ruined his living situation, his reputation, and the public reception of his works.[30] The false image generated out of Grimm's misrepresentation leads to a false judgment of the innocent-accused. Our author, the Rousseau we do not know and have misjudged, has to correct the representation

[29] At least in its staging. Perhaps they're serious to the extent that sin is serious. The possibility remains that the entire operation from the opening scene before the Supreme Judge is ironic. The hyperbole of the penitential posture can cut the opposite way, staging the absudity of the demand for his confession, (still invoking Augustine, exposing those who examine others instead of themselves). On a bit of childhood mischief, Rousseau stages his confession: "Gather round, O readers, curious to learn the noble history of the walnut tree on the terrace and to hear its horrible tragedy, and refrain from trembling if you can!" Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 21. The deployment of irony plays in the truth-game, and the adjudication of sincerity and irony plays a truth game. If there is an irony that releases us from a truth-game, that may be a relief from the point of view of power relations. If, on the other hand, we want salvation – or truth…

[30] Kelly points out the recuperation of Rousseau's reputation is connected to the public service of his texts, *Rousseau As Author*. Mostefai points out Rousseau is not the unwitting victim of public polemical arguments, but sparks them and the image of Rousseau as a persecuted philosopher, *Écrivain polémique.* The position of defense as part of the author's self-figuration and as verification of the truth is evident in the Christian tradition, for example in the self-writings of Margery Kempe, a British convert whose 1436 text claims the hatred of her enemies proves her truth and increases god's love for her: "you shall be recognized as truth indeed. And you will succeed, daughter, in spite of all your enemies; the more envy they have of you for my grace the better shall I love you," *Kempe*, 83.

in order to arrest the subjugations this falsehood imposes on him. His anonymity may be over, but he wants his freedom back.

For example, Rousseau lays bare his full account of the correspondences between himself, Diderot, Grimm, and d'Épinay to give his side of the story, the true portrait, of his dealings with this coterie in the events that lead to his exile from the Hermitage. The letters overlap with his account of the affair with Sophie, which lend an entirely other explanation of the scandal. In this section, I track the way the letters offer a space for Rousseau to work his truth-telling, on the same terrain that the figure 'Rousseau' was so ill-represented.

On Rousseau's account,[31] the hullabaloo arises from this nonevent: Mme d'Épinay sends for him, is agitated, and tells him of her sudden plans to take a trip to Geneva for a medical reason. When he asks her who will go with her, she names a group of people including her son and M. de Linant,

> Then she added casually: 'And you, my bear, won't you come too?' Since I did not believe her to be in earnest, knowing as she did that during the season we were entering I was rarely in a fit state to leave my room, I joked about the practicality of one invalid escorting another; she herself appeared not to have meant her proposal to be taken seriously, and there was no further mention of it. We talked exclusively about the preparations for her journey, with which she was much preoccupied, since she was determined to set out within a fortnight.[32]

All in all, on Rousseau's account, it seems that the request for Rousseau to accompany d'Épinay to Geneva was lightly meant, lightly taken, impractical, and inconsequential. Rousseau explains to us that the hasty journey was actually planned for a more discreet reason, which he only found out about through Thérèse's confidences with the servants in the house, the chamber-

[31] Again, the question is not whether this is true, but the 'truth telling' machinery assembled and how it works.
[32] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 464 – 465. "Et puis elle ajoûta négligemment; et vous, mon Ours, ne viendrez-vous pas aussi? Comme je ne crus pas qu'elle parlât serieusement, sachant que dans la saison où nous entrions j'étois à peine en état de sortir de ma chambre, je plaisantai sur l'utilité du cortége d'un malade pour un autre malade, elle parut elle-même n'en avoir pas fait tout de bon la proposition, et il n'en fut plus question. Nous ne parlames plus que des préparatifs de son voyage dont elle s'occupoit avec beaucoup de vivacité, étant résolue à partir dans quinze jours," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 475.

maid and *maitre d'hotel*. Notably, Rousseau is still the soul of discretion. His role of truth-teller is not to share everyone else's secrets, the merit of his truth-telling does not lie in telling everything.[33] The merit of Rousseau's confession lies in remedying the initial deficit of truth: on his interior feelings.

Rousseau can maintain this position and keep d'Épinay's secret because the contents of her secret are irrelevant to this case. The relevant matter is whether the image of Rousseau is accurate or not. He has to account for his interior states and render a confession that delivers the truth of these interior states and private exchanges, against the false representations of them. In fact, that d'Épinay has a secret Rousseau cannot share does not cast suspicion on Rousseau, but establishes that d'Épinay is the one to keep secrets from friends and the public. While Rousseau delivers the truth to the misled public, it turns out d'Épinay and her coterie perpetrate the misrepresentation – and the constraints it puts on Rousseau and the public.

In being deceived but not telling d'Épinay's secret, Rousseau proves his candor and pins d'Épinay and her coterie with the sin of deception. To Rousseau's eye, her deception – to pretend that the journey was for one reason and not another – actually betrays a more sinister plot. While he argues it was better that he did not agree to go with d'Épinay to Geneva, ("she gained greatly from my refusal, for she succeeded it the end in persuading her husband himself to accompany

[33] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 465. "It took no great penetration of mind to guess that there was some secet motive for this journey that was being kept from me. This secret, which was known to everyone in the household except me, was discovered next day by Thérèse, to whom it was divulged by Teissier, the *maitre d'hotel*, who had heard it from the chamber-maid. Although I do not owe it to Mme d'Épinay to keep this secret, since I did not learn it from her, it is too closely linked with the others that I did for me to be able to separate them; and so I will say nothing on the matter. But these secrets, which never have nor ever will escape either my lips or my pen, were known to too many people for them not to be known to everyone who was close to Mme d'Épinay;"'Je n'avois pas besoin de beaucoup de pénétration pour comprendre qu'il y avoit à ce voyage un motif secret qu'on me taisoit…quoique je ne doive pas ce secret à Mme d'Épinay, puisque je ne le tiens pas d'elle, il est trop lié avec ceux que j'en tiens pour que je puisse l'en séparer: mais ces secrets qui jamais ne sont sortis ni ne sortiront de ma bouche ni de ma plume, ont été sus de trop de gens pour pouvoir être ignorés dans tous les entours de Mme d'Épinay," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 475.

her"[34]) the request was actually a hostile plan which brought about a severe, damning, public misrepresentation of him.

In the following, I read the letters that Rousseau transcribes around this event in three parts. In the letters, Rousseau submits as evidence the exchanges amongst his friends on accompanying d'Épinay to Geneva and leaving her patronage. The exchanges amongst Rousseau, Diderot, Gimm, and d'Épinay form fodder for the portrayals of each of them. Rousseau claims his portrait was painted in a misleading manner by these friends, and transcribes the exchanges in writing ostensibly so that the truth can be laid out for the reader to judge. If Rousseau acts as the truth-teller against false accusers, this transcription serves as the labor of manifesting the truth for the public to convert their deception to truth.

Diderot

In the first note from Diderot, Rousseau points out the way this letter was designed to be seen and to shape the view of him. He points out Diderot's note "had been folded only once, so that its contents could be read without difficulty, was addressed to me at Mme d'Épinay's house, care of M. de Linant, who was the son's tutor and the mother's confidant," while "we usually communicated by post or by the messenger at Montmorency, and this was the first and the only time that he had ever used this particular route."[35] Not only does the new route indicate the purposes behind Diderot's letter, that is to say, what it means to accomplish in being read by another, hidden audience apart from Rousseau himself. Rousseau also notes the "the artful way in which Diderot affected here a milder, more affectionate, more respectful tone that in any of his previous letters, where he had addressed me at best as his 'dear fellow' without condescending to

[34] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 465.
[35] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 465, 466.

bestow upon me the name of friend."[36] Diderot's letter has an art of deception in misrepresenting the relation between them, adopting an unusual tone and inviting a new audience. Rousseau discovers – and lays bare – that this letter was meant to be seen, has an art of deception about it, pretends its intimate and respectful tone is usual, and makes its way though an unusual route so that it can be seen by d'Épinay before he even receives it. To Rousseau's eye, the letter trades in the hidden operations, indirect address, and strategic exposures that work against him.

Rousseau, who has positioned himself as actually telling the truth, without art, speaks directly to his reader: "I received from Diderot the note that is transcribed below," labels the note, and transcribes its contents in full:

Note from Diderot, Bundle A no. 52[37]

> 'I was made to love you and to cause you displeasure. I hear that Mme d'Épinay is going to Geneva but nothing about your accompanying her. My friend, if you are happy with Mme d'Épinay, you should go with her; if you are unhappy, you should go more readily still. Here is your chance, overburdened as you must be with the weight of your obligation to her, to discharge it in part and obtain some relief. Will you find another such opportunity in life to demonstrate your gratitude? She is going to a country where she will be like someone who has just dropped from the clouds. She is ill; she will require amusement and distraction. It's winter, my friend, don't forget. The difficulty posed by your health may be very much greater than I believe. But are you worse today than you were a month ago or than you will be at the beginning of the spring? Will the journey seem any easier in three months from now?'[38]

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[36] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 466. "Le tremblement de colere, l'éblouissement qui me gagnoient en lisant ce billet, et qui me permirent à peine de l'achever, ne m'empêchérent pas d'y remarquer l'adresse avec laquelle Diderot y affectoit un ton plus doux, plus caressant, plus honnête que dans toutes ses autres lettres, dans lesquelles il me traitoit tout au plus de mon cher sans daigner m'y donner le nom d'ami," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 476 – 477. The *Collected Writings 5* commentary corrects the record: the letter was sealed and adressed to Rousseau, 657. The Pleiade commentary corrects d'Épinay's account of Rousseau receiving it, and notes Diderot later remonstrates Rousseau for sharing a private letter, 1503 – 1504.

[37] The texts containing the truths in question change from Scriptures to letters. The cataloging, assemblage, and numbering of his bundles of letters reiterate the cataloging and organization of truths visible in the numerations of Augustine's truth-text as well.

[38] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 465 – 466. "Je suis fait pour vous aimer, et pour vous donner du chagrin. J'apprends que Mme d'Épinay va à Genève, et je n'entends point dire que vous l'accompagniez. Mon ami, content de Mme d'Épinay il faut partir avec elle: mécontent il faut partir beaucoup plus vite. Etes-vous surchargé du poids des obligations que vous lui avez; voila une occasion de vous aquitter en partie et de vous soulager. Trouverez-vous une autre occasion dans votre vie de lui témoigner votre reconnoissance? Elle va dans un pays où elle sera comme tombée des nues. Elle est malade: elle aura besoin d'amusement et de distaction. L'hiver! Voyez, mon ami. L'objection de votre santé peut être beaucoup plus forte que je ne la crois. Mais étes-vous plus mal aujourdhui que vous ne l'étiez il y a un mois, et que vous ne le serez au commencement du printems? Ferez-vous dans trois mois d'ici le voyage plus comodement qu'aujourdhui?" Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 476.

Weighing in, Diderot's letter makes a series of points on Rousseau accompanying d'Épinay on her trip: he owes her, he knows the city in which she will be new and alone, he could ease her illness, and he will only grow less capable of the trip with time. Then, the letter shifts to a mode of comparison between Diderot and Rousseau, and shifts the terms of the exchange. No longer about the trip, the letter stages an encounter between the terms of making the decision, and weighs conscience and obligation. Diderot writes:

> 'As for me, I must confess that if I could not bear riding in the chaise, I would take up my stick and follow it on foot. Besides which, aren't you afraid that your behaviour might be misinterpreted? You will be suspected either of ingratitude or of some other secret motive. I know, of course, that whatever you do your conscience will always bear witness on your behalf, but is such witness on its own enough, and is it permissible more or less to ignore other people's? It is, for the rest, out of a sense of duty towards you, my friend, and towards myself that I am writing this letter. If it annoys you, throw it into the fire and let us think no more of it than if it had never been written. I send you greetings, I send you love, I embrace you.'[39]

For his part, Diderot wants his audience to know, he would walk the route to Geneva. Diderot mobilizes confession as well: if the audience seeks to evaluate Diderot on this matter, his inner feeling dictates that he would walk the route out of obligation and gratitude. Diderot raises the suspicion Rousseau's refusal could cause: either around the refusal to go or the desire to stay behind. In effect, Rousseau becomes the source of secrecy on this intepretation. The force of consensus is also mobilized against Rousseau in weighing his refusal against the common sense that he ought to accompany d'Épinay. Of course, the difficulty of this argument remains that the secret reason itself cannot be exposed, so Rousseau has to fight against the misrepresentation of

[39] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 466. "Pour moi je vous *avoue* que si je ne pouvois supporter la chaise je prendrois un bâton et je la suivrois. Et puis ne craignez-vous point qu'on mesinterprete vôtre conduite? On vous soupçonnera ou d'ingratitude ou d'un autre motif secret. Je sais bien que quoique vous fassiez, vous aurez toujours pour vous le témoignage de votre conscience: mais ce témoignage suffit-il seul, et est-il permis de négliger jusqu'à certain point celui des autres hommes. Au reste, mon ami, c'est pour m'aquiter avec vous et avec moi que je vous écris ce billet. S'il vous déplait, jettez-le au feu, et qu'il n'en soit non plus question que s'il n'eut jamais été écrit. Je vous salue, vous aime, et vous embrasse," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 476.

himself without exposing it, and has to fight against the way the secrecy is mobilized to cast suspicion on him. For Diderot, adherence to social expectation and obligation solves all these problems. Diderot raises the opinions of others as a means to check the choice not to go, spare Rousseau the suspicion, and keep a clear conscience by adhering to the obligations imposed by others. Diderot enacts the principle in his own letter; the duty to one another compels him to write his letter, which the audience can bear witness to when reading it.

We could see why this would drive Rousseau mad, for his ethical *telos* opposes Diderot's argument on both grounds. Rousseau has configured the 'problem' as the debt incurred from the deficit of truth, and the outcomes of unjust constraint on others as their effect. In this case, someone else has a secret and places an unjust burden on him, constraining Rousseau. In further violation, the secret is used to perpetate another deception, a false image of Rousseau, which places constraints on others.[40] For Diderot to invoke social obligations as he perpetrates an artful deceit is incoherent and disingenuous to Rousseau. The entire note reads as farce, its final demurral – "if [this letter] annoys you, throw it into the fire and let us think no more of it" – evinces that it was not meant to change the mind of Rousseau. If taken seriously, the final line is a strangely casual note to put at the end of the letter. If taken lightly, the letter seems like it could have been, as Rousseau argues, not for his benefit, but to perform this argument for its other, actual audience, and while forming a discussion about Rousseau and his refusal.[41]

Rousseau is furious upon reading the letter and directs this fury not just to Diderot, but at the coterie of people building this story about Rousseau and his decision not to travel. He barely finishes the letter, and "hastily scribbled the following reply" in a state of "trembling" with "blind rage." Against the circuitous route Diderot's letter takes to share its message with the

[40] In their misjudgment of Rousseau.
[41] Which, on Rousseau's telling of the original conversation with d'Épinay, is hardly a refusal at all.

involved parties, Rousseau marches himself, letter in hand, "to Mme d'Épinay, to whom, in my blind fury, I wanted to read it myself, along with Diderot's note."[42] When he reaches the house, "entering Mme d'Épinay's room, I found Grimm with her; I was delighted. I read out my two letters to them, loudly and clearly, with a boldness of which I would not have believed myself capable"[43] and transcribes the letter he reads to them in full for us:

> 'My dear friend, you cannot know the force of my obligation towards Mme d'Épinay, nor to what extent I am bound by it, nor if she really needs me on this journey, nor if she wants my company, nor if it is possible for me to go, nor the reasons I might have for not doing so. I have no objection to discussing all of these points with you; but you must concede meanwhile that for you to prescribe so positively what I should do, without first putting yourself in a position to judge, is, my dear philosopher, to give vent to mere opinion.[44]

In his reply, Rousseau rebuts Diderot's list of reasons to go on the trip on the grounds that Diderot is uninformed on each of these issues, and therefore in no "position to judge." The accusation represents the threat of misinformation. Against the misjudgment founded on this misinformation, Rousseau offers the *Confessions*; against the deficit of truth on the part of those evaluating and judging him, Rousseau gives evidence. Without it, judgments of Rousseau come up wrong. In the ribbon scene he failed to give his confession, in the apple scene he was cut off from giving his confession. Diderot is in danger of judging Rousseau without the truth; the public is in danger of conspiring and adopting someone else's opinion as one's own as well. In his letter with Diderot, read aloud, and transcribed here again, Rousseau lays out the truth. Now,

[42] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 466.
[43] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 467. "En entrant dans la chambre de Mme d'Épinay, je trouvai Grimm avec elle et j'en fus charmé. Je leur lus à haute et claire voix mes deux lettres avec une intrepidité dont je ne me serois pas cru capable," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 478.
[44] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 466 – 467. "Mon cher ami, vous ne pouvez savoir ni la force des obligations que je puis avoir à Mme d'Épinay ni jusqu'à quel point elles me lient, ni si elle a reellement besoin de moi dans son voyage, ni si elle désire que je l'accompagne, ni s'il m'est possible de le faire ni les raisons que je puis avoir de m'en abstenir. Je ne refuse pas de discuter avec vous tous ces points; mais en attendant convenez que me prescrire si affirmativement ce que je dois faire sans vous être mis en état d'en juger, c'est, mon cher philosophe, opiner en franc étourdi," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 477.

the truth does not just include the circumstances that prevent him from traveling, but the misrepresentations of his decision which are crafting a false image.

Where Diderot wagers a comparison of himself and Rousseau to incite Rousseau to consider the opinions of others and his duty towards them, Rousseau reiterates the comparison to make Diderot consider the damage to his own judgment and honesty by bowing to them:

> 'And the worst of it, as I see it, is that your views are not your own. Not only am I disinclined to let myself be pushed around in your name by anyone who has a mind to do so, but there is, I find, something evasive about all these detours, which is not at all in keeping with your usual candour and from which you would do as well, for your sake as well as for mine, to desist in future.'[45]

In fact, Diderot's deference to the opinions of others not only makes Rousseau less inclined to follow his advice, these deceptions compromise Diderot's honesty, and his ability to fulfill his "sense of duty towards" Rousseau. To Diderot's urge to check their conscience against that of others, Rousseau rebuts with the option of bringing truth-telling into the equation, against the false steps that arise from too much deference to the opinions of others. In his final turn, Rousseau writes:

> 'You are afraid that my conduct might be misinterpreted; but I defy a heart like yours to think badly of mine. Others, perhaps, would speak better of me if I resembled them more. May God preserve me from their approbation! Let the wicked spy on me, let them misinterpret me; Rousseau was not made to fear them, nor Diderot to heed them.'[46]

In this letter, Rousseau defies, "let the wicked spy on me, let them misinterpret me." Such people who will misinterpret his conduct are wicked, they can try and fail to find evidence for

[45] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 467. "Ce que je vois de pis à cela est que votre avis ne vient pas de vous. Outre que je suis peu d'humeur à me laisser mener sous vôtre nom par le tiers et le quart, je trouve à ces ricochets certains détours qui ne vont pas à vôtre franchise, et dont vous ferez bien pour vous et pour moi de vous abstenir desormais," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 477.
[46] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 467. "Vous craignez qu'on n'interprete mal ma conduite; mais je défie *un coeur comme le votre* d'oser mal penser du mien. D'autres peut être parleroient mieux de moi si je leur ressemblois davantage. Que Dieu me préserve de me faire aprouver d'eux. Que les méchans m'épient et m'interprétent; Rousseau n'est pas fait pour les craindre ni Diderot pour les écouter," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 477.

these misinterpretations or willfully stick to them despite the truth. Against their opinions, against their wicked and false opinions, Rousseau's *vitam impendere vero* will not be moved. Their misinterpretation should not induce Rousseau to follow the example of the wicked. While Rousseau concedes they might be more sympathetic if he were to follow their example, his only response to this promise of praise is: "May God preserve me from their approbation" and urges Diderot to join him instead, "Rousseau was not made to fear them, nor Diderot to heed them."

To the mark of friendship meted out at the end of Diderot's note, Rousseau measures it against the contents of the note that preceded it. To discard the counsel and the note so casually would be difficult in the friendship Diderot's letter supposes, and which might exist, ironically enough, if Diderot were not to urge Rousseau to risk his health:

> 'You invite me, if your note displeases me, to throw it into the fire; and to think no more of it! Do you imagine that one forgets so easily anything that comes from you? My dear fellow, you set as little store by my tears in causing me this pain as you do by my life and my health in urging me to take on these duties. If you could only cure yourself of this, your friendship would be the dear to me, and I would be the less to be pitied.'[47]

In his reformulation, Rousseau has turned Diderot's measures to new outcomes: on the specifics of the situation, you are not to judge; on the friendship, you ought to counsel me not to go; on the obligation, this should not come out of deference to the wicked.

Rousseau describes the scene in which he declares the contents of the letter frankly and directly to all parties involved. This stages a contrast with Diderot, who craftily presents his letter to all these parties while pretending to send a missive only for Rousseau. The visibility of the letter is not the problem for Rousseau – in fact, he reads and transcribes the letters as

[47] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 467. "Si votre billet m'a déplu, vous voulez que je le jette au feu et qu'il n'en soit plus question! Pensez-vous qu'on oublie ainsi ce qui vient de vous. Mon cher, vous faites aussi bon marché de mes larmes dans les peines que vous me donnez que de ma vie et de ma santé dans les soins que vous m'exhortez à prendre. Si vous pouviez vous corriger de cela, votre amitié m'en seroit plus douce et j'en deviendrois moins à plaindre," *Confessions*, Pleiade, 477 – 478.

evidence and exercise of his own truth-telling. The problem lies in the duplicity: in pretending to speak to Rousseau while actually speaking to d'Épinay, in pretending to have a more intimate relation to Rousseau for the benefit of his other, actual audience. On Rousseau's account, truth-telling works against pressures and constraints, social injustices, impingements on his health, and adherence to wicked social norms. When he replies, he does not send a half-folded letter through the same route. To speak frankly to its audience, Rousseau walks into the house and directly addresses the audience of their correspondence.

Rousseau's boldness leaves d'Épinay and Grimm dumbfounded: "confronted by this unexpected audacity in a man who was usually so fearful, they were both of them aghast, dumbfounded, unable to utter a word in reply." Of course, a reader might wonder if this is just because their tenant burst in to yell the contents of his personal letters at them. On Rousseau's account, their silence is no surprise, but confirmation of their conspiracy: "I saw, above all, this arrogant man lower his eyes to the ground, unable to withstand my piercing glance; although at that very moment, deep down in his heart, he was vowing my ruin, and I am quite certain that they had agreed it together before they parted."[48] The silence of d'Épinay and Grimm can be interpreted in contrast to the candor Rousseau displays in sharing his letters – aloud, to all parties involved – without the craft and manipulation of rhetorical turns and postal routes. His own explosion is positioned as evidence of his frank speech, in contrast to Diderot's crafty letter and in contrast to the silence and fallen countenance of d'Épinay and Grimm.

On Rousseau's side, his direct speech illustrates his *parrhēsia*; it stems from, manifests, and develops his principle that his free direct speech avoids the pitfalls of constraint, deception,

[48] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 467. "A cette audace inattendue dans un homme ordinairement si craintif, je les vis l'un et l'autre atterrés, abasourdis, ne répondant pas un mot; je vis sur tout cet homme arrogant baisser les yeux à terre et n'oser soutenir les étincelles de mes regards; mais dans le même instant *au fond de son coeur* il juroit ma perte, et je suis sûr qu'ils la concertérent avant de se séparer," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 478.

and subjugation. The silence and dissembling of Diderot and d'Épinay, on the other hand, illustrate the ethical-epistemological problem of dissembling, deception, injustice, and constraint. The scene of reading his letter aloud also prefigures the function of the *Confessions* and his transcription of the letter before the public. Transcribing the letter serves to demonstrate his commitment to the principles of free, honest speech, and it saves Rousseau and the readers, his public, and us, from the perils of its opposite: deception, intrigue, and constraint.

Grimm

Rousseau builds his position as truth-teller in two more exchanges over this event: transcribing his letters with d'Épinay and Grimm. Rousseau's exchange with Grimm about the trip to Geneva reveal the conspiracy that culminates in Rousseau's terrible public reputation. Besides the secret reason for d'Épinay's trip, which was a secret from Rousseau as well, there is another, to which Rousseau is privy, but which he keeps secret to protect the people involved. The problem of this secrecy is the same: it is mobilized to create a false image of Rousseau.

The major figure in this plot is Grimm.[49] Rousseau claims Grimm, who was intimate with d'Épinay and knew the circumstances and secrets, would be one of the few people to know that Rousseau accepted the burden of a secret that was not his own. Grimm would have been one of the few to know that Rousseau did not deserve some of the flack, and would be in a position to defend Rousseau. Instead, Grimm abuses this position and mobilizes Rousseau's vulnerability in the situation to smear him. In his letters with Grimm, Rousseau raises the appearance opposed to the truth, the exploitation of the space between them, the game, and the public perception.

[49] Grimm was another young *philosophe* in 18th-century Paris who Rousseau complains enjoyed the introductions Rousseau made for him without reciprocating, tried to trap him into deceiving Thérèse then expose Rousseau's lie to her, and sharpened the cracks in his friendship with d'Épinay. Rousseau describes a scene in which Grimm acted as though he was sick to generate a conversation about himself in Paris and then got up and walked away one day, Rousseau, *Confessions*; *Collected Writings 5*, 310.

As ever, Rousseau paints himself as an honest direct speaker. In this debate, he addresses Grimm directly: writing a letter presenting his position on the budding scandal over d'Épinay's trip to Geneva, starting with his list of reasons not to go. As if responding to Diderot's letter again, Rousseau names "the absudity of anyone trying to impose the visit to Geneva on me as a duty, the pointlessness, indeed the embarrassment to Mme d'Épinay of my being there, as well as the inconvenience it would cause me."[50] In his letter to Grimm, Rousseau also puts into play the respective obligations based on their respective intimacy with d'Épinay, objecting to the illusion of Rousseau's obligation in the situation, as well as the hypocrisy of doing so when – Rousseau hints – Grimm has a greater obligation himself.

> I could not resist the temptation of letting him see in this letter that I was acquainted with his position, and that it seemed to me strange that anyone should suggest that it was up to me to make this journey, while he himself was spared, was not even mentioned.[51]

Rousseau not only puts pressure on Grimm's decision not to take the trip himself, he also starts to work on the comparison between himself and Grimm, as he did with Diderot, over the contrast between his *franc-parler* and Grimm's conduct:

> This letter, in which for want of being able to state my reasons clearly I was often forced to beat around the bush, could have laid me open, in the eyes of the public, to a number of charges; but it offered a model of restraint and discretion to people who, like Grimm, knew all the things I was leaving unsaid, and which fully justified my conduct.[52]

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[50] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 470. "Je lui écrivis une longue lettre dans laquelle j'exposai le ridicule de vouloir me faire un devoir de ce voyage de Geneve, l'inutilité, l'embarras même dont j'y aurois été à Mme d'Epinay, et les inconveniens qu'il en auroit résulté pour moi-même," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 481.

[51] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 470 – 471. "Je ne resistai pas dans cette lettre à la tentation de lui laisser voir que j'étois instruit, et qu'il me paroissoit singulier qu'on prétendit que c'étoit à moi de faire ce voyage, tandis que lui-même s'en dispensoit et qu'on ne faisoit pas mention de lui," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 481. The *Collected Writings 5* notes the intepretation that d'Épinay was pregnant, 657. The Oxford translation notes Rousseau's hint that Grimm a parent, 666.

[52] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 471. "Cette lettre où faute de pouvoir dire nettement mes raisons, je fus forcé de battre souvent la campagne, m'auroit donné dans le public l'apparence de bien des torts; mais elle étoit un example de retenue et de discretion pour les gens qui comme Grimm étoient au fait des choses que j'y taisois et qui justifoient pleinement ma conduite," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 481.

Rousseau writes that he was aware of the 'charges' the 'public' could assume against him due to this discretion. Rousseau maintains discretion because the secrets are not his own, because Grimm knows the details of the situation anyways, keeping them secret does not cause anyone (but himself) constraint, and because the letter was not public. For the letter to become public, they would either have to disclose the secret as well, or perpetrate a misleading picture of Rousseau. In this situation, Rousseau was actually a model of conduct because he maintained discretion without hiding anything from Grimm, and without betraying the trust of d'Épinay and d'Houdetot. When Grimm makes the letters public, Rousseau accuses him of this double offense of breaking the bond of trust and perpetrating a deceit against the public. Grimm thus abuses the trust Rousseau extends in his letter:

> My letter ended with a mark of trust, by which any other man would have been touched; for in urging Grimm to weigh up my reasons and then to give me his opinion on the matter, I was indicating that this opinion, whatever it might be, would be followed, which was indeed my intention, even if he were to judge that I ought to go.[53]

Rousseau gives Grimm the chance to judge what he should do and defers to Grimm's judgment on the matter. This is, of course, greater deference than he gives Diderot, but Grimm knows the details of the circumstances. Because Grimm knows the full details of the circumstances, Rousseau sets him up to deliver the reasonable judgment that would be delivered by someone with full knowledge of the situation: that Rousseau would have no need to go.

When Rousseau submits his account of this letter to the reader of the *Confessions*, the truths told in this account are doing work. Rousseau does not transcribe his letter to Grimm into the *Confessions*, but delivers his confession, his intentions and feelings, the truth of Rousseau

[53] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 471. "Cette lettre finissoit pas un *acte de confiance* dont tout autre homme auroit été touché; car en exhortant Grimm à peser mes raisons et à me marquer après cela son avis, je lui marquois que cet avis seroit suivi, quel qu'il put être, et c'étoit mon intention, eut-il même opiné pour mon départ," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 481 – 482.

captured in his letter. While the move exempts his own letter from the evaluation and judgment of the audience, the account measures up to the task he has set for his confessions: to reveal his internal feelings, that no one knows, and only he can tell. That is what Rousseau sets up as the confession he needs to deliver. This is also the 'truth' that is necessary for the confession to accomplish the freedom from subjugation delivered by its truth. In effect, Rousseau only needs to recount his intentions and because the truth-in-question is Rousseau's inner feeling in these dealings and whether or not the public has the truth about them.

Grimm's behavior, on the other hand, is in question. Grimm is on trial, not for the secrets, but for the way he generates subjugations out of secrecy. In his dealings with Maman or Sophie, Anet or St Lambert, Rousseau aligns and extols the merits of frankness and freedom. In opposition, he identifies the exercise of deception in Grimm's letters, and holds Grimms to the question of whether he aligns with frankness-freedom, or secrecy-subjugation. Rousseau enters the letter into the record so the public can judge Grimm and Rousseau's reply to him:

> Grimm's reply was a long time coming; but at length I received the singular note that is transcribed below (see Bundle A no. 55):
>
> 'Mme d'Épinay's depature has been postponed; her son is ill and she must wait for him to get better. I will meditate on your letter. Stay quiet at your Hermitage. I will let you have my opinion in time. Since she will certainly not be leaving for some days yet, there is no hurry. In the meantime, if you think it appropriate, you could make your offer to her yourself, although this seem to me to be neither here nor there. For, knowing your position as well as you do yourself, I have no doubt that she will respond to this offer as she ought, so that the only gain I see in all this is that you will be able to say to those who are pressing you to go that if you have not done so, this is not for want of having offered. For the rest, I don't see why you feel it necessary to insist that the Philosopher is speaking for everyone else, or why, because it is his opinion that you should go, you should imagine that all your other friends are urging the same thing. If you were to write to Mme d'Épinay, her answer could serve as your reply to all these friends, since you have

> set your heart on replying to them. Farewell: greetings to Mme de Vasseur and the Criminal.'[54]

Grimm's letter tells Rousseau that the trip has been delayed so there is no rush in resolving the issue, but that he could make his offer to d'Épinay directly which would put the whole thing to rest, and that he need not assume Diderot's opinion was shared by anyone else. While we do not have to agree that Grimm's letter does what Rousseau accuses it of doing, nor that Rousseau's transcription of the letter does the work he wants it to do, we can examine the framework Rousseau sets up and mobilizes to make these moves.

On Rousseau's account, he is outraged by Grimm's letter because it takes Rousseau's 'mark of trust' literally, accepts the authority to direct him on whether or not he should take the trip, and asks him to please wait quietly for his decision. The presumption to imagine that he should direct Rousseau is, predictably, an outrage for our protagonist:

> Transfixed with astonishment at what I had just read, I searched my mind anxiously for what it might mean and found nothing. What! Instead of giving me a straightforward answer to my letter, he was taking time to meditate on it, as though he had not already taken quite enough. He was even warning me of the suspense in which he intended to keep me, as though there were some great problem to be resolved, or as though it suited his pupose to deprive me of every means of guessing his opinion right up until the moment when he chose to divulge it to me. What was the meaning of these precautions, these delays, these mysteries? Was this how one responds to trust? Were these the ways of integrity and good faith? I sought in vain for some favourable interpretation of his behaviour; I could find none. Whatever his plan was, if it was hostile to me his position would facilitate its execution, without my being able, because of mine, to put any obstacle in its way. Received everywhere, the favourite in a great prince's household, the oracle of the circles in which we both moved and whose tone he

[54] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 471 – 472. "La réponse de Grimm se fit attendre; elle fut singuliére, je vais le transcrire ici. Voyez (Liasse A. no. 59). Le départ de Mme d'Épinay est reculé; son fils est malade, il faut attendre qu'il soit rétabli. Je rêverai à votre lettre. Tenez-vous tranquille à votre hermitage. Je vous ferai passer mon avis à tems. Comme elle ne partira surement pas de quelques jours, rien ne presse. En attendant si vous le jugez à propos, vous pouvez lui faire vos offres, quoique cela me paroisse encore assez égal. Car connoissant votre position aussi bien que vous-même, je ne doute point qu'elle ne réponde à vos offres comme elle doit, et tout ce que je vois à gagner à cela, c'est que vous pourrez dire à ceux qui vous pressent que si vous n'avez pas été, ce n'est pas faute de vous être offert. Au reste je ne vois pas pourquoi vous voulez absolument que le philosophe soit le porte-voix de tout le monde, et parce que son avis est que vous partiez, pourquoi vous imaginez que tous vos amis prétendent la même chose. Si vous écrivez à Mme d'Épinay sa réponse peut vous servir de réplique à tous ces amis, puisqu'il vous tient tant au coeur de leur répliquer. Adieu, je salue Mme de Vasseur et le Criminel," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 482.

> set, he would be able, with his usual skill, to deploy all his machiniations as and when he chose; while I, alone in my Hermitage, far from everything, with no one to advise me and no communication with anyone, I had no option but to stay there quietly and wait.[55]

Rousseau is outraged, not only that Grimm would take up the mantle of conducting Rousseau's conduct, but also that he would betray Rousseau's mark of trust by adopting a position of direction, and that Grimm would abuse his position of authority, social centrality, and influence to keep Rousseau in the dark and at his direction. Grimm, for Rousseau, is abusing the inequilibrium of their respective social positions and his level of influence on Rousseau.

In the second part of Grimm's note, he suggests that Rousseau write to d'Épinay directly, offering to accompany her on her trip. (He also points out this might solve the problem of the dispute amongst his friends, because if he were to ask d'Épinay directly and she refuse his offer, this would serve as reason enough not to go with her.) This is also a ridiculous suggestion for Rousseau, and a trap. So to Grimm's suggestion that he write d'Épinay directly and offer to accompany her, Rousseau writes: "The only thing I did was to write to Mme d'Épinay, on the subject of her son's illness, a letter that was as sincere as it could have been, but in which I did not fall into the trap of offering to accompany her."[56] We could understand this idea on the following grounds.

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[55] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 472. "Frappé d'étonnement en lisant cette lettre, je cherchois avec inquietude ce qu'elle pouvoit signifier, et je ne trouvois rien. Comment! Au lieu de me répondre avec simplicité sur la mienne il prend du tems pour y rêver, comme si celui qu'il avoit deja pris ne lui avoit pas suffi. Il m'avertit même de la suspension dans laquelle il me veut tenir, comme s'il agissoit d'un profond probleme à resoudre, ou comme s'il importoit à ses vues de m'ôter tout moyen de pénétrer son sentiment jusqu'au moment qu'il voudroit me le déclarer. Que signifient donc ces précautions, ces retardements, ces mistéres? Est-ce ainsi qu'on répond à la confiance? Cette allure est-elle celle de la droiture et de la bonne foi? Je cherchois en vain quelque interprétation favorable à cette conduite; je n'en trouvois point. Quel que fut son dessein, s'il m'étoit contraire sa position en facilitoit l'éxecution, sans que par la mienne il me fut possible d'y mettre obstacle. En faveur dans la maison d'un grand Prince, répandu dans le monde, donnant le ton à nos communes societés dont il étoit l'oracle, il pouvoit avec son adresse ordinaire disposer à son aise toutes ses machines, et moi, seul dans mon hermitage, loin de tout, sans avis de personne, sans aucune communication, je j'avois d'autre parti que d'attendre et rester en paix," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 482 – 483.

[56] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 472. "Seulement j'écrivis à Mme d'Epinay sur la maladie de son fils une lettre aussi honnête qu'elle pouvoit l'être, mais où je ne donnai pas dans le piége de lui offrir de partir avec elle," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 483.

‘Right now,’ Rousseau writing the *Confessions*, is not engaged in the debate of whether or not he should accompany d’Épinay to Geneva. Instead, the debate is whether Rousseau was guilty for not going, for not bowing to the pressures her coterie put on him to go, and whether the image of Rousseau as ungrateful on this count is deserved or accurate. Indeed, this is also the debate that Rousseau is engaged in at the time, in these letters. He is already aware of the public perception of these events, the way the letters look to the public (how they are misleading or revealing), and how the replies and responses indicate to the public whether or not their correspondents are in the wrong or right. In the exchanges, from Rousseau’s perspective, they are not just debating whether or not Rousseau should go. The deference to Grimms’s opinion is a gesture and mark of trust, but it has nothing to do with the possibilty of actually going. He trusts Grimm to write that Rousseau has no obligation to go. For Grimm to take up the mantle of deciding whether or not Rousseau should walk across the Alps is wrong twice: in taking up a position of putting constraints on Rousseau, and in taking up the ruse that any of this is actually Rousseau’s responsibility. If accompanying d’Épinay would confirm an untrue narrative, Rousseau refuses the trap of going with d’Épinay and playing into this false picture.

After Rousseau receives this letter from Grimm and writes to d’Épinay about her son without offering to go on the trip, she leaves for Geneva without him. The following fallings-out with Grimm and d’Épinay happen in letters, which Rousseau transcribes into the *Confessions*. Recall that the from the first scene, in the conversation between himself and d’Épinay, it is clear between the two of them that Rousseau should not take the trip. What is being publcly litigated now is the way a false image of Rousseau was created. In opposition, Rousseau gives a clear picture of his motives and intentions over the course of these events, insisting on the frank-

speech against-constraints he maintained throughout, which he replicates again in his transcriptions of these letters.

First, Rousseau receives another letter from Grimm. From Rousseau's perspective, Grimm[57] kept him in "cruel uncertainty" for "a week or ten days," at which point he found out that d'Épinay had already left, and received a letter from Grimm:

> It was only seven or eight lines long; I did not read it to the end… it annouced a break with me, in terms which only the most diabolical hatred could have dictated, and which were so wilfully offensive as to be absurd. He banished me from his presence as though from his estates. His letter only needed to be read with more composure to be risible. Without transcribing it, without even finishing it, I returned it to him forthwith, accompanied by the following note.[58]

This time Rousseau does not transcribe Grimm's letter. He cannot; he claims he did not even finish it, and he returned it to Grimm without transcribing it. On the letter where Grimm announces his break with Rousseau, Rousseau dismisses the letter on the grounds that it has strayed so far from the truth. Rousseau claims its contents were so laughable, so absurd, that it does not even pertain to him. Rousseau returns the letter to sender because it failed to find any fitting addressee to its contents:

> 'I have hitherto been reluctant to… heed my justified suspicions; and now that I know you for what you are, it is too late.
>
> 'So this is the letter over which you meditated at such leisure! I am returning it, it has nothing to do with me. You can show mine to the whole world and hate me openly; that will be one falsehood the less on your part.'[59]

[57] Rousseau uses the language "cet homme barbare" against Grimm, like Rousseau's old "barbarous heart" set against Marion, Pleiade 483.
[58] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 472 – 473. "Elle n'étoit que de sept à huit lignes que je n'achevai pas de lire… c'étoit une rupture, mais dans des termes tels que la plus infernale haine les peut dicter, et qui même devenoient bêtes à force de vouloir être offensans. Il me défendoit sa présence comme il m'auroit défendu ses Etats. Il ne manquoit à sa lettre pout faire rire que d'être lue avec plus de sang froid. Sans la transcrire, sans même en achever la lecture, je la lui renvoyai sur le champ avec celle-ci," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 483.
[59] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 473. "Je me refusois à ma juste défiance; j'acheve trop tard de vous connoitre. Voila donc la lettre que vous vous étes donné le loisir de méditer! Je vous la renvoye, elle n'est pas pour moi. Vous pouvez montrer la mienne à toute la terre et me haïr ouvertement; ce sera de votre part une fausseté de moins," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 483.

In his reply, Rousseau pins the betrayal on Grimm and defies him to "hate me openly; that will be one falsehood the less on you part." In other words, Rousseau gives Grimm permission to share the letter and display how Grimm hates him, which will reveal the dynamics at play to the misled public. While Rousseau instructs Grimm to show the letter and lift the deception, he breaks down the way Grimm maneuvers this opening. Rousseau clarifies: "In saying that he could show my previous letter, I was referring to an item in his, from which the reader will be able to judge the consummate skill that he brought to this whole affair."[60] Rousseau lays out the effects and stakes, the outcomes and representation, that Grimm generates through *his* circulation of the letters between himself and Rousseau:

> As I have said, my letter exposed me to attack on a number of points by anyone who was not familiar with the details of this affair. He saw this with joy; but how was he to make the most of this advantage without compromising himself? For if he showed the letter, he might well lay himself open to the reproach of abusing the trust of his friend.[61]

From Rousseau's perspective, Grimm sees the opportunity to set Rousseau up for attack, because the details of the affair are secret, and it looks like Rousseau's fault. Grimm's problem is that if he shows the letters, everyone will see him betray the trust of his friend. In doing so, Grimm's opportunity to make Rousseau the villain would be undermined by his public betrayal. So, Rousseau imagines, Grimm provoked Rousseau. He wrote the absurdly offensive note in order to make Rousseau "reject his sham discretion and give him leave to show my letter to the world." In other words, the whole exchange was contrived in order to make Rousseau open the correspondence to the public and allow Grimm to generate this false image of Rousseau:

> In order to resolve this difficulty, he conceived the idea of breaking with me in the most offensive way possible, while impressing upon me in his letter the favour he

[60] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 473.
[61] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 473. "J'ai dit que pour gens qui m'étoient pas au fait, ma lettre pouvoit donner sur moi bien des prises. Il le vit avec joye; mais comment se prévaloir de cet avantage sans se compromettre? En montrant cette lettre il s'exposoit au reproche d'abuser de la confiance de son ami," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 484.

> was doing me in not making mine public. He could be quite certain that, in my indignation and anger, I would reject his sham discretion and give him leave to show my letter to the wold; this was precisely what he wanted, and everything happened in just the way he had arranged it.[62]

That Grimm "impess[ed] upon [Rousseau] in his letter the favour he was doing me in not making mine public" seems to confirm Rousseau's behavior is reprehensible and the public would rule against him. But in Rousseau's framework, this favor becomes a threat. In the game of using the secret to make Rousseau seem like a villain – against the truth – Grimm's invocation of showing the letter publicly is an invocation of the public opinion that would result. Grimm invokes the public domain and does not offer to clarify Rousseau's innocence. Instead, when Grimm invokes the possibility of a public leak, he calls it a favor not to leak the letters because their public exposure *would* be damning for Rousseau: in effect, saying he would *not* clarify the details of the circumstances in his defense. Rousseau is at the mercy of Grimm, who has the letters that make Rousseau sound guilty, has the truth of the matter which Rousseau is not allowed to divulge (to protect his friends) and Grimm will not divulge (to save Rousseau), has provoked Rousseau to tell him to show the public the letters, and has broken with Rousseau in so violent a way that any viewership of the letters would fill in the missing details with the supposition that the fault lies with Rousseau. In the game of telling the truth in public, Grimm has the upper hand:

> He circulated my letter all round Paris, accompanied by comments of his own devising, a move, however, that turned out to be not quite as successful as he had envisaged. It was generally felt that the permission to make my letter public, which he had somehow managed to extort from me, did not absolve him from the blame of having, in order to do me harm, taken me a little too lightly at my word. Everyone was asking what personal wrong I had done to justify so violent a hatred. Finally it was felt that, even if the wrong I had done him was so great as to oblige him to break with me, friendship, even when extinguished, imposed

[62] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 473. "Pour sortir de cet embarras il imagina de rompre avec moi de la façon la plus piquante qu'il fut possible, et de me faire valoir dans sa lettre la grace qu'il me faisoit de ne pas montrer la mienne. Il étoit bien sûr que dans l'indignation de ma colére je me refuserois à sa feinte discrétion et lui permettrois de montrer ma lettre à tout le monde: c'étoit précisément ce qu'il vouloit, et tout arriva comme il l'avoit arrangé," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 484.

> obligations that he ought to have respected. But Paris, unfortunately, is a frivolous place; the observations of the moment are soon forgotten: the poor wretch who is absent is overlooked, the man who prospers imposes by his very presence, the game of intrigue and malice continues, is renewed, and soon its effects, endlessly repeated, effect everything that has gone before.[63]

While publc opinion sways on the side of Rousseau for a moment, acknowledging that circulating their letters so publicly was a breach of trust Rousseau hardly deserved, Rousseau consigns himself to the eventual outcome. Grimm succeeds less because he was right, and more because Paris is frivolous[64] and Rousseau was away.

Rousseau's game, on the other hand, is the game of truth-telling and non-subjugation. And while he lost the battle against Grimm, he is now – writing his *Confessions* – trying to win the war. Consider how he changes the game. When Grimm circulates the letters around Paris, he made a tactical error. Because Grimm was the first to show them publicly, he has the burden of guilt for betraying a friend. Now, Rousseau can enter the letters into the public record with his own commentary on them without being accused of betraying his friends's trust. Because Grimm circulated the letters, Rousseau can enter his commentary on them, can hold Grimm's betrayal to judgment, and can expose Grimm's game of intrigue and malice. Rousseau gets to compare the way that Grimm enters the letters before the public to the way that Rousseau enters the letters

[63] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 473 – 474. "Il fit courir ma lettre dans tout Paris avec des commentaires de sa façon, qui pourtant n'eurent pas tout le succés qu'il s'en étoit promis. On ne trouva pas que la permission de montrer ma lettre qu'il avoit su m'extorquer l'exemptât du blâme de m'avoir si légérement pris au mot pour me nuire. On demandoit toujours quels torts personnels j'avois avec lui pour autoriser une si violente haine. Enfin l'on trouvoit que quand j'aurois eu de tels torts qui l'auroient obligé de rompre, l'amitié, même éteinte, avoit encore des droits qu'il auroit dû respecter. Mais malheureusement Paris est frivole, ces remaques du moment s'oublient; l'absent infortuné se néglige, l'homme qui prospére en impose par sa présence, le jeu de l'intrigue et de la méchanceté se soutient, se renouvelle, et bientot son effet sans cesse renaissant efface tout ce qui l'a précédé," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 484.

[64] At a remove from this 'frivolous' Paris, Rousseau's principles orbit Cicero: "it is better to unstitch the union than to tear it apart; unless, that is to say, there has been some outburst of intolerable wrongdoing, in which case the only proper and honourable course, indeed the only practicable course, will be immediate withdrawal and dissociation. If, on the other hand, as more frequently happens, there has merely been a shift in attitude and interests, or a divergence of political views… then something must be done to make it clear that what has happened is just a termination of friendship and not a declaration of war. For if a man has been your friend, it is the most discreditable thing in the world to let him become your enemy…if [rifts] occur, it is our duty to make it look as though the associations have just burnt themselves out and not been forcibly smothered. Under no circumstances must friendships be allowed to deteriorate into serious hostility, which would inevitably mean that one becomes the target for insulting, abusive criticism," Cicero, *Good Life*, 215

before a public. Grimm shares them in betrayal, intrigue, and malice. Against all of this, Rousseau can now truth-tell on his own behalf: I wrote letters in honest direct address to those evaluating how honest and direct my address was; I wrote the letters in a bond of trust to a friend, I was betrayed by a friend who shared the letters; I was betrayed by a friend who used a game of intrigue and malice to paint me as guilty when he knew I was not. Now, like Marion again, Rousseau is the innocent-accused, and we stand as the guilty-because-misinformed jury – if we believe Grimm. Amend your verdict, Rousseau allows, on the basis of the truth, so that when you stand before god, you don't have to be judged for this.

The game of malice and intrigue had been won before Rousseau writes this *Confessions*. He described the miserable state Grimm, and the frivolity of the Paris public, left him:

> So it was that, having for so long deceived me, this man at last removed his mask, convinced that he has so contrived things as no longer to need it. Relieved, for my part, of the fear that I might be doing him an injustice, I abandoned this miserable wretch to the devices of his own heart and thought no more about him. A week later receiving this letter, I received Mme d'Épinay's answer, written from Geneva, to the previous one (Bundle B no. 10). I inferred from its tone, which was unlike any she had ever used with me before, that the two of them, confident of the success of their measures, were now acting in concert, and that, regarding me as a man already lost and with nowhere to turn to, they were abandoning themselves to the pleasure, which they could henceforward indulge with impunity, of dealing me the last crushing blows.[65]

Rousseau consigns himself to think no more about Grimm once he has been so exposed, without guilt, considering the malice he has shown, "abandon[ing] this miserable wretch to the

[65] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 474. "Voila comment après m'avoir si longtems trompé, cet homme enfin quitta pour moi son masque, persuadé que dans l'état où il avoit amené les choses il cessoit d'en avoir besoin. Soulagé de la crainte d'être injuste envers ce misérable, je l'abandonnai *à son propre coeur* et cessai de penser à lui. Huit jours après avoir receu cette lettre, les reçus de Mme d'Epinay sa réponse datée de Genève à ma précédente. (Liasse B. no. 10) Je compris au ton qu'elle y prenoit pour la prémiere fois de sa vie, que l'un et l'autre, comptant sur le succés de leurs mesures agissoient de concert, et que, me regardant comme un homme perdu sans ressource, ils se livroient desormais sans risque au plaisir d'achever de m'écraser," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 484.

devices of his own heart." However, Rousseau extends this judgment to d'Épinay as well, and interprets her letter as confirmation that she is aligned with Grimm's plot.

D'Épinay

Following the conclusion of his friendship with Grimm, Rousseau recounts the correspondence with Mme d'Épinay that ended their friendship and his secure living situation.[66] In breaking with d'Épinay, Rousseau cannot continue to stay at her home. In his current physical and medical circumstances, he cannot leave in the winter season. He proposes to leave the Hermitage in the spring in his letter to d'Épinay, "never doubting for a moment that, out of humanity, generosity, and decency, out of the good impulses that, in spite of some bad ones, I had always believed her to possess, she would eagerly concur with them."[67] Rousseau asks permission to remain until the spring, considering the break that he assumes has occurred between them, and asking a delay for his departure out of decency:

The Hermitage, 23 November 1757

> 'If one could die of grief, I would no longer be alive. But at last I have made up my mind. The friendship between us is over, Madame; but what no longer exists nevertheless has claims that I respect. I have not fogotten your kindness towards me, and you can count, on my part, on all the gratitude it is possible to feel toward someone one must no longer love. There is no point in further explanations; my conscience is easy, and I commend you to yours.
>
> 'I wanted to leave the Hermitage, and I ought to have done so. But I am told that I must remain until spring, and, since this is what my friends want, I will, with your consent, remain until the spring.'[68]

[66] After which he is constantly displaced until he finally settles outside of Paris, banished from publishing.
[67] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 474 – 475. "Ne doutant pas un moment que par humanité, par générosité, par bienseance, par les bons sentimens que j'avois cru en elle malgré les mauvais, elle ne s'empressât d'y souscrire," *Confessions*, Pleiade, 485.
[68] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 475. "Si l'on mouroit de douleur je ne serois pas en vie. Mais enfin j'ai pris mon parti. L'amitié est éteinte entre nous, Madame; mais celle qui n'est plus garde encore des droits que je sais respecter. Je n'ai point oublié vos bontés pour moi, et vous pouvez compter de ma part sur toute la reconnoissance qu'on peut avoit pour quelqu'un qu'on ne doit plus aimer. Toute autre explication seroit inutile: j'ai pour moi ma conscience et vous renvoye à la votre. J'ai voulu quitter l'Hermitage, et je le devois. Mais on prétend qu'il faut que j'y reste jusqu'au printems, et puisque mes amis le veulent, j'y resterai jusqu'au printems, si vous y consentez," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 485.

To which d'Épinay replies:

Geneva, 1st December 1757 (Bundle B no. 11)

> 'Having for several years shown you every possible mark of friendship and consideration, it only remains for me to pity you. You are truly wretched. I hope that your conscience may be as tranquil as mine is. This could be necessary for your future peace of mind.
>
> 'Since you wanted to leave the Hermitage and ought to have done so, I am astonished that your friends should have prevented you. As for me, I never consult mine as to my duty and I have nothing further to say to you about yours.'[69]

Rather than agree that his friends were right to encourage him to stay, insist that he stay herself, or represent his health as a reason to stay until spring, d'Épinay responds to his claim to "want to leave the Hermitage and ought to have done so." She does not tell him to stay or go, but puts pressure on his decision to stay against wanting to. She shifts the terms of the debate from the date of departure to the grounds of the decision. Matching his claim to act on his own conscience in their break, "my conscience is easy, and I commend you to yours," d'Épinay claims her own easy conscience as well, "I hope that your conscience may be as tranquil as mine is." She also applies the invocation of conscience in their break to his decision to stay. When Rousseau stays because his friends ask him to, then d'Épinay can challenge him to either follow his own conscience or stay at the Hermitage.

Rousseau leaves the Hermitage that week: "a dismissal so unexpected but so unequivocal did not allow me to hesitate for a moment. I must leave on the spot, whatever the weather, whatever my condition, even if I had to sleep out in the woods or in the snow with which the

[69] Rousseau, *Confessions,* Oxford, 476. "Après vous avoir donné pendant plusieurs années toutes les marques possibles d'amitié et d'intérest, il ne me reste qu'à vous plaindre. Vous étes bien malheureux. Je desire que votre conscience soit aussi tranquille que la mienne. Cela pourroit être necessaire au repos de votre vie. Puisque vous vouliez quitter l'Hermitage et que vous le deviez, je suis étonnée que vos amis vous aient retenu. Pour moi je ne consulte point les miens sur mes devoirs, et je n'ai plus rien à vous direr sur les vôtres," Rousseau, *Confessions,* Pleiade, 486 – 487.

ground was still covered."[70] Rousseau finds himself searching for a place to stay despite his health crisis in the winter season, not to mention the difficulty of the task, but resolves to return the keys within a week, and finds furniture, a new place to live, and moves to Montmorency:

> I found myself in the most terrible predicament I had ever been in; but my mind was made up: I swore, whatever happened, to be out of the Hermitage within a week. I set to work sorting out my things, determined to leave them out in the open rather than fail to return the keys before the week was out; for I was anxious above all that everything should be done before a letter could be dispatched to Geneva and a reply received. I found a courage I had not known I possessed; all my strength had returned. Indignation and a sense of honour had restored it, and with it an energy on which Mme d'Épinay had not reckoned. Fortune looked kindly on my boldness. M. Mathas, procurator-fiscal to the Prince de Condé, heard of my plight. He offered me a little house that stood in the garden of Mont-Louise, his property at Montmorency. I accepted with alacrity and gratitude. The affair was soon settled; I bought in haste some pieces of furniture so that, with what I already had, Thérèse and I could live there. I transported my things, with great difficulty and at great expense; in spite of the ice and snow the move was completed within two days, and on 15 December I returned the keys of the Hermitage, having paid the gardener's wages since I could not pay my rent.[71]

Rousseau leaves before a week is out to avoid the possibiilty of receiving a letter of reply from d'Épinay: "for I was anxious above all that everything should be done before a letter could be dispatched to Geneva and a reply received." The time stamps floating above each letter log the relationship between each missive and each reaction. To d'Épinay's last letter from December 1,

[70] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 476. "Un congé si imprévu, mais si nettement prononcé ne me laissa pas un instant à balancer. Il falloit sortir sur le champ quelque tems qu'il fit, en quelque état que je fusse, dussai-je coucher dans les bois et sur la neige," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 487.

[71] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 476 – 477. "Je me trouvai dans le plus terrible embarras où j'aye été de mes jours; mais la résolution étoit prise, je jurai quoiqu'il arrivât, de ne pas coucher à l'Hermitage le huitiéme jour. Je me mis en devoir de sortir mes effets, déterminé à les laisser en plein champ plustot que de ne pas rendre les clefs dans la huitaine: car je voulois surtout que tout fut fait avant qu'on put écrire à Genève et recevoir réponse. J'étois d'un courage que je ne m'étois jamais senti: toutes mes forces étoient revenues. L'honneur et l'indignation m'en rendirent sur lesquelles Mme d'Épinay n'avoit pas compté. La fortune aida mon audace. M. Mathas procureur fiscal de M. le Prince de Condé entendit parler de mon embarras. Il me fit offrir une petite maison qu'il avoit à son jardin de Mont Louis à Montmorency. J'acceptai avec empressement et reconnoissance. Le marché fut bientot fait; je fis en hâte acheter quelques meubles avec ceux que j'avois déja pour nous coucher Thérèse et moi. Je fis charrier mes effets à grand peine et à grands fraix: malgré la glace et la neige, mon démenagement fut fait dans deux jours, et la quinze decembre je rendis les clefs de l'Hermitage, après avoir payé les gages du jardinier, ne pouvant payer mon loyer," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 487.

Rousseau wants there to be no additional documents complicating the interpretation of his leaving the Hermitage as a reply to her letter.

If Rousseau did not move from the Hermitage, d'Épinay's letter is not entirely shocking. If he did not move, then her letter merely indicates that he ought not to have let his friends influence his decision, but that since he wanted and ought to have left the Hermitage, that was for him to decide what to do about it. If Rousseau were to stay at the Hermitage after receiving this note, then d'Épinay's reply is perhaps cold, but it effectively is agreeing with Rousseau and weighing in on whether he should let his friends influence whether or not he should do as he thinks he ought. The discussion in this case is primarily located on his following his own conscience or listening to his friends, with the example of leaving the Hermitage the occasion over which they discuss it.

However, if Rousseau were to leave in reply to her note, then the question of leaving the Hermitage becomes the primary object of the exchange, and the question of listening to one's conscience operates differently. If Rousseau has not left, then d'Épinay's claims – "I am astonished that your friends should have prevented you. As for me, I never consult mine as to my duty and I have nothing further to say to you about yours" – are claims to maintaining an equal adherence to her own conscience, as Rousseau does. She is in the clear on these grounds. In a discussion of whether or not Rousseau should be influenced by others against his wants or follow his conscience, d'Épinay supports, follow your conscience, and claims the same for herself. On the other hand, if Rousseau were to leave the Herrmitage on account of her letter, under difficult circumstances, against the counsel of trusted friends, then her claim to follow her own conscience is now read on different terrain, and her claim, "I hope that your conscience may be as tranquil as mine is," reads in a new light. Her conscience, and her hubris in following it

against everyone, seem out of order. The accusation that Rousseau absorbed at first from Diderot can now be thrown at d'Épinay.

Rousseau leaves the Hermitage and writes his reply to d'Épinay in a letter dated 17 December, "The day after my arrival at Mont-Louis I wrote the following letter to Mme d'Épinay":

Montmorency, 17 December 1757

> 'Nothing is simpler or more necessary, Madame, than to leave your house when you no longer approve of my being there. Following your refusal to agree to my spending the rest of the winter at the Hermitage, I left on 15 December. It was my destiny to leave it, as I entered it, in spite of myself. Thank you for the stay that you persuaded me to make there; I would thank you more if I had paid less dearly for it. For the rest, you are right to think me wretched; no one in the world knows better than you do how profoundly I must be so. If it is a misfortune to be deceived in one's choice of friends, it is another and no less cruel one to awake from so sweet an illusion.'[72]

Rousseau's reply includes the move from the Hermitage that he made in reaction to d'Épinay's letter. He casts d'Épinay's letter as a "refusal to agree to my spending the rest of the winter at the Hermitage," with the proof being that he left it already. The move casts a letter about conscience as an imperative on moving. Having left, Rousseau can cast her letter as a refusal with the proof in its effects, and reply to her letter on those terms. His reply to her 'refusal' was to thank her for the stay, make clear that it was only at her persuasion, and that it has in the end severely damaged his circumstances. In his sign off, he pitches this image of d'Épinay as the true one, 'If it is a misfortune to be deceived in one's choice of friends, it is another and no less cruel one to awake from so sweet an illusion,' and leaves d'Épinay with Grimm in the category of deceivers.

[72] Rousseau, *Confessions,* Oxford, 477. "Rien n'est si simple et si necessaire, Madame, que de déloger de votre maison quand vous n'approuvez pas que j'y reste. Sur votre refus de consentir que je passasse à l'Hermitage le reste de l'hiver, je l'ai donc quitté le quinze Décembre. Ma destinée étoit d'y entrer malgré moi et d'en sortir de même. Je vous remercie du séjour que vous m'avez engagé d'y faire, et je vous remercierois davantage si je l'avois payé moins cher. Au reste, vous avez raison de me croire malheureux, personne au monde ne sait mieux que vous combien je dois l'être. Si c'est un malheur de se tromper sur le choix de ses amis, c'en est un autre non moins cruel de revenir d'une erreur si douce" Rousseau, *Confessions,* Pleiade, 488. The Pleiade also notes the transcription of the letter in Mme d'Épinay's text, *Histoire de Mme de Montbrillant* (composed 1756), 1510.

In its staging, Rousseau's frankness is proven by the very text of the *Confessions*. The transcription of the letters demonstrates Rousseau's candor and frank speech even in the face of hardship, in contrast to the guile of d'Épinay and Grimm. His transcriptions are presented as an exercise of truth-telling against the misinformation generated by these enemies of truth. In effect, Rousseau can punctuate the book with a claim about the book, as proof of the argument he is making, on the image he paints of himself:

> Such is the faithful account of my stay at the Hermitage and of the reasons that made me leave. I have been unable to cut short this narrative, which it was imperative should be pursued with the greatest exactitude, since this period of my life exercised on everything that followed an influence that will last until my dying day.[73]

This, Rousseau claims, is a faithful account. And these events influenced the condition of permanent exile he suffers until his 'dying day,' incurred from the distortion of his portrait, which maligns all of his writings and actions, miscasting their terms and meanings. Now he has outlined the terms and the truth of it all, so that his actions can be recast according to the true portrait of himself.

Of course, one can judge that Rousseau's account is misleading, or remain unconvinced by his interpretation of these events and his choices therein.[74] From our angle, the task is not to evaluate the truth or the lie. It's about the scene of a truth-telling practice, and the freedoms and formations of the subject it promises. In these scenes, Rousseau enters new evidence into the record for the 'public trial' of Rousseau, which had judged him guilty, and which did not have any of the truth. In restaging the trial, and in offering the evidence we were missing, he offers

[73] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 477. "Tel est le narré fidelle de ma demeure à l'Hermitage et des raisons qui m'en ont fait sortir. Je n'ai pu couper ce récit, et il importoit de la suivre avec la plus grande exactitude; cette époque de ma vie ayant eu sur la suite une influence qui s'étendra jusqu'à mon dernier jour," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 488.
[74] His own account within the *Confessions* can contradict his claims, for example the following book transcribes a letter from d'Épinay explaining one reason for her delay which Rousseau ignores entirely, Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 479.

both restitution of his image, and relief for the duped. The letters of the correspondence are clear evidence. They offer records of his inner feelings, his motives, and the reactions of others to his unflagging *vitam impendere vero*. In other words, they offer the truth.

The effects of this truth-telling are staged in the texts. For the author, the extended practice of truth-telling both forms himself as a subject and extends the promises of his truth-telling to its audience. The comparison with Augustine highlights these elements. For Augustine, reading Scripture offers the possibility of telling of the eternal truth in the temporal medium of syllables, which affords an ongoing truth-telling practice that transforms the subject and extends its orientation to god. Doing this truth-telling work before his witnesses exposes them to the truth as well and affords the occasion for our own conversion to the truth. For Rousseau, transcribing his letters offers the possibility of telling the hidden truth to his fellow men who have misjudged him, which enacts and sustains his ongoing commitment to live according to his principles and to tell the truth irrespective of constraints, norms, and decorum. Doing this truth-telling work before his public exposes the truth to them, and them to the truth. The confession offers a remedy, the occasion for us to change our judgment of Rousseau.

The way each *Confessions* configures a textual practice in its own text might raise one final comparison. Each positions another text as the souce of the truth it tells. The confession of self in either Augustine or Rousseau, even the freedoms promised in each confession of truth, are both held against these truth-texts. For Augustine, the truth he's sharing – for his and our freedom – is the truth of god found in Scripture. For Rousseau, the truth he's sharing – for his and our freedom – is the truth of himself found in the letters. To accomplish his truth-telling, Augustine has to turn to god, throw himself to god, and carry his witnesses to the truth of god as well. To accomplish his truth-telling, Rousseau has to show himself, prove himself, and reverse

the public judgment of him. In a way, this proves more difficult than Augustine's juridical scene, because Augustine only has to submit himself to exposure to the truth of god. Rousseau has to verify an account that is verified by his delivery of it to god – *before* that final scene.

Closings

What human being can give another the power to understand this?
What angel can give it to another angel?
What angel can give it to a mortal?
We must ask it of you.
We must seek it from you.
We must knock at your door.
This, then, is how it will be received.
This is how it will be found.
This is how it will be opened.[1]

– Augustine, *Confessions*

The next morning, having with difficulty procured a chaise, I at last left this homicidal land, without waiting for the deputation that was about to honour me with a visit, and without even seeing Thérèse, to whom I had indicated she would join me when I thought I would be staying in Bienne, and whom I hardly had time to countermand with a brief word telling her of my new disaster. The reader will see in my third part, if I ever summon up the strength to write it, how, while believing that I was leaving for Berlin, I was in fact leaving for England, and how the two ladies who wanted me at their command, having through their intriguing had me expelled from Switzerland, where I was not sufficiently in their power, at last succeeded in delivering me into the hands of their friend.

I added the following passage on the occasion of a reading that I gave of this work to M. and Mme d'Egmont, to the Prince Pignatelli, to the Marquise de Mesme, and to the Marquis de Juigné:

I have told the truth. if anyone knows things that are contrary to what I have just set out, should they be proved a thousand times over, he knows lies and deceits, and if he refuses to explore and to clarify them with me while I am alive, he loves neither justice nor truth. As for me, I hereby declare publicly and without fear: that anyone who, without ever having read my writings, examines with his own eyes my nature, my character, my morals, my inclinations, my pleasures, my habits, and can think me a dishonourable man, is himself a man who ought to be choked.

With this I ended my reading. No one spoke. Mme d'Egmont was the only one who appeared to me to be moved; she was trembling visibly; but she recovererd quickly and, like the rest of the company, remained silent. Such was the fruit I derived from this reading and my declaration.[2]

– Rousseau, *Confessions*

[1] Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb, XIII 38. (53), 427.
[2] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 642.

The final lines of each text stage the closures of each work. Augustine's *Confessions* closes with the reiteration of a passage that opens book 12. In the earlier book, the passage presents the promises of his pursuit, consider this original form:

> My heart is smitten by the words of your holy Scripture, and is preoccupied with many matters, Lord, in this poverty-stricken life of mine… We hold fast to what was promised: who can bring it to ruin? If God is for us, who is against us? 'Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and everyone who seeks will find, and to the one who knocks, it will be opened.' These are your promises, and who fears being cheated when Truth itself is making the promise?[3]

The passage lifted from Mt 7:7-8[4] is invoked in reply to the constant concern of Augustine's text: how to get from the 'poverty-stricken life' to god? The passage sets up the posture of pursuit and holds out the promises of this work. Asking will be rewarded with receiving, seeking will be rewarded with finding, knocking will be rewarded with opening. Truth itself holds out promises to those who take up these pursuits.

As O'Donnell points out, Augustine shifts the tense of the cited passage from the subjunctive to the indicative at the end of the text.[5] At the close of the *Confessions*, "knocking, seeking, and asking" expand beyond the confines of expectation and citation within a passage.

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[3] "Tenemus promissum: quis corrumpet illud? si deus pro nobis, quis contra nos? 'petite et accipietis, quaerite et invenietis, pulsate et aperietur vobis. Omnis enim qui petit accipit, et quaerens inveniet, et pulsanti aperietur.' Promissa tua sunt, et quis falli timeat cum promittit veritas?" Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb, XII, 1. (1), 261.

[4] The language is from a scene in Matthew 5:1 – 2 where: "Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them," the close at 7:24 – 28 casts his listeners at risk and holds out the promise of following his teaching: "'Everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against his house, and it fell – and great was its fall!' now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching." The passage here invokes the mode of reception staged towards the end of the passage in Matthew 7:1 – 8: "'Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? Or how can you say to your neighbor, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' while the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor's eye. Do not give what is holy to dogs; and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under foot and turn and maul you. Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for eveyone who knocks, the door will be opened," *Harper Collins Bible*, pgs. 1869 – 1870.

[5] O'Donnell, *Commentary III*, 419 – 421.

Instead of inserting the pursuit-and-promise pairings into the flow of the text, these labors overtake the space of the confession. The pairings are broken up and recombined in the final iteration. First the collection of exercises – asking, knocking, seeking – compress against the barrier to god, and then the effects – receiving, finding, opening – flood forward. But there is no further text, the exercise of pursuit and the promise of their effects overwhelm and overtake the confession.

Consider this under the sign of confession and with the force of truth-telling expanded over our reading. The passage Augustine plays with itself has an operation in the task of the confession. Over the course of the text, the task to get into a relation with god is met by the confession which transforms oneself and makes this possible. Along the way, the text of the Scripture functions as part of this work. In the scene of sin, the problem of his attraction to the lower things is configured as a disorder in his will, and the confession of this desire as an exercise that turns him against this desire and opens him to god's mercy. In his conversion, Paul's text tips the scale so that his aversion to his own sin and epistemological conversion obtain in an ethical conversion to love god more than sin. And in his work of exegesis, the sustained encounter with the text sustains his turn away from Vanity and provides the medium to practice telling-the-truth of god as a sustained *ethopoeitic* work. The tripartite confession combines the telling-the-truth of oneself and telling-the-truth of god in each case, and unfolds each combination in a rolling practice of confession-of-oneself and in the confession-of-Scripture that sustains these practices in the very rhythm of the text. Over the course of the text, the narrative arc, on this reading, is not the life story of Augustine. The narrative arc is the arc of the transformation of the self through confession, and the respective arc the confession takes over the *Confessions*. While the confession of the self is embedded in a mode of confessing the

Scripture from the first lines and throughout the life story, the ethical-epistemological arc pulls Augustine closer and closer to the truth of god, so that the text eventually converges into a practice of telling-the-truth of Scripture. The arc pulls him from a life story, into an archetypal story, into a conversion story, into an exegesis practice, into a reading practice. In the end, the subject-forming work of confession is wound together around confessing the words of Scripture.

In the end, the confession of the passage from Scripture exceeds any further need for Augustine to continue to write about 'I.' His work from this point will just be the confession of Scripture which will do the work of pulling him towards god. The Scripture passage which describes the compression and extension, execise and effect, pursuit and promise of this work, can propel the confession beyond any further narrative work bound to its protagonist in this text, but as an outpouring catapulted forward from this point. If you have traveled to this point of the *Confessions* with Augustine, as you read it, and you could be too. We could be saved in being carried along on the ride.

The end of Rousseau's *Confessions* is fractured. In the first end to the text, brought about by yet another involuntary displacement, Rousseau hopes to fill the void that is about to swallow up the end of the text with "my third part, if I ever summon up the strength to write it." He projects a text-to-come against the painful constraints that bring the text to a close. The closure does not come about in a coherent knitting-together of the confession around its culmination. Rousseau's ending is as hopelessly torn apart as his life; he tries to bind it all together through his writing against the forces working against him. In this passage, he describes leaving Switzerland "without even seeing Thérèse" with hardly the time for a "brief word telling her of my new disaster." He is forced to leave when his new patrons feel he is "not sufficiently in their power [and so] deliver me into the hands of their friend." Rousseau's powerlessness underlies

the account and reverberates with the central shift in the text that writes his *Confessions* against the plot, intrigues, and enemies of truth who seek to keep the true portrait of him from posterity.

Beyond this hasty ending, Rousseau: "added the following passage on the occasion of a reading that I gave of this work" which casts a final image of his *Confessions*:

> I have told the truth. If anyone knows things that are contrary to what I have just set out, should they be proved a thousand times over, he knows lies and deceits, and if he refuses to explore and to clarify them with me while I am alive, he loves neither justice nor truth. As for me, I hereby declare publicly and without fear: that anyone who, without even having read my writings, examines with his own eyes my nature, my character, my morals, my inclinations, my pleasures, my habits, and can think me a dishonourable man, is himself a man who ought to be choked.[6]

The text concludes with a reiteration of its opening passage, the scene of judgment before god and fellow men. In the opening iteration, Rousseau is secure in the knowledge that he has told the truth, and has nothing to fear in the judgment before god. His fellow men, however, are called before god at these steps – not at their own death – but at the scene of Rousseau's death, when he arrives at the pearly gates. The fellow men are brought to judgment because it hangs in the balance whether or not they will accept the truth Rousseau tells. The promise of learning and loving the truth is held out in the book Rousseau writes for them, which holds the true account of his feelings, and which can amend the public attachment to untruth which puts them in jeopardy.

The reiteration of the passage at the close of the text repeats the presentation of the confession before his fellow men, pitched against the scene of Rousseau's death, but this time calling his audience to engage the truth he tells while he is alive. The same audience hangs in the

[6] Rousseau, *Confessions*, Oxford, 642. "J'ajoûtai ce qui suit dans la lecture que je fis de cet écrit à M. et Mme la Comtesse d'Egmont, à M. le Prince Pignatelli, à Mme la Marquise de Mesme et à M. le Marquis de Juigné. J'ai dit la vérité. Si quelque'un sait des choses contraites à ce que je viens d'exposer, fussent-elles mille fois prouvées, il sait des mensonges et des impostures, et s'il refuse de les approfondir et de les eclaircir avec moi tandis que je suis en vie il n'aime ni la justice ni la vérité. Pour moi je le déclare hautement et sans crainte: Qui-conque, même sans avoir lu mes écrits, examinera par ses propres yeux mon naturel, mon caractére, mes moeurs, mes penchans, mes plaisirs, mes habitudes et pourra me croire un malhonnête homme, est lui-même un homme à étouffer. J'achevai ainsi ma lecture et tout le monde se tut. Mme d'Egmont fut la seule qui me parut émue; elle tressaillit visiblement; mais elle se remit bien vite, et garda le silence ainsi que toute la compagnie. Tel fut le fruit que je tirai de cette lecture et de ma déclaration," Rousseau, *Confessions*, Pleiade, 656.

balance: were they to engage the truth Rousseau tells, they would love truth and justice, and be spared the guilt of one who clings to lies and refuses to engage with Rousseau to amend them.

To help them along the way, the final passage, in typical fashion, pulls together the scenes of truth-telling in his life-story with the activity of truth-telling ongoing in and manifested by the *Confessions*. The final passage includes Rousseau's declaration to his fellow men, the scene of their response to it, and his record of it here. The final formulation stages the relationship between the formulation of the confession, the narrative of giving confession, and the exercise of the confession in the *Confessions*. In this culminating moment, the Rousseau *Confessions* continue to tell the truth to his audience, to record the scenes where he tells the truth to his audience, and to thereby prove that he tells the truth by confirming his claim, demonstrating it with the text. The truth-telling also puts on trial – but opens up the possibility of redemption for – the audience who hears it, offering the truth that would spare the audience from living with the deficit of truth, and suffering the ensuing misinformation, misjudgments, and culpability as a result.

In this final scene, Rousseau stages the reception of the text by its audience in the text. The effects and outcomes of this truth-telling are the conversion of his audience to truth, located in Rousseau. They – we – need to engage him in order to get it. Rousseau stages the scene and formulates the operation of the confession and tries to put it to work so that the machinery of the truth-telling can work for us. In the end, the scene of not listening to Rousseau and the truth he tells is held out as the danger to the audience, if we make this mistake too. Alas the representation of the scenes of his reception, and the work of framing them in terms of the operation of confession, is an infinite task that would exceed the limits of his finite temporal time.

While Augustine's confession does not project a continued narrative of his 'I' in order to extend the confession, Rousseau's does need to continue to claim space in the temporal future to render its promise and work. While each fills the 'present' with the expansion of the confession text into its effects in the experience of the author and audience, Rousseau's initial encounter with god in the opening passage shifts in the final scene to his infinite task – impossible to accomplish in the temporal bounds – of writing the truth of his telling to his fellow men.

This, however, is a relief. If there is an utter failure of Rousseau to deliver on this task, it releases – not just subjugations of the one from whom the confession is wrested, but also – the audience from the ritual of truth-telling. As the Augustine and Rousseau *Confessions* set the scene, the witnesses of the confession are brought into the truth game and 'our' freedom also depend on it. If the *Confessions* fails, it relieves the 'I' of the truth games it has put into place. The two closings reopen around the rhetorical tasks and continue to stage the grounds on which they are built. Among these openings, there may be an opening for 'us readers' of the text to change 'our' designations by it.

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