

THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF MADAME DE GENLIS:

Rousseau's Royalist Legacy

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Little is known about the political thought of Félicité de Genlis (1746-1830) beyond the fact that she became a royalist after the French Revolution. A wealth of clues to her politics, however, is contained in the story of the Arcadia of Lagaraye in *Adèle et Théodore, ou lettres sur l'éducation* (1782). The figure of Lagaraye's Legislator, in particular, shows that Genlis' political thought is principally concerned with the emotional administration of political societies, and that it is so in ways that are both reminiscent and highly critical of the political preoccupations of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78). This essay examines the contrasts and correspondences between Lagaraye and the Arcadia of Clarens in Rousseau's *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse* (1762). It argues that although Genlis was a severe opponent of Rousseau's ideas, she was also a covert adherent of his political philosophy who used it as a springboard to develop her own, unique form of monarchism.

As a growing body of scholarship suggests, the intellectual legacy that Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) left to Félicité de Genlis (1746-1830) is especially important for Genlis studies.¹ Not only is the comtesse's pedagogy greatly inspired by the most influential and controversial educational philosophy of her time, but also, and more generally, her intellectual engagement with Rousseau, whom she befriended in her youth with the stormy consequences that usually ended the Genevan's friendships, is also abundant and consistent, even "omniprésent" (Martin, 51). She refers to him in multiple works, and notably in *Adèle et Théodore* (1782), her masterpiece, both when formulating her educational prescriptions, and when putting forward her social and political ideals.

“Je ne peux souffrir les tièdes”, Rousseau had written, echoing Christ in the Apocalypse, “quiconque ne se passionne pas pour moi n’est pas digne de moi”.² Genlis was “digne” of him: she was horrified by him and she admired him. If she saw her servants reading his *Confessions* (1782, 1789) or the *Discours sur l’inégalité* (1753), she confided in *La religion considérée comme l’unique base du bonheur* (1787), she would feel “très effrayée, et ne se croirait nullement en sûreté dans sa maison” (209). Jean-Jacques’ *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse* (1762) was also an exceptionally “dangereux” specimen of philosophic production (52), an incendiary book that had “mis à la mode l’exaltation des sentiments et l’amour désordonné” (1811, 322), but that at bottom was only a weak imitation of *Pamela* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1748) (Brouard-Arends 2008, 21). In fact a mixture of forgery and despicability beset the whole of the book’s ruinous philosophy (1782, I, 44, 82-85, 138, 145-146, 187-189), whose creator, “inconséquent” and “[manquant] de goût” (Brouard-Arends 2008, 21), merely emulated his true master, Locke (Brouard-Arends 2006, 13), and stole his pedagogical precepts from Seneca, Montaigne and Fénelon (Genlis 1782, I, 199-200).³ One had to admit, though, that all the intellectual thieving had been of some use, since Rousseau’s thought contained much to learn from and expand upon, a richness that justified Genlis’ constant remembrance of his ideas (Martin, 51), especially in regard to female psychology and education (1782, I, 15, 73, 77, 86, 154; III, 18-19, 299). The comtesse’s interest in Rousseau, moreover, went well beyond the picking of helpful thoughts. She was fascinated by the man, writing a play, *Jean-Jacques dans l’île de Saint-Pierre* (1791), that related one of the last – and happiest – episodes of his life, and she also admired the artist greatly. In fact she loved his play *Pygmalion* (1762) so much that she wrote a sequel to it, *Galatée* (1798), and she remembered him in her last years as well, publishing, in 1820, an edited and annotated version of *Émile* deleting all the passages she deemed improper (Trouille, 256-257, 264).

Like most of her fellow Christian counter-revolutionaries, Genlis believed that Rousseau’s greatest value lay by far in the brilliant defense he had undertaken of Christianity against the mockeries and insults of *philosophie*. “Les ecclésiastiques et les dévots”, she wrote, “lui ont tous pardonné au fond de l’âme ce qu’il a écrit contre la religion, en faveur des hommages si répétés qu’il a rendus à l’Évangile” (1787, 22; 1825, VI, 145). The middle position Rousseau occupied, the magnificent synthesis he had devised between Christianity and the French Enlightenment, coupled with the aspersions he had cast upon both, meant that neither party could utterly love or hate him. Genlis shared this ambivalence (Trouille, 252-255). Like other conservatives – Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821), Louis de Bonald (1754-1840), the abbé Gaspard-André

Jauffret (1759-1823) – she condemned Rousseau for attacking religion, but made unobtrusive use of his defenses of it (Masson, 275). In fact her “remarques... semblent souvent d’autant plus sévères que l’héritage rousseauiste pèse lourd dans son œuvre” (Martin, 51). This attitude was not necessarily dishonest. Genlis was right to accuse Rousseau of imitation. His religious reflections in particular were conceptually commonplace: the Savoyard vicar’s profession of faith was *communis opinio* in the eighteenth century, and if the piece had gained so much fame, it was due to eloquence rather than originality. Rousseau was also so controversial that acknowledging his influence on one’s thought was risky. Often, therefore, Genlis opted for implicit engagement and emulation. In *Adèle et Théodore*, though, her discretion disguises only awkwardly the fact that the entire novel is a response to Rousseau’s *Émile* (1762) and *Julie* (1761). Like these works, Genlis’ *magnum opus* recounts the education of a boy and girl, with the aim not only of forging perfected men and women, but also of evoking an Arcadian political society.

This last aspect of *Adèle et Théodore* has been overlooked. While the themes of education and motherhood have received extensive attention (Robb 2008), Genlis’ political thought – both in this novel and elsewhere – remains almost completely unknown. On this subject, too, Rousseau’s influence is pervasive. The harmonious society of Lagaraye where the d’Almanes take their children to witness human relations at their peak is Genlis’ answer to *Julie’s* Clarens. It is the sort of republic that the well-educated and spiritually superior can construct for the common benefit, the political *telos* of Genlis’ entire pedagogical project.

This paper examines the Lagaraye laboratory in intellectual context, focusing on the main literary figure that Genlis borrowed from Rousseau: the Legislator. The dual aim is to analyse systematically her intellectual inheritance from the Citizen of Geneva, while providing what to my knowledge is, together with Sophie Bourgault’s article below, virtually the first study of Genlis’ political thought.

The Legislator in Arcadia

The community of Lagaraye is possibly inspired by the Royal Saltworks of Arc-et-Senans, built in 1774-1779 [fig. 1 and 2] (Brouard-Arends 2006, 28), the masterpiece of the utopist architect Claude Nicolas Ledoux (1736-1806), an adept of Rousseau desirous of “réinstaller la société dans son environnement naturel”.⁴ A village “Patrie” for “tout être infortuné” inhabited by people from “tous les pays” (II, 14), Lagaraye is a charitable community composed of manufacturing industries that employ the former poor; fertile fields cultivated by

peasants; the newly built houses of these working families; a chapel; a men's hospital, headed by M. de Lagaraye; a women's hospital, headed by Mme de Lagaraye, his wife; an inoculation hospital; an apothecary; the laboratory and library of M. de Lagaraye; and schools for a thriving generation of children – for Lagaraye, like a true eighteenth-century Arcadia, proves its political value by its population growth.

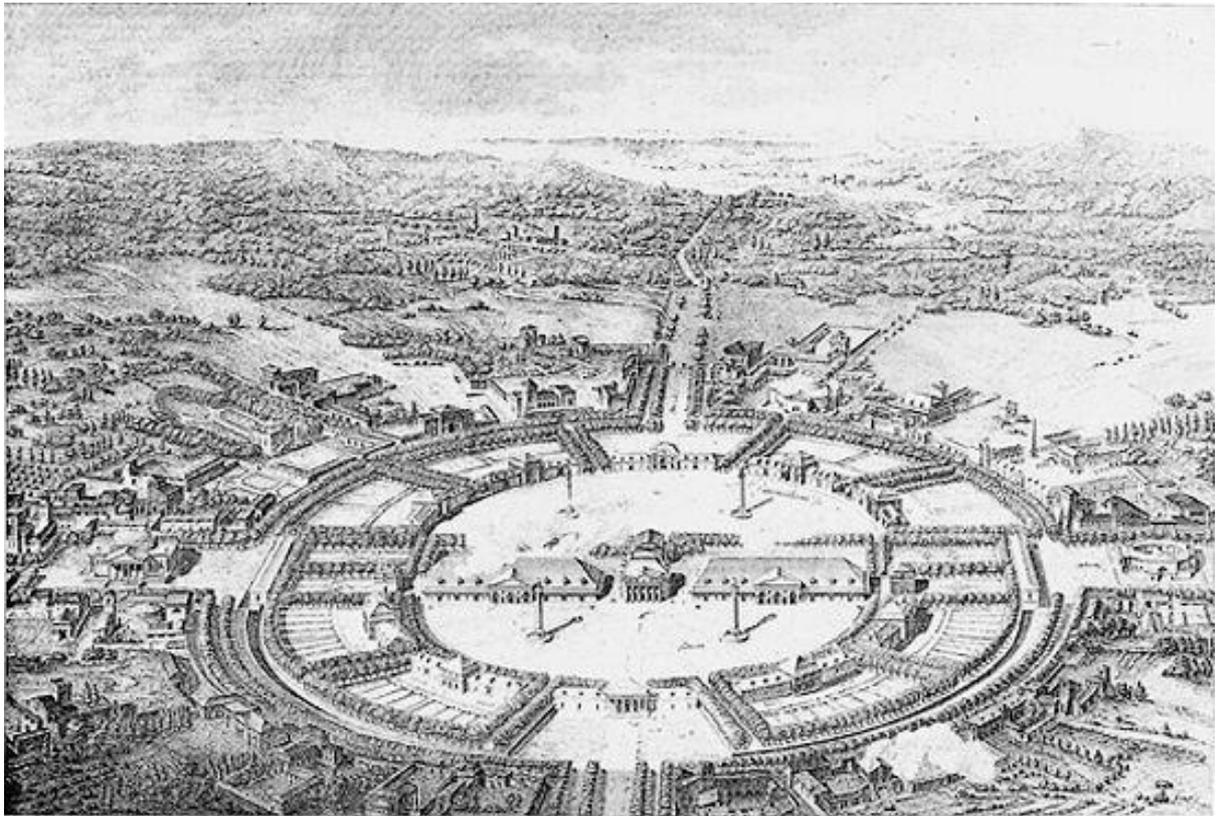


Fig. 1. The Royal Saltworks at Arc-et-Senans seen from the ideal village of Chaux.
Engraving after Claude Nicolas Ledoux, 1804. Photo: Archives Larbor.



Fig. 2. The Royal Saltworks of Arc-et-Senans today.
 Photo: Syndicat Mixte du Pays Horloger.

It is built on the estate of the marquis de Lagaraye, an “homme véritablement incomparable” (II, 11) who became the “Législateur d’une République heureuse” (II, 80) thanks to the exceptional moral character and humanitarian vision he derived from a “piété véritablement sublime” (II, 68). M. de Lagaraye had a sensitive heart, but youthful “égarements, une extrême dissipation” had the ironically happy effect of preventing him from “[se] livrer [à l’amour] dans cet âge où les impressions en sont si vives”. If he had “aimé passionnément sa femme... il eût été sans doute un époux tendre et fidèle... un homme estimable et chéri, mais ce n’étoit plus M. de Lagaraye” (II, 93). Interestingly, this lack of romantic feeling – of the self-interested sentiment that stifles the love of humanity – is a true rarity among Genlis’ fictional men, all of whom eventually – and sometimes principally – become the victims of sexual desire. Thus the baron d’Almane develops a “passion violente” for a lover from whom his wise wife manages to separate him; the vicomte de Limours turns into the docile prey of a mistress who sows division in his home and prepares his daughter’s mortal fate; Charles, Adèle’s fiancé, develops a “profonde” passion for her, after having been in love with Mme d’Ostalis; even the well-raised Théodore falls “éperdument amoureux” with his bride-to-be, Constance (III, 467); Germeuil in *La femme auteur* has passionate relation-

ships, first with Mme de Nangis and later with Natalie, leaving them both after swearing eternal devotion to them quite sincerely.

M. de Lagaraye, then, embarked on the road to legislative exception because he skirted the romantic abyss into which his sex usually fell. Yet he could not avoid passion completely, since managing the emotions successfully required knowing them exhaustively. And so M. de Lagaraye did experience one single, great passion, but it was for his only daughter, in whom he deposited all his love until she died suddenly in the midst of her *débutante* party. Devastated by this tragedy, M. de Lagaraye still managed to emerge from it inwardly regenerated. Realising how much suffering derives from “s’attacher passionnément à un objet”, he concluded that “l’amour de l’humanité” – the Greeks’ *agape* – is “le sentiment vertueux qui reste au sage” (II, 78). Henceforth, he extended his sentiments to all, in particular the sick, the old, the handicapped and the poor. He decided to leave his château – once the reign of “[le] luxe... la mollesse et l’oisiveté” (II, 71) – and convinced his wife to attend with him the medical school of Montpellier, then among the best in Europe. Mme de Lagaraye accepted enthusiastically. In itself, of course, her attendance of medical school was extremely rare if not scandalous in eighteenth-century France. But it illustrated aptly Genlis’ feminism, and in particular her defense of women’s right to learn, write, produce knowledge and serve as educators.⁵ Her fervor in this regard justified her own literary and educational roles, exceptional in a woman of her time, in particular her unheard-of – even shocking – position as *gouverneur* of the children of the duc d’Orléans – the role of *gouverneur* being invariably reserved to men (Brouard-Arends 2006, 9).

At Montpellier, the Lagaraye couple made “les plus étonnans progrès” in medical studies (I, 517), while their previously luxurious and unproductive estate was reconverted into a bountiful and rationally managed community inhabited by peasants and the former poor. The transformations were substantial, but they did not take more than a few years, and owner and property once renewed, the Lagarayes returned to their lands to devote the rest of their lives and the remainder of the family fortune to the service of the sick and the most deprived. Their founding sacrifice divinized them. “Vous venez voir deux Anges... oui, deux Anges que le Ciel nous a donnés pour le Bonheur de tout le pays” (II, 12), is the announcement the d’Almanes hear on first arriving at Lagaraye. Their subsequent experience validates it. They first glimpse M. de Lagaraye, rather appropriately, at daily Mass. The old man attends “habillé comme tout le monde et placé au hasard”, but little Théodore identifies him at once, noticing his “figure noble et touchante”, his “air vénérable qui [imprime] le respect”, his “recueillement et sa piété” (II, 62). Théodore recognizes M. de

Lagaraye so quickly because he possesses the spiritual discernment that Jesus attributed to children; but he is not the only one who can tell that this man is not of this world. His father, the baron d'Almane, explicitly describes M. de Lagaraye's visit to the infirmary as an Epiphany:

Ce fut pour nous le spectacle le plus touchant de voir M. de Lagaraye parler à tous ces malades d'une manière affectueuse & consolante, & de les entendre le bénir & le remercier avec les expressions de la plus vive & la plus tendre reconnoissance. Au son de sa voix, nous vîmes tous les rideaux s'entr'ouvrir, & toutes les têtes, dans toute l'étendue de la salle, se soulever & s'avancer pour jouir du bonheur de le voir. Il me parut alors une Divinité qui daigne descendre dans le Temple où on l'implore, pour venir y répandre les grâces & les bienfaits (II, 64).

That M. de Lagaraye should be the object of a cult becomes understandable when considering that he has not only founded Lagaraye, but given it laws (or at least regulations), educated its inhabitants, provided them with work, rendered the community cohesive through the quality and intensity of the love he has inspired, and become, in doing these things, a saintly ruler in contact with the divine. The sacred atmosphere that envelops him surrounds all Christian kings, but the social foundation it enables is especially reminiscent of Rousseau's Legislator, himself the denizen of a divine universe. The similarity is not a simple case of borrowing. On the contrary, M. de Lagaraye is the symbolic embodiment of the tensions that typify Genlis' attitude to Jean-Jacques' political thought.

Rousseau's Legislator is an ill-studied figure, but a brief sketch of him is crucial for reconstructing the literary genealogy of M. de Lagaraye. Beside the famous Legislator of *Du contrat social* (1762) – the dispassionate, disinterested and omniscient molder of nations, the discerning deceiver who convinces peoples that they forge their own freedom, though in reality they only obey his own prescriptions – Rousseau's works contain other lawgiver figures. These include Émile's tutor and Clarendon's Legislator, who I would like to argue is not just M. de Wolmar as has been suggested (Shklar 348-349), but the *couple* of Julie and Wolmar. The *ménage* of these two is ideally suited to creating and directing society because it constitutes the perfect marriage of emotion and reason. As Julie explains: "Chacun des deux est précisément ce qu'il faut à l'autre; il m'éclaire et je l'anime; nous en valons mieux réunis, et il semble que nous soyons destinés à ne faire entre nous qu'une seule âme, dont il est l'entendement et moi la volonté" (II, 374). The imagery of the soul evokes *Du contrat social* (1762), whose Legislator animates the nation by showing his soul (Kelly 326). *Julie*, however, is more specific in that it provides a *geography* of the legislative soul. Wolmar is the "oeil vivant" who *sees* the good, while Julie is

Clarens' idol, the sacred being who makes the people *want* it. Her motivational role is extremely important for understanding how the Legislator applies his laws, and more particularly how he manages "to persuade without convincing". The subject has long stirred speculation among scholars, with patriotism, the civil religion, and music being adduced to explain the legislative mastery over wills. Rousseau's political works certainly describe these mechanisms more or less explicitly; but the novels, by including female characters, show that the most powerful weapon of political creation and leadership is love. Julie subjugates all and educes "idolâtrie" from every soul thanks to her own, extraordinary capacity for love (203-204).

This model of government, where the sexes' different faculties combine to form new souls and to shape and direct society, is markedly different from Lagaraye's. A feminist nostalgic for the baroque, Genlis echoes François Poullain de la Barre's dictum that "l'esprit n'a pas de sexe" and that, intellectually, women can achieve the same things as men. Her only caveat is that, men being stronger and capable of greater violence, it is prudent for prominent women to maintain a discreet presence within the public sphere, and to refrain from becoming famous writers⁶ or managing *les affaires*. An excessive public presence exposes women's modesty because publicity inevitably implies defamation, especially during ungenerous times – like Genlis' – oblivious of the chivalrous manners of *le grand siècle* (Genlis 1811).

Each individual, then, being complete, and men administering business with fewer obstacles than women, M. de Lagaraye, unlike Wolmar, reigns alone as his Arcadia's rational and emotional epicenter. Certainly, his wife, Mme de Lagaraye, is also a key figure – the other "Ange" that presides over the place – but rather than contribute a different set of faculties, like Julie, she simply acts as her husband's mirror image in the feminine world. She runs the women's hospital where he runs the men's, and the girls' school where he runs the boys', fitting in this way the profile of educator, instructor, and contributor to civil society that usually defines Genlis' female heroines. Interestingly, by her professional status, vocation as instructor, and lack of foundational specificity, Mme de Lagaraye is the antithesis of Julie, who, although an educator,⁷ is not only *not* an instructor, but becomes a founder precisely because of her *lack* of instruction. Saint-Preux, her teacher, has taught her to "[p]eu lire, et penser beaucoup à nos lectures, ou, ce qui est la même chose, en causer beaucoup entre nous" (57-58). This Rousseauian advice applies to both men and women – Émile also reads little – but especially to women – Sophie reads only two books during her upbringing, a manual of arithmetic and *Télémaque* (1699). The latter even is not intended for her, since she picks it up by

mistake and with disastrous results, nearly dying of love for the main character. Rather than read, therefore, Julie prefers to devote herself to mastering the Rousseauian woman's quintessential art – the organisation of relationships.

The similarities and contrasts between Clarens' and Lagaraye's Legislator become sharper when considering that as Julie's tutor, Saint-Preux also possesses legislative abilities. His extreme sensibility makes him Rousseau's ideal citizen, rather like *Émile* and the image that his creator had of himself. Yet this obedient lover is more of a leader than he seems. After all, he is the "expert in moral blackmail"⁸ who has formed the feminine half of the legislative soul, not only by instructing her – imparting knowledge to her and directing her reading – but also by educating her, or forming her moral character, and more specifically by causing her to experience the single great passion that every Legislator must know in order to manage souls effectively. In turn, Julie also represents Saint-Preux's own single and great passion, the one that he declares from the beginning "fera le destin de [sa] vie" (37) – and that is integral to the Legislator's emotional history.

Most intriguingly, Saint-Preux *leaves*. M. de Lagaraye is ever-present and quite explicit about his plans and motivations, expounding to the d'Almanes the details of how and why he created his Arcadia, from his own emotional development to the financial intricacies of the enterprise. Not so with Julie's mysterious lover. We never learn his real name – "Saint-Preux" is Julie's nickname for him – he is constantly coming and going from the scene, and he vanishes into thin air rather bafflingly at the end. At the time of Julie's death, he is in Rome. Claire and Wolmar write to him to recount to him the sad news, and invite him to come live at Clarens in remembrance of Julie and as the tutor to her children. Saint-Preux never replies, at least that we know of. After nearly a thousand pages of intense emotions, we are left without closure – like Clarens' denizens themselves.

Saint-Preux's disappearance exemplifies Rousseau's narrative playfulness, engaged in at the expense of his characters and readers, and evident also in the fifth book of *Émile*, where he makes Sophie die of love for the fictional Télémaque but then changes his mind, teasingly deciding to let her live, marry, and enjoy a "destin plus heureux". This ludic storyteller who plays games with the emotions and fates of characters and readers, this magical dealer in words who makes people appear and disappear at will, is himself a literary rendition of the Legislator, whose enormous power to elicit and administer other people's fates and passions extends even, we shall see, to the power over life and death. In Saint-Preux's case, the mystery that ends the game does not allow us to draw precise conclusions; but it does encourage reflection. It could

be that he is so overwhelmed by Julie's death that he cannot reply to Claire and Wolmar's letters; but it could mean as well that now that she is gone his role as Legislator is over. Saint-Preux leaves Clarens at its apex as Julie herself has done, as Émile's tutor does after Émile's marriage, and as all good Legislators must do their cities once constituted. Indeed leaving at the right moment is typical of, and crucial for, the Legislator's mission. Every great Legislator since antiquity had departed or died his work once completed (Honig). Moses died with the Promised Land in view, but before treading upon it; and Lycurgus left for Delphi and then starved himself to death after making the Spartans swear that they would respect his laws until his return. Timely departures forced citizens to learn to govern themselves in polities pristinely prepared. They also sublimated the Legislator's memory, turning it into a myth, a boundless source of political inspiration that ensured the perpetuity of the laws. Clarens will live from Julie's sacred remembrance.

Leaving, in turn, is something foreigners can do more easily, and an alien status is another traditional feature of Legislators, who were always, since antiquity, strangers to the community or exiled men returned home to give laws, again like Moses and Lycurgus. Being a newcomer was important, because the foreigner can demolish more easily than the native, and as Rousseau remarked, "ce qui rend pénible l'ouvrage de la législation est moins ce qu'il faut établir que ce qu'il faut détruire" (1964, 391). Appropriately, Julie, Wolmar and Saint-Preux are strangers to Clarens: Julie did not live there before her marriage, Wolmar is Swedish, and Saint-Preux's origin, like everything else about him, is enigmatic, but we know at least that he is not Swiss (66).

M. de Lagaraye, by contrast, is anything but a stranger to the place he governs – his Arcadia is located on his family's ancestral home, where he has always lived – he does not leave when his legislative work is done, and he does not choose even when or how to die. On these points, he escapes the myth of the Legislator, and the reason is simply that his work requires little destruction. Certainly, to purify peasant mores, he closes down taverns and forbids dancing (II, 86-87) – a probable critique of Clarens, where Julie herself dances with her servants, to Saint-Preux's initial puzzlement (456). Yet these measures are associated with "sevérité" rather than with the "tourment" of Clarens,⁹ and they do not involve, as *Du contrat social* suggests,¹⁰ partially breaking the spirit of a people. On the contrary, M. de Lagaraye's work is almost wholly constructive. Rather than dissolve old customs, he *gives* new ones to a people that he forms *de novo* by assembling poor individuals and families from all over the world. His community is truly Christian and universal, since it lives from a common spirituality and possesses no national temperament to

alter, no worldly identity to damage.

M. de Lagaraye also never thinks of leaving, or of conjuring a founding myth, because he has no interest in transferring sovereignty. The Lagarayans are not destined for self-government, as M. de Lagaraye stipulates in his will that the community will dissolve after his death. He reasons that, once he is gone, the increase he has been able to make in his fortune will not suffice to support the institutions he has formed; and that “remettre les hôpitaux entre les mains de gens intéressés, c’est souvent moins travailler pour les pauvres que pour les Administrateurs” (II, 84). This unique founder has made no succession for himself, has formed no men in his ideas, because the celestial spirit he embodies cannot be taught or replaced. He has also taken no care to forge the public spirit so essential to republics. Indeed such a spirit cannot form at Lagaraye even if it emerges spontaneously, since “les assemblées sont rigoureusement défendues” (II, 85). Thus although Genlis’ Arcadia may look like a republic by its egalitarian austerity, it is a kingdom by its origin and structure: the marquis may be a humble man, but he governs as an absolute monarch over a place that is entirely the product of his vision. “Nous lui devons tout”, says Saint-André, “jusqu’à l’air sain et pur que nous respirons” (II, 18). The baronne agrees. “[J]e contemplois avec attendrissement cette terre heureuse et vivante, et je me disois: La volonté d’un seul homme peut faire naître tant de biens, peut produire tant de choses utiles!” (II, 18) Not meant, then, for self-government, Lagaraye disperses little by little after its creator’s death and according to his plans.

Genlis, Rousseau, and political society

M. de Lagaraye both fits in and breaks out of the Legislator’s mold in ways that allow us insight into Genlis’ political ideals, disclosing her, specifically, as a royalist with republican sensibilities. The generous marquis bears the divine mark that distinguishes kings: his loving aura and efficient saintliness single him out as a divinely chosen monarch, a modern version of St Louis, the caring king whose “fils”, the Bourbons, Genlis herself defended by persuading her own lover, the duc d’Orléans, not to accept power when it was offered to him in 1791 (Trouille, 280). At the same time, though, the creative divinity of M. de Lagaraye recalls the Legislator, a republican figure, a transformer of worlds whose powers and sway derive from exceptional personal qualities with thoroughly public expressions. His plain dress and modest manners likewise embody the republican dream of a just and egalitarian polity built by its own denizens where no distinctions exist between rulers and subjects. Of course, the egalitarian demeanor of M. de Lagaraye is exceptional in Genlis’ oeuvre, which tends to affirm social hierarchies, and expresses suspicion of

ideologies that attack them (II, 8); but Lagaraye is an ideal world, one even more perfected than the château of the baronne d'Almane, and one separated as well in space and time from commonplace reality, since the Lagarayes are supposed to have died around 1752, three decades before the publication of *Adèle et Théodore*. The marquis' readiness to let his memory pass from this world is related to the second major aspect of Genlis' royalism: its Christianity. For while she may imagine heaven on earth, she can glimpse it and then let it go, as in the end it is only inner bliss and the bliss that follows death that really matter.

At Clarens, by contrast, the "idolâtrie" of Julie has turned into a religious cult, as becomes clear at the end of the novel, when her grief-crazed servants, kneeling around her deathbed, become convinced – like Christ's disciples – that the mistress they adore, their female Jesus, their household's incarnation of divine love, has come back to life like her divine model. I would like to suggest here that this "idolâtrie" of Julie-Jesus, which evokes Christianity, but looks toward an earthly paradise, is the literary equivalent of the civil religion that Rousseau introduced in the last chapter of *Du contrat social* (1762). The sacred memory and lasting worship of Julie it enables will keep Clarens alive. And its vision is anathema to Genlis, whose variety of Christianity accepts no complements to, or derivatives of, the religion of Jesus, least of all the kind that promote attachment to this fleeting world.

No society, though, can be formed or integrated without sacrifice and renunciation, and for both Genlis and Rousseau, the overcoming of a single and great passion is the defining feature of the Legislator's emotional history, the guarantor of the inward transformation that results in a capacity for foundation. Thus M. de Lagaraye surpassed the grief caused by his daughter's death to give himself to humanity; Julie gave up her love for Saint-Preux in order to marry Wolmar and become the mistress of Clarens: "En me disant combien vous m'étiez cher", she writes to her former lover, "mon coeur était ému, mais ma conscience et mes sens étaient tranquilles; et je connus dès ce moment que j'étais réellement changée". (355). Saint-Preux sacrificed Julie, his first and only love, to become her children's tutor and a beloved denizen of her community; Wolmar too has known only one love – his wife – yet, uniquely, he does not need to surpass it, because his exceptionally "cold" character protects him from "idolizing" Julie the emotional volcano, and allows him to engage simultaneously in other, more universal forms of self-giving.

The Legislator's emotional history, however, also reveals Genlis and Rousseau's different perspectives on love. He insists that "le véritable amour" should *precede* legislation, that is, that it should be experienced and then re-

nounced before social foundation; she is adamant that it should be given up completely. Not only has her Legislator never been in love, but nobody else should be either. “[L]e coeur est fait pour aimer”, writes the baronne d’Almane regarding romance, “j’en conviens; il lui faut un sentiment qui l’agite et l’occupe; mais est-il nécessaire que ce soit de l’amour?” (I, 349). The uncertain and unstable sentiment feeds narcissism and causes suffering, and it must be moderated both within and outside marriage. Let your husband see only “les sentiments qui peuvent durer toujours”, is the baronne’s advice to her daughter Adèle: only so will you become your husband’s friend (III, 478), and only so will he love you in a solid and durable manner.

Looking, then, for another means to “agitate” and “occupy” the heart, the Lagarayes institute biannual prizes for the best mothers and fathers (II, 87-88) so that parenting can compete with sexual passion. This measure ensures that emotion produces the investment in others that all societies require while planting the seed of the *agape* that has grown within M. de Lagaraye. It is no accident that the marquis flowers into a Legislator out of his paternal feelings. From this perspective, the mothering duties that pervade Genlis’ oeuvre and that until now have been examined only in the context of her pedagogy acquire new meaning in her thought as society’s founding acts. Of course – and at the risk of calling upon the very theories of female nature she rejected – the privileging of parenting can be read as a feminine preference and opposed to Rousseau’s more masculine view that sexual passion founds society. But what is interesting from a historical standpoint, is the fact that Genlis’ feminine and feminist view cohered with contemporary royalism, while Rousseau’s masculine and masculinist perspective harmonized with the republican ideas that would re-emerge – profoundly transformed and selectively appropriated – under Jacobin rule.

Aware, though, that romance cannot be eliminated from society despite the Legislator’s best efforts, Genlis proposes to employ it in two socially useful ways. The first is to get men married. Wishing to betroth her daughter, Adèle, to a young man she approves of, Charles, the baronne d’Almane informs herself about the woman with whom Charles is in love. On learning that it is Mme d’Ostalis, she rejoices, since she believes that a man’s character is revealed by his first crush, and Mme d’Ostalis is a virtuous woman. The baronne then deploys various strategies to render Adèle inaccessible. Charles predictably falls in love with her and marries her, thus ending the novel happily.

The second use of romantic love is to lend to the Legislator a devoted spouse: Mme de Lagaraye. Generally, Genlis believes that falling in love is undesirable and even dangerous for women,¹¹ as even kind men are fickle and

a man's romantic feelings do not last more than the first three years of marriage – if that (III, 476). In her novels, therefore, women in love are generally either victims or fools; but not Mme de Lagaraye. She is a happy exception because her husband's human qualities have made him a safe object of adoration, and because her enthusiasm for him has furthered his legislative projects: "aimant autant M. de Lagaraye, avec une tête vive, elle s'étoit laissée entraîner sans peine à tout ce qu'il avoit pu lui proposer" (II, 70).

Romance can thus have salutary political uses, but for Genlis austerity, both sentimental and material, is otherwise the order of the day. Its practice has the salutary effect of quieting the social passions that emerge from making comparisons between people – what Rousseau called malignant *amour-propre*. Clothing is important in this respect. At Lagaraye, everyone, including M. and Mme de Lagaraye (61), wears the "uniforme" (68) of the place, consisting of a plain grey "serreau de toile".¹² The resulting effacement of social distinctions and silencing of the passions is likewise practiced at school. Thus, although M. de Lagaraye sends his most brilliant students to Paris to receive the best education and career opportunities available, he does so only rarely: unless a student's talent is truly exceptional, he prefers to leave him in the class where he was born. This policy is designed to protect the community's egalitarian order and discourage the desire to shine that Genlis, like most of her contemporaries, condemned as "frivolous ambition" (II, 81). Outside Arcadia, though, the same approach reinforces existing social hierarchies. Thus Genlis' *Discours sur l'éducation publique du peuple* (1791), published nine years after *Adèle et Théodore*, advocated free, but only vocational, public schooling for girls and boys – just like at Lagaraye, but this time with a substantially more hierarchical context in mind. Genlis could thus both defend the social distinctions of her time and dream of an ideal world characterized by equality where people worked with their hands. On this point, she practiced as an educator what she preached as a novelist, training her princely charges in a wide variety of manufacturing crafts.

By contrast with Lagaraye, Clarens never poses the question of schooling, and we never hear of anyone receiving an education except Julie, Claire, and their children. In Rousseau's world, it seems, education is minimal not only in content, but also by its availability to the lower classes. Also in contrast with Lagaraye – and filling up the void left by instruction – clothing here plays a strong imaginative role. Julie's clothes are modest only in appearance, and their simplicity is devised not to moderate attention but to attract it. As Saint-Preux tells her:

Toutes les parties de ton habillement éparses présentent à mon ardente imagination

celles de toi-même qu'elles recèlent: cette coiffure légère que parent de grands cheveux blonds qu'elle feint de couvrir; cet heureux fichu contre lequel une fois au moins je n'aurai point à murmurer; ce déshabillé élégant et simple qui marque si bien le goût de celle qui le porte; ces mules si mignonnes qu'un pied souple remplit sans peine; ce corps si délié qui touche et embrasse... (147)

In short, if Lagaraye is the home of Stoical charity, Clarens is that of Epicurean sensuality. Rousseau not only does not recommend austerity, but explicitly discourages it as the companion of hypocrisy: "J'ai toujours remarqué," says Saint-Preux, "que les gens faux sont sobres, et la grande réserve de la table annonce assez souvent des mœurs feintes et des âmes doubles" (81). Certainly, like M. de Lagaraye, Wolmar is a formerly rich man who shuns pomp and extravagance. Yet, unlike his Genlisian counterpart, he has not given up his fortune willingly but has rather lost it through war and political conflicts. Rousseau's anti-Stoicism, in fact, is so marked that at Clarens the sole gestures of privation have an Epicurean goal: like Julie's when she abstains from coffee, her favorite drink, in order to enjoy it more when she has it, and be more animated among her guests (552).

Clarens' greater self-indulgence, though, comes at the price of delation, as becomes clear when considering the crucial role played by transparency. The very name of the place evokes clarity, as does that of Claire, who is connected to the lineage of Clarens (Matthes 131) as the cousin of Julie and mother of Henriette, herself Julie's niece, adopted daughter, and future daughter-in-law. When Saint-Preux first visits Clarens, he is shocked to discover that people there share their innermost thoughts and feelings: Wolmar, for instance, knows all about his (Saint-Preux's) amorous past with Julie, while Julie herself dies making a full, written confession about how she still feels about her former lover. Lower down on the social scale, though, transparency is forced. We learn that the Wolmar couple requires the servants to spy on each other and denounce publicly whosoever among them has not corrected his faults (463-466) – a system that seems to justify the accusations of proto-totalitarianism that have been leveled against Rousseau (Talmon). Indeed it appears that at Clarens, the relative lack of individual self-restraint – by comparison with Lagaraye – is functionally replaced by the Legislator's total control.

Yet at both Clarens and Lagaraye the Legislator can possess souls unto death, a fact that begins to emerge when considering that in Rousseau's novelistic world, all the female characters die. Even seemingly rational ones, like Claire, turn out to be fundamentally unstable beings with a morbid incapacity for emotional self-control, unlimited people who go to the grave following the psychological crises induced by sentimental excesses. Thus Julie, Claire, Sophie, Lucretia, Émile's second wife, Milord Édouard's marquise, Fantasque the

capricious queen, all pass away following emotional immoderation. Laure the virtuous prostitute is the only exception to this rule. Unable to marry Milord Édouard, she enters a convent, a destiny that in her case can be considered a living death, since she chooses it without vocation, but that at least does not involve self-annihilation by passion: Rousseau probably estimates that it would be unjust for her to die like the others, as she did not choose prostitution but was sold into it as a girl.

Rousseau's much-debated misogyny must have dictated this pattern to some degree, but in *Julie* and *La mort de Lucrece* (1754) at least, female dying has socially foundational and integrative results that link it to the figure of the Legislator. Although Julie dies, certainly, to prevent the transgression of her pudicity (Still 168), her decision is not simply that of a woman in love. It is above all that of a Legislator, a new Lucretia whose sacred memory will perpetuate her community, and whose being even seems to *contain* that community – like the body of the ruler on the famous frontispiece of Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651), which is physically composed of the bodies of the republic's citizens. Claire and Wolmar suggest this when they write to Saint-Preux that he and Milord Édouard must come to Clarens to form part of this body: "Venez vous réunir à tout ce qui reste d'elle" (740, 744), as if Clarens were her "restes", her cadaver, which it is the fate of the community's denizens to enliven. Thus when Wolmar dresses up Henriette like Julie and asks her to talk and act like her (apparently to console Claire, although the morbid pantomime has, unsurprisingly, the opposite effect (739)), he is symbolically setting up Julie's niece and adoptive daughter as Julie's successor and Clarens' new ruler, the animating soul and body of the place, a role that Henriette fulfills to perfection by flawlessly mimicking her dead aunt.

Things, however, are quite different at Lagaraye. For if Rousseau's women are fatally incapable of containing their passions, in Genlis' world it is men who are so cursed. At M. de Lagaraye's funeral, the patients who escape from the infirmary – "pâles, livides, décharnés" – to drag themselves to his tomb like "spectres sortant de la tombe" (III, 399) are men. It is also a man, Saint-André, his most faithful and devoted protégé, who dies on the spot at the same event: "Éperdu, égaré [...] il s'écrie: O mon Maître! O mon ami!... A ces mots, il tombe dans la fosse, et, noble et touchante victime de la reconnaissance et de l'amitié, il expire sur le cercueil de son bienfaiteur!" (400-401) The scene is strikingly reminiscent of another dying moment, one that will contribute to Clarens' founding myth. This is the final scene of *Julie*, when Claire, driven insane with grief by her cousin's death, and standing at her grave, hears Julie's voice crying out to her in the midst of her despair:

Confiance, amitié, vertus, plaisirs, folâtres jeux, la terre a tout englouti... Je me sens entraînée... j'approche en frissonnant... je crains de fouler cette terre sacrée... je crois la sentir palpiter et frémir sous mes pieds... j'entends murmurer une voix plaintive!... Claire! ô ma Claire! où es-tu? que fais-tu loin de ton amie?... Son cercueil ne la contient pas tout entière... il attend le reste de sa proie... il ne l'attendra pas longtemps (745).

The close friend and mourner dying or beginning to die at the tomb of the adored, the invocations, the language of friendship: the similarities between Genlis' and Rousseau's scenes are too great to be coincidences. They testify to Genlis' debt to Rousseau, and to the belief both authors share that the Legislator's nature is to cause death by passionate love. However, in Rousseau's version, Claire's death completes Julie's and contributes to the sacred memory of a community that will continue, while in Genlis' story, Saint-André's demise has no communal consequences, since Lagaraye itself is not destined to survive (II, 84-85). Again, the reason for this lies in Genlis' Christianity, which, less worldly than Rousseau's, preaches discreetly that no earthly community, regardless of how virtuous, is worthy of receiving the human sacrifices that ensure collective perpetuity. It was a dictum that Genlis' future revolutionary enemies would discard with Christianity a decade later as they devised their own version of Rousseau's civil religion.

Interestingly, Genlis and Rousseau both agree that those who die of grief with the Legislator are not the lovers. It is not Mme de Lagaraye who falls dead into her husband's grave, and it is neither Saint-Preux nor Wolmar who is mortally wounded by Julie's passing: Claire's last letter even informs us that Saint-Preux is beginning to recover from the blow. Our authors hence believe, with the ancients, that it is not romantic love or sexual passion, but friendship, which forms the most intimate and authentic bonds between people (Lewis, 69). Yet these are not friendships that correspond to Aristotle's "friendships of the good", those most readily practiced by fulfilled and self-sufficient people, and which the Athenian believed to be the most excellent, since they consist of caring for another and enjoying his or her character.¹³ Claire and Saint-André's radical dependency on their friends instead suggests that theirs is an Aristotelian "friendship of pleasure" based on enjoying the other person's company – to the point of not being able to do without it. The dependency is not returned. From the beyond, Julie may call Claire a part of her, but Claire will die for Julie and Julie did not choose to live for Claire, while M. de Lagaraye seems even more detached. When the baron d'Almane asks him whether he suffers to see his patients suffer, the marquis doctor answers: "ma sensibilité pour tous ces êtres malheureux et souffrants, est vague, universelle, et comprend la masse entière; nul choix, nulle préférence

ne m'attache à l'un plus qu'à l'autre" (II, 91). Not even the cold Wolmar is this aloof, since he loves Julie, however distantly, and he desires the companionship of Saint-Preux and Milord Édouard. Indeed in his utter abandonment of self-interest in relationships, in his unparalleled capacity for self-emptying, M. de Lagaraye exceeds the sacrality of Rousseau's novelistic lawgivers, and is ironically truer to the profile of the *Contrat social's* Legislator.

Most importantly, though, the imbalance between the Legislator's detachment and the intense friendship experienced by his or her friends suggests that even the Legislator's closest and most perfected relationships are parasitic on individual fulfillment. Arcadia, Genlis and Rousseau intimate, is premised on quasi-erotic (and, in Rousseau's case, fully erotic) states of extreme attachment and psychological dependency preventive of complete happiness – in fact, sometimes incompatible with life. Put like this, the idea that attachment is necessary among citizens, and detachment among rulers, may sound dangerously Machiavellian. But it is not unique to Genlis and Rousseau: it dwells at the very heart of modern Western political thought.

Covert inequalities aside, though, Arcadia remains a place for realizing happiness, and as long as the Legislator lives, Lagaraye is a haven of true bliss. M. de Lagaraye enjoys a "bonheur presque sans mélange" (II, 82) both in other people's eyes (65) and in his own: "le genre de vie que j'ai choisi fait mon bonheur," he says, "et vous ne voyez en moi qu'un homme heureux" (II, 63). His sole sadness is to see some of his patients die, but he bears even that with equanimity, sustained by "l'espoir de les guérir ou de soulager leurs souffrances" (II, 89). The love he inspires surges spontaneously from all who surround him to create a joyful world. Lagaraye is "the dwelling-place of happiness" (II, 71); "everyone [there] is happy" (II, 12). "I am happy" (II, 13), Saint-André assures the d'Almanes when they first arrive. He transmits to them this state of mind, since they experience "un sentiment d'une douceur inexprimable" (II, 13) on hearing him speak, and by the end of their first day develop a "désir passionné de... voir" M. de Lagaraye (II, 20), looking forward to the experience as "un bonheur si vivement désiré" (II, 19). Happiness, in fact, is imbibed from the atmosphere in this blissful world. "Tout [ici] respire la gaieté", boasts Saint-André on showing the d'Almanes the streets of Lagaraye's village, "tout y peint l'abondance et le bonheur" (II, 15). Lagaraye's peasants "reviennent gaiement" from the fields (II, 16); Saint-André's children enjoy "une heureuse existence" in the local manufactures (II, 16-17). A community like this is certainly "si rare" (II, 18); but it takes only one person to make it real, and diffuse delight effortlessly among all.

This vision of bliss recalls Clarens, where a wise Legislator has also

“montée au comble du bonheur permis sur la terre” (723), and where this happiness, too, is contagious. “Le bonheur qu'elle goûte”, we learn of Julie, “se multiplie et s'étend autour d'elle. Toutes les maisons où elle entre, offrent bientôt un tableau de la sienne” (533). Yet at Clarens happiness is far more fragile and unstable than at Lagaraye. In fact, Julie herself doubts that the bliss others discern is real. “[I]l n'y a point de vrai bonheur sur la terre” (513), she muses. Even the relative happiness she has achieved at Clarens is a source of wonder for her: “A qui devons-nous un bonheur si rare?” (664) and with time, she experiences it as excessive. “[J]e me rassasie de bonheur et de vie” (689); “je suis trop heureuse; le bonheur m'ennuie” (694). This satiety, though, does not prevent her from foreseeing the loss of her happiness: “Mon bonheur monté par degrés était au comble; il ne pouvait plus que déchoir” (726). Her deliberate death is even partly a measure for averting the slumber of felicity: “mon bonheur est fixé, je l'arrache à la fortune; il n'a plus de bornes que l'éternité” (727).

The diverging quality and stability of happiness at Lagaraye and Clarens reflect differences in commitment to political life. Because Lagaraye cannot survive its founder, each individual within it is comparatively free to develop the self-sufficiency that enables happiness, and whose blossoming can continue the community once dissolved. Prizing political existence far more, by contrast, and destined to survive the Legislator, Clarens manufactures souls more dependent for their well-being on external circumstances – beginning with the Legislator – and whose happiness is not only more fragile, but to some extent even finally undesirable. Yet this does not mean that Genlis believes Arcadia to be compatible with complete individual self-sufficiency, at least for all. She has, like Jean-Jacques, her emotionally dependent characters: the dying Saint-André, Mme de Lagaraye in love. Such people are necessary, since communities composed solely of the thoroughly blissful cannot hold together for lack of integrative compulsion.

Despite all these differences, though, Genlis shares with Rousseau the fundamental conviction that the quality of the soul is the primary determinant of politics. Arcadia can emerge only from souls exceptional – by their austerity and detachment in the case of M. de Lagaraye, by their sensibility and detachment in that of Julie, Saint-Preux and Wolmar *taken together* – since Wolmar is not very sensitive, and Saint-Preux is not very detached, but as we have seen, *Julie's* Legislator is a composite of various people.

The soul in the political machine was of course an old idea, but in eighteenth-century France, advocating it meant adopting a partisan stance. In political matters, many Enlightenment thinkers, and notably Montesquieu, focused on the manipulation of factors external to the individual, like fiscal and institu-

tional reorganization (Sonenscher 2009), while Rousseau supported the contrary position most famously. “Hommes sensuels, corps sans âme...!” was the accusing cry with which he founded the Counter-Enlightenment,¹⁴ replacing the soul at the center of political thought (Melzer), and basing his political project on the refashioning not of institutions, but of human needs and faculties (Sonenscher 2008). Genlis too embraced this attitude. Thus although M. de Lagaraye seems more financially preoccupied than Julie or Wolmar – he gives details of the costs and revenues of his operation, as well as financial reasons for why he does not expect his community to survive him – Lagaraye is no perfected monarchy, akin to “les plus belles machines” that even mediocre men can run (Montesquieu, I, 120), but only a group of loving souls steeped in austerity, capable of self-sacrifice, and devoted to the community’s legislative soul. Lagaraye is likewise Rousseauian in its rejection of the luxury that Jean-Jacques condemned, and that Montesquieu believed to be natural to monarchies. Thus if Genlis differed from most royalists in neglecting Montesquieu as an inspiration for political thought, she resembled her fellow Counter-Enlighteners in being a true – and discreet – disciple of Rousseau.

Conclusion: Rousseau’s chafing political heir

The Arcadia of Lagaraye discloses the intellectual origins of Genlis’ political thought in a disguised yet admiring critique of Jean-Jacques that encapsulates its creator’s attitudes to the famous philosopher. Like Clarens, Lagaraye emanates from a divine Legislator, an exceptional soul who has overcome a single and great passion, and to whom the Arcadians are attached by a (sometimes fatal) bond of idolatry; and like its Rousseauian model, it requires renunciation and sacrifice to be founded and maintained. These features, central to Rousseau’s political Counter-Enlightenment, allow us to identify Genlis, for all her condemnations and protestations, as a political thinker in the tradition he began. In fact in politics Genlis always preferred Rousseau the defender of Christianity. Thus her Arcadia is at once Rousseauian and Christian by its refusal of mechanism, and by the primacy it lends to purity of soul in political functioning.

Yet if Rousseau and religion unite in her thought on this point, they part quickly on others, as Genlis’ Christianity, unlike Jean-Jacques’, invariably prioritizes individual fulfillment over social cohesion, and personal salvation over the creation of heaven on earth. This order of priority explains why M. de Lagaraye can be an absolute monarch yet no totalitarian unlike Julie and Wolmar and why his community can disperse peacefully after his passing. Also, while in Rousseau’s Arcadia a multiple Legislator leads the community in a republican direction – for if Saint-Preux and Milord Édouard come join

Wolmar at Clarens, they will form with him the community of male peers that constitutes Rousseau's political ideal – Lagaraye's single Legislator governs over a futureless monarchy that is as such thoroughly un-Rousseauian. Interestingly, though, Genlis' departure from Rousseau does not draw her close to Montesquieu: for as an absolute society Lagaraye is eminently un-Montesquieuian. That the Bordelais thinker should shine in this way by his absence was highly unusual in the work of Genlis' monarchist contemporaries, who, even during the Revolution, announced their Montesquieuian sensibilities by rejecting absolutism and positing machine-like states (Saint-Victor, *passim*).

Lagaraye's political culture is also un-Rousseauian in other ways that further reveal Genlis' idiosyncratic position on the political map of her time. Ironically, Genlis the royalist was often more republican than Rousseau the founder of modern democracy, and Lagaraye differs from Clarens by incorporating features consistent with republican life: a uniform, a sober lifestyle, the near-absence of ranks, a relatively equal education for all. Also ironically, this world, which differs from Rousseau's by its relative equality, further contrasts with his by its aristocratic culture, in two ways. First, the middle class is absent from it. Lagaraye is a feudal community transformed into a manufacturing world where the aristocracy cohabits with the peasantry, its dependent of centuries. The noble founder of this society also prefers to dissolve it rather than allow the bourgeoisie – the "Administrateurs" – to acquire it. Second, Lagaraye is aristocratic by its feminism, and specifically by the opportunities it affords lower-class girls to receive schooling, and upper-class women to become educators and professionals. Mme de Lagaraye's attendance of medical school would have scandalized Rousseau's middle-class sensibilities, as would her heading a hospital, exercising as a medical doctor, leading a girls' school, composing its curriculum, and teaching. In the aristocratic imagination that enlivened Genlis' work, female education and learning were antidotes to the practice of – and enslavement by – romantic love in which Rousseau wished women to become experts. Thus, *contra* Rousseau, who believed that study led to licentiousness, Genlis posited female education and learning as instruments for the *prevention* of adultery. Even before adolescence, then, the reasonable Adèle – the converse of Rousseau's precarious women – knows the full vanity of romance and can read racy novels like *La princesse de Clèves* (1678) without her imagination becoming "enflammée". Contrast the fate of the fanciful Sophie, who peruses the far less romantic *Télémaque* as a teenager, only to fall in love with the main character with almost fatal results.

Genlis' and Rousseau's divergences on the subject of women represent-

ed antithetical positions in a quarrel regarding gender that raged from the middle of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth.¹⁵ In the beginning – and certainly at the time of the composition of *Adèle et Théodore* – the quarrel possessed primarily class implications, with the aristocracy being more open to furthering women’s learning, and the bourgeoisie wishing to shape “coeurs sensibles” with romantic love. This debate belonged to the conceptual transformations of the *Sattelzeit* (ca. 1750-1850) that Reinhart Koselleck has linked to the rise of the bourgeoisie. After the French Revolution, though, the debate on gender became politicized as monarchy and republic, the frequent companions of centuries, quickly became deadly rivals, and as being a noble grew increasingly incompatible with professing republican convictions. Genlis and her fellow aristocratic feminists¹⁶ thus joined the royalist camp, while Rousseau (probably much to his own bemusement, had he lived to witness the strange fates of his thought) became one of the *chevaux de bataille* of revolutionary republicans.

The Revolution’s retrograde policies in regard to women have caused much puzzlement among historians, especially when considering the liberating ideals that the movement – and its Genevan philosophical ancestor – furthered in other ambits (Fraisie, Desan, Martin, Verjus). Geneviève Fraisie has suggested that for republicans and revolutionaries, instituting a strong notion of the public sphere demanded developing a strong notion of the private one – and thus required relegating women to the home. The story of Lagaraye, however, suggests that an additional reason for the much-discussed regression of women’s rights during the revolutionary and Napoleonic periods lies in the decades-long confrontation between the initially aristocratic and finally royalist culture represented by Genlis, and the once bourgeois and ultimately republican one defended by Rousseau. Had they not wished to define themselves against, and to quell, aristocratic and royalist attitudes more open to women’s public roles – and tending to blame men for amorous unreason – the revolutionaries would probably have insisted less on female domesticity.

Adèle et Théodore, in short, is more than a pedagogical novel, the theory behind the practice of Genlis’ work as *gouverneur* of the d’Orléans. It can be read in part as well as a treatise of political theory showing that the comtesse’s choice of the royalist side during the Revolution was not a matter of mere personal convenience.¹⁷ On the contrary, it was the fruit of a carefully elaborated political vision that predated the Revolution, and that was part and parcel of her work as the educator of a family destined to rule. Simultaneously, though, the story of Lagaraye reveals Genlis to have been a royalist apart. In particular, her belief in the full power of political creation of divinized men – a belief that

becomes literary flesh in the character of M. de Lagaraye – is not found, to my knowledge, in any other royalist writings of the time. It betrays republican convictions. The idea that kings were divinely connected and instituted was of course central to the royalist tradition, since the king ruled by God's grace; and in his guise as sacred chief of state, administering his own lands, M. de Lagaraye is a modern Christian king. Yet, with rare exceptions, the king owed his sacrality to his institutional status rather than to his personal abilities, and he did not create the nation that he governed; whereas M. de Lagaraye not only rules his community, but also fashions it completely thanks to intimate and saintly qualities that form his public persona, and that made of him a Legislator in the republican sense. M. de Lagaraye is thus a political composite, a Legislator-king. He is also the figure who reveals Genlis' political thought as a monarchist twist on Rousseau's, and who symbolizes most eloquently what she owed to the Swiss "madman" – that same "madman" whose reviled philosophy was one of the Counter-revolution's most precious supports.

Notes

I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers of the *Revue électronique de littérature française* for their helpful comments on a previous draft of this paper.

¹ Marguerite de Coüasnon has written the lengthiest and most recent work on the subject, identifying Genlis' ideological moderation as the mark of a Rousseauian heritage, while Bonnie Arden Robb has commented on Genlis' and Rousseau's opinions on history and fiction (1995). Mary Trouille, for her part, has observed how Genlis' inheritance from Rousseau determined her opinions on women (Chapter 6), and in her Introduction to her edition of *Adèle et Théodore* (9, 12-13, 15, 19, 23, 25, 29), Isabelle Brouard-Arends has analysed Genlis' pedagogical debt to Rousseau. More generally, Machteld De Poortere has underlined some of Genlis' (mostly critical) opinions of Rousseau's philosophy (12, 26, 100, 101, 104, 106); the collection of essays edited by François Bessire and Martine Reid treats the subject of Genlis' inheritance from Rousseau (9, 13, 19, 21, 24, 51, 55, 64, 275); and Pierre-Maurice Masson opened the subject by remarking, probably for the first time, on Genlis' opinions on Rousseau (160, 170, 198).

² Rousseau to Marie-Anne Alissan de La Tour, 26 September 1762 (XIII, 122). The phrase recalls Revelation 3:16: "So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth". It also echoes Matthew 10:37-8: "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me". Bible quotations from the New English Standard Version (2001).

³ See also Trouille, 250.

⁴ Quoted in "La ville de Chaux", <http://edu.saline.free.fr/01-cites/1-thema/03-ledoux.html> (30 June 2013) (original source unknown).

⁵ See especially *De l'influence des femmes sur la littérature française, comme protectrices des lettres et comme auteurs* (1811).

⁶ Like Natalie, the heroine of *La femme auteur* (1806).

⁷ I refer here to the common eighteenth-century distinction between instructor and educator, with the former exercising mainly an intellectual role, and the latter a moral, character-forming one.

⁸ The phrase is Timothy O'Hagan's.

⁹ The word recurs in the novel 84 times.

¹⁰ See the continuation of Chapter 10 of Book II.

¹¹ See e.g. the novel *Hortense* (1808), a satire of *Corinne* (1807).

¹² This is my translation for Genlis' expression "serreau [sic] de toile". "Serreau" is a word of Genlis' invention, as it does not appear elsewhere in French literature. It is likely a corruption of "sarrau", of which Voltaire provides the first known written usage in his *Histoire de Charles XII* (1740). *Le Grand Robert* (1964) defines a "sarrau" as a "sorte de blouse de travail, portée par dessus les vêtements: sarrau de paysan, de peintre, de sculpteur". Genlis probably associated the word with "serrer" or "to tighten", which would explain her spelling of it. I am grateful to Philippe Barthelet for elucidating the mystery.

¹³ See *Nicomachean Ethics*, Chapter 3 of Book VIII.

¹⁴ On Rousseau as founder of the Counter-Enlightenment, see Garrard.

¹⁵ I discuss this quarrel and notably the feminist royalist side of it in "Aristocratic Women on Love, Learning, and the Feminine", forthcoming in *Republics of Letters*.

¹⁶ I am thinking of Antoinette Legroing de La Maisonneuve (1764-1837) and Constance de Maistre (1793-1882).

¹⁷ Nor would she have felt the need to proclaim herself a royalist merely to further her fortunes: her political opinions did not wrest from her the patronage of Napoleon.

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