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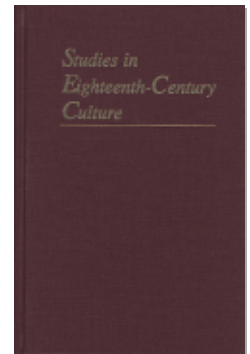
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Adam Schoene

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Silence and the Passions in Rousseau's *Julie*

ADAM SCHOENE

As a remote haven of shared harmonious coexistence and transparency, the Clarens, Switzerland community of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761) has been interpreted by some as representing an ideal form of society, while others deem it a dystopia. *Lettres de deux amans, habitans d'une petite ville au pied des Alpes*, the second portion of the title of *Julie* (and the title of the original edition), evokes the alpine setting of Clarens, a village on the shores of Lake Geneva, near where Rousseau himself spent his youth. This title emphasizes the passionate love between Julie and her former tutor St. Preux, around which the initial half of the story revolves, preceding Julie's marriage to the nobleman Wolmar, arranged by her father the Baron d'Étange, who disapproves of the middle class rank of St. Preux. Julie and Wolmar raise a family at the Wolmar estate in Clarens, which is often read as a political microcosm, with Julie herself arguing that it is an imitation of the order of political society.¹ Yet there is frequent debate over the contours of participation within this space and over the distinction between domestic and political *family*, with the two often detrimentally collapsed.

While there is a tendency to align Rousseau's avowed depiction of the feminine with the family, a space of private domesticity, and the masculine with the state, a public realm comprised solely of male citizens, recent commentators have offered more nuanced studies that complicate

this opposition. Elizabeth Wingrove suggests that Rousseau makes the nondeliberative, unutterable electoral image of the general will eloquent through his fictional depictions of women, insisting on their agency to offer an alternative version of political participation, and Lori Marso similarly sees Rousseau's female protagonists as offering a broader version of citizenship that ultimately undermines the gender boundaries he elsewhere seems to construct.² Speaking directly to the political implications of Clarens, Juliet Flower MacCannell analyzes it as an ironic representation of a patriarchal order based on the suppression of Julie's female desire, arguing that Clarens is best understood not as a utopic ideal, but rather as a critique of a fundamental fantasy of the "Regime of the Brother," as "farical repetition of the dream of patriarchy, figured as the utopia of Clarens—the place where desire is never admitted."³ Andrew Billing likewise perceives Clarens as a site where Rousseau attacks despotism by imitating its oppressive elements in order to distinguish between paternal and political power, situating the difference between family and state as an essential tenet of his critique, yet maintaining the affective relational aspect of an *adoptive* version of the family as what is most political in Clarens, with the state acting as a surrogate parent, educating its citizens by inculcating an affective patriotic sentiment.⁴ Julie's participation in this process may be understood as problematizing the distinction between the domestic space as feminine and the public as masculine by feminizing the political as it is revealed in the contractual relations of Clarens. While following these readings in considering the space of Clarens as emancipatory in its incorporation of Julie in the governance of a private sphere that is simultaneously public, I will shift the focus to explore the politics Rousseau enacts with his silent tableau of friendship, suggesting that it is through the force of this silence that Rousseau reconfigures the social order.

I begin by exploring an ineffable scene of camaraderie, the *matinée à l'anglaise* in Book V of *Julie*, which I interpret as a paradigmatic example of how we might read Rousseau's mute eloquence politically, especially if considered in relation to the tacit nature of the general will of *Du contrat social* (1762). I then consider the transformation from passionate love to friendship between Julie and St. Preux as beyond merely a linear movement, drawing upon Jacques Derrida's notion of *aimance* to suggest that the friendship Rousseau proposes holds political force as well, in its unique power to transgress and reconfigure previously prohibited stations, as with the shift in sovereignty to the formerly subjugated people found in *Du contrat social*. Derrida's *Politiques de l'amitié* (1994) illustrates the centrality of friendship to political thought in its capacity to combat tyranny, while simultaneously revealing the tyrannical risks within friendship. Rousseau also captures this aporia in the *matinée* and in the multifaceted relationships

of *Julie*, and I will argue that in his alignment of friendship with silence as depicted in the space of Clarens, he presents a politics that subverts the androcentric model upon which the Wolmar estate initially seems to be built, therefore offering an avenue towards a more inclusive form of democracy.

The arrival of St. Preux, Julie's former tutor turned lover, to the bucolic Clarens represents a radical shift in their relationship, which is overseen by her husband Wolmar. Born into a lower station in life than the aristocratic Julie, middle-class St. Preux separates himself from her in an effort to quell their illicit romance and to protect her virtue, yet his journey around the world brings him back to her years later and to a community modeled after his own sentimental principles. "J'y mène une vie de mon goût," writes St. Preux to his friend Milord Édouard of his first impressions of Clarens, "j'y trouve une société selon mon cœur."⁵ This society after the heart could refer to St. Preux's affection for Julie herself as well as to her governance role in establishing a compassionate community that he deeply admires. Clarens is characterized as much by its heart and shared spirit of benevolent goodwill as by its complete transparency, as St. Preux's return is by the invitation of Julie and her upper-class husband Wolmar, who is fully aware of the formerly passionate relationship between his wife and St. Preux. Often compared to the *Du contrat social* figure of the legislator, Wolmar is presented as quasi-divine, and of superior intelligence, seeing all of man's passions yet experiencing none, and he is thus able to read into Julie and St. Preux's hearts and to help them "reform" their sentiments.⁶ In noting that it is the former Julie d'Étange rather than Julie Wolmar with whom St. Preux is in love, Wolmar considers it possible for this reformation to succeed: "Qu'ils brûlent plus ardemment que jamais l'un pour l'autre et qu'il ne règne plus entre eux qu'un honnête attachement; qu'ils soient toujours amans et ne soient plus qu'amis."⁷ It is this unconventional project that Wolmar oversees, and while his intervention has been interpreted as noble by some critics and despotic by others, I will instead explore the silent force of the *petit ménage* that results, as captured most acutely within the *matinée à l'anglaise*.

A striking moment in which Julie, St. Preux, and Wolmar share a morning of silent communication and reciprocal transparency at the Wolmar estate in Clarens, the *matinée à l'anglaise* might also offer richer depth and clarity to Rousseau's political vision. Breakfast is described by Julie as a meal of friendship, one of the few moments when we are actually permitted to be solely what we are. It is important to note the exclusions that condition this gathering, as to create an intimate circle, *les étrangers*, *les valets*, and *les importuns* are left out.⁸ Yet the silence of the *matinée* is benevolent and intensely expressive for those who do partake in it, exceeding the capacity of language to encapsulate the deep sense of redemptive harmony that it alone conveys. St. Preux describes this scene in a letter to Milord Édouard:

Après six jours perdus aux entretiens frivoles des gens indifférents, nous avons passé aujourd'hui une matinée à l'angloise, réunis et dans le silence, goûtant à la fois le plaisir d'être ensemble et la douceur du recueillement. Que les délices de cet état sont connues de peu de gens ! Je n'ai vu personne en France en avoir la moindre idée. La conversation des amis ne tarit jamais, disent-ils. Il est vrai, la langue fournit un babil facile aux attachemens médiocres. Mais l'amitié, Milord, l'amitié ! Sentiment vif et céleste, quels discours sont dignes de toi?⁹

There are certain religious resemblances in the scene of the matinée, such as the fact that it begins “after six days,” evoking the same length of time as the biblical story of creation, and in the description of a friendship of a “celestial” nature.¹⁰ As with the positive role for silence in this scene of friendship, Rousseau’s political conception of the general will similarly effaces power asymmetries and difference by bringing the people together to feel it in silence. In *Du contrat social*, he writes: “Si, quand le peuple suffisamment informé délibère, les Citoyens n’avoient aucune communication entre eux, du grand nombre de petites différences résulteroit toujours la volonté générale, et la délibération seroit toujours bonne.”¹¹ The matinée may also be considered as emulating an ideal political state for Rousseau, as it likewise balances liberty and interdependence, with the participants gathered in a small group of kindred hearts, yet silently absorbed in their own activities, like the people of *Du contrat social*. While Rousseau often appears to relegate women to the private sphere, the matinée places Julie at center stage, serving as a guide in how to love, not solely as a virtuous wife and mother in the domestic sphere but also as a friend. Christie McDonald has noted that friendship becomes the basis for all relationships in Clarens, with silence as its language; the fact that the morning is spent in the English manner is furthermore in critical contrast with the French (and most notably Parisian) style of alienating babble that does not convey anything authentic, as the matinée is a form of communication that is based not upon words but upon sentiment.¹²

The reference to Milord Édouard, who is in England, draws yet another friend into this intimate circle, thus extending the boundaries of friendship, or of the general will in relation to politics. This aesthetic expansion of the general will is evident in the introduction of a foreign dimension, offering a glimpse of something beyond the purely nation-based model like that instilled within the people through the ineffable influence of the *Du contrat social* legislator, possessor of a superior intelligence who employs the influence of persuasion instead of oratory eloquence, inculcating an affective patriotic sentiment within the people. This bond unites them as compatriots, and it may thus be viewed as kindred to that of friendship, but its scope is limited to

the nation; Rousseau is suspicious of the unmoored cosmopolitan sentiment like that he perceives in the superficial and corrupt posturing of the elite and in theater spectators whose sympathy may be extended to the characters on stage yet detached from and neglected in the world beyond. His advocacy of the kind of humanitarian principles that encompass the true spirit of cosmopolitanism is nevertheless evident at certain moments of aesthetic description, and although he initially envisions *Du contrat social* as part of a larger project concerning a network of nations, he limits its scope out of fear of a greater potential scale of violence that may arise.¹³

As *Du contrat social* remains ultimately rooted in national patriotic bonds and women appear absent from the public sphere (as in the *Lettre à M. d'Alembert sur les spectacles* of 1758), both Milord Édouard's role as the distant friend and Julie's relinquishing of her central place in Clarens in dying to save her son are absences that haunt the text, unsettling the same political and gender boundaries that Rousseau seems to put into place. While St. Preux's tender rapport with Milord Édouard appears to conform to the fraternal role of the brother in the androcentric structure of friendship, his English background challenges the nation-based model of fraternity upon which Rousseau's politics is constructed, revealing a threatening and foreign element to the figure of the friend, as I will further explore in relation to Derrida's alignment of friendship and politics.¹⁴ Milord Édouard's absence from the petit ménage allows its passionate story to unfold in the silent English manner, so it could on the one hand be read as merely a textual device, but as his own love story is omitted from the narrative and included as a supplement to the text, it could also be understood as further accentuating the nationalistic boundaries that haunt Rousseau's conception of the general will.

Julie similarly threatens to tear the fabric of the fraternal order by reigning alongside (or above) her husband over the domestic economy of Clarens and in establishing a relation that is based upon friendship with her former lover. Wolmar is compelled to speak about the positive nature of friendship's bond after a moment of silence, as he clasps together the hands of Julie and St. Preux: "Notre amitié commence; en voici le cher lien; qu'elle soit indissoluble."¹⁵ This could capture Wolmar's magnanimity and intensity of emotion, but it could also be interpreted as a form of decree, revealing a despotic dimension in that he does not seem to give Julie and St. Preux the choice to determine their own status. We might read this moment in line with the paradoxical nature of Rousseau's *Du contrat social* assertion of citizens being forced to be free when they are constrained to obey the general will. This despotic possibility is later reflected in the gravity of Julie's deathbed pronouncement on the more oppressive side to silence: "Rien ne

fait tant de mal aux femmes que le silence !”¹⁶ Yet, as with the general will, there is also new political freedom that emanates from silence, if only as a fictional tableau. Before returning to the *matinée* in order to analyze its silent dimension in relation to the broader politics of Clarens in correspondence with the tacit workings of the general will of *Du contrat social*, I will briefly turn to Derrida to explore his conception of the political nature of friendship, which is also of relevance to *Julie*.

Like Rousseau, Derrida sees political potential in the aporetic nature of friendship, and he thus offers further grounds to better understand the emancipatory silent eloquence of *Julie*. In *Politiques de l'amitié*, Derrida presents friendship as a political problem, beginning from the death of the friend in the apostrophe within “O mes amis, il n’y a nul amy,” which he situates as a performative contradiction in its lodging of the other or the enemy in the heart of the friend.¹⁷ Friendship is unstable and unpredictable, as the love of the neighbor may transform into lust for possession, and the voice of the friend could likewise resemble a menacing spectral appeal, revealing an even deathly element in friendship in its ability to consume the self with its demands. Yet friendship may also combat despotism, as at its core it is an *act* of loving, and whereas the enemy is essential for theorizing the political for someone like Carl Schmitt, Derrida challenges this discourse by substituting *hostis* for enemy, emphasizing the guest element of the etymology over that of a purely adversarial antagonism.¹⁸ Friendship is political for Derrida in its potential for a “democracy to come,” and it is similarly threatened internally by its own logic, as it is unable to resolve its contradictions; yet, it is this autoimmunity, or prospect of destroying itself from within, that also opens new possibilities within friendship and democracy, allowing space for fluctuation and contestation. Derrida illuminates the political genealogy of friendship by tracing the history of his opening quotation, “O mes amis, il n’y a nul amy,” connecting it with Aristotle’s claim that good lawgivers have shown more concern for friendship than for justice, and with Montaigne’s notion of a sovereign friendship in the *Essais*. Taking issue with both Aristotle and Montaigne’s exclusion of women from this realm, Derrida offers a radical revision of this traditional fraternal conception of friendship, employing it to underscore the intertwined nature of sovereignty and democracy, as well as the conflict between them in relation to a plurality of people within the single entity of a nation. Derrida’s concerns thus closely intersect with Rousseau’s, and both establish a foundational role for silence within their politics of friendship and democracy.

It is through Nietzsche that Derrida aligns friendship most closely with silence, drawing upon *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* (1878) (*Human, All Too Human*) to reveal the destructive nature of speech, which could be a refrain of Rousseau. Nietzsche’s rejoinder to “O my friends, there

is no friend” is that it is an error or deception that leads us into becoming friends, and that we have learned to keep silent in order to remain friends. Derrida’s response is that friendship is preserved by silence, with friends protecting themselves from its illusion by remaining quiet about the truth of the “bottomless bottom” upon which it is founded.¹⁹ This uncertain and shifting ground from which friendship is born parallels the foundational emptiness of the *demos*, the nothingness from which it derives its power, and Derrida seems to channel Rousseau in aligning silence with the social bond.²⁰ Yet Derrida’s tacit agreement reference also invokes an inversion like that evident in Diderot’s notion of the *pacte tacite* in *Le Neveu de Rameau* (1805):

Et comme les amis savent cette vérité de la vérité (la garde de ce qui ne se garde pas), il vaut mieux qu’ils gardent le silence ensemble. Comme d’un commun accord. Accord tacite cependant par lequel les séparés sont ensemble sans cesser d’être ce qu’ils sont destinés à être – et sans doute le sont-ils alors plus que jamais : dissociés, solitarisés, singularisés, constitués en altérités monadiques (*vereinsamt*).²¹

While this atomistic distance seems closest to Diderot’s ironic formulation of the social contract as an animalistic *pacte tacite*, it also evokes the tension between particular interests and the general will inherent in Rousseau, and the foundational paradox dramatized in the figure of the legislator, who aims to transform human nature, *d’instituer un peuple*. Whereas Nietzsche rejects social contract theory as the reflection of a slave morality which aims to “seduce the strong and convert them to the morality of the weak,” for Rousseau the silence of the *demos* signifies a virtuous order in which sovereignty expresses itself as collective autonomy.²² Speech represents a menace to this order, threatening to divide the people by revealing the secret underlying force of contractual foundation upon a “bottomless bottom.”

In addition to Derrida’s shared political alignment of silence and friendship, his conception of *aimance* helps to shed further light upon *Julie*, as Étienne Balibar illustrates in *Citoyen sujet* (2011).²³ Returning to the context of Clarens, we might consider the initially amorous relationship between St. Preux and Julie as the error or deception that Derrida describes, as the “open secret” upon which the bond of friendship is initiated at Clarens by the legislator-like Wolmar, who forces them to be free (of their forbidden love) and to enter into friendship by conjoining their hands in the gardens where this love first blossoms. Much like the legislator aims to transform human nature, Wolmar too seeks to alter the sentiments of St. Preux and Julie. Yet the transformation that occurs is far from a simple shift from passionate love into friendship, and it is here where Derrida’s conscription of *aimance* is beneficial. A term coined in 1927 by French linguist and

psychoanalyst Edouard Pinchon, *aimance* initially served as a means to designate a concept of object attraction that would not necessarily entail sexual satisfaction. For Derrida, this third term that is neither love nor friendship helps to identify “an indeterminate affect that circulates among modalities of love and friendship on a spectrum of sentiments that defy description or enumeration.”²⁴ Balibar considers *aimance* in this respect as somewhat parallel to Freud’s theorization of the category of *pulsion*, or *drive*, with its neutralization of the active/passive opposition in desire, which may too be relevant for thinking of Rousseau’s conception of the general will, with a present, active democracy, but one that is also silent. Returning to the *matinée*, I will expand upon Balibar’s treatment of *aimance* in relation to the passions and the new configurations of friendship that develop among Julie, St. Preux, Wolmar, and Julie’s cousin Claire to further illuminate how Rousseau’s silent experiment in *Julie* also serves a political function.

In the midst of the *matinée* while Julie, St. Preux, and Wolmar are lost in their own silent reveries, yet together in each other’s company, the scene is punctuated by a role reversal which underscores Julie’s governance, elevating her to a position that is neither purely romantic nor domestic. The children enter the space along with chambermaid Fanchon, and maintaining stereotypical gender roles, the women embroider as the men read the gazette and speak of the king, when Julie mentions that she envies sovereigns only the process of making themselves beloved.²⁵ St. Preux describes Wolmar’s response, which serves to reveal a transition of roles:

N’enviez rien, lui a dit son mari d’un ton qu’il m’eût dû laisser prendre; il y a longtems que nous sommes tous vos sujets. A ce mot, son ouvrage est tombé de ses mains; elle a tourné la tête, et jetté sur son digne époux un regard si touchant, si tendre, que j’en ai tressailli moi-même. Elle n’a rien dit: qu’eût-elle dit qui valut ce regard? Nos yeux se sont aussi rencontrés. J’ai senti, à la manière dont son mari m’a serré la main, que la même émotion nous gagnoit tous trois, et que la douce influence de cette âme expansive agissoit autour d’elle et triomphoit de l’insensibilité même. . . . C’est dans ces dispositions qu’a commencé le silence dont je vous parlois: vous pouvez juger qu’il n’étoit pas de froideur et d’ennui. Il n’étoit interrompu que par le petit manège des enfans; encore, aussi-tôt que nous avons cessé de parler, ont-ils modéré par imitation leur caquet, comme craignant de troubler le recueillement universel.²⁶

Wolmar and St. Preux affirm Julie’s reign over them, and in aligning herself with the king, she redistributes his sovereignty, with love and friendship as her guiding precepts.²⁷ Julie’s silent and persuasive force in

solidifying these bonds is evocative of Derrida's concept of *aimance* in that it exceeds both love and friendship, with a driving energy that founds new intersubjective possibilities, replacing particular interests with a stronger desire for the general will. Julie displaces Wolmar as legislator, dropping her needlework, as Wolmar and St. Preux clasp hands in union, a reversal of the earlier moment between Julie and St. Preux in the gardens. Julie also supplants St. Preux as tutor, as Wolmar, St. Preux, and the children now become her disciples. Claire's daughter Henriette corrects the boys' errors as they read a book together, mirroring the men's misreading of the gazette; this suggests a similar ascendancy over them, and a role in carrying forth the message of love taught by Julie, her surrogate mother whom she will further channel and incarnate after Julie's death. The children's mimicry of this silence demonstrates its originary and enduring resonance as well as the advancement of Julie beyond merely a passionate or familial role. Her ability to purvey a silent force to unite those around her beyond their own particular interests reveals the centrality of the message of love at the heart of the *matinée*.

Claire similarly affirms Julie's strength with her claim that "ma Julie, tu es faite pour régner," and their connection further underscores the unique and political nature of the friendship among these *inséparables*.²⁸ In addition to Julie's fostering bonds of friendship with her former lover and between St. Preux and her husband, her relationship with Claire offers a model of female friendship that lies in stark contrast to the male-dominated political tradition outlined by Derrida; *Julie* provides a response to another question that Derrida raises, that of the role of the sister, or why women are left out. Julie and Claire's friendship serves to address the exclusion of women from the realm of political friendship, and one indication of their kindred, transparent hearts is evoked within the very name Claire, which means clear, in close relation to the Clarens lakeside setting, as Jean Starobinski has perceived.²⁹ Alongside one another nearly throughout the novel, Claire and Julie describe themselves as sharing one soul, and decide to raise their families together after the death of Claire's husband, with Julie taking care of Henriette, and Claire overseeing the education of Julie's sons. After bearing close witness to Julie's earlier romance with St. Preux, Claire almost becomes romantically entangled with him herself, but remains true to her cousin, and even spends the night in bed with Julie shortly before her death, leading some commentators to speculate that they share an amorous relationship. My interest is more in how Claire and Julie's friendship could be understood as calling into question the foundations of the patriarchal model that Rousseau elsewhere seems to defend, and how we might interpret their relationship as dramatizing the social contract. This is perhaps most evident in Claire's proclamation:

Ton empire est le plus absolu que je connoisse : il s'étend jusque sur les volontés, et je l'éprouve plus que personne. . . . Ton cœur vivifie tous ceux qui l'environnent, et leur donne pour ainsi dire un nouvel être dont ils sont forcés de lui faire hommage, puisqu'ils ne l'auraient point eu sans lui. . . . Est-il possible de te voir longtemps, sans se sentir pénétrer l'âme des charmes de la vertu et des douceurs de l'amitié?³⁰

Julie's silent empire may be viewed as political in that she is helping to construct a social bond, psychically structuring the people around her heart and altering human nature by creating a new communal being that extends beyond their particular wills. There is nevertheless a despotic element that remains within Julie's empire, implied by this word, and in the fact that the people are forced to pay tribute to her; yet, she has displaced force with love and replaced the paternalistic reign of the king. Although Julie has only male children, her friendship with Claire enables her to become a surrogate mother to Henriette, who embodies a future female citizen with a unique capacity to reign, or even a new version of Julie, already herself a new Héloïse.

Julie takes the struggle of the earlier Héloïse one step further through the legacy of friendship that she instills in Clarens, which carries forth after her death. The Héloïse of the twelfth-century letters also has a love affair and maintains epistolary correspondence with her tutor Abélard, exhibiting resistance to established oppressive orders against women. Peggy Kamuf aligns Julie's story with that of Héloïse, who contests the institution of marriage and the space of the convent, suggesting that Julie is similarly "positioned at the juncture of one social order which can no longer sustain its claim to legitimate power and another which must succeed to that claim without violence."³¹ Julie's nonviolent resistance is evident in her combat with her father, who employs physical violence against her when she confesses her love for St. Preux; although Julie respects her father's wishes by instead marrying Wolmar, she combats the despotic patriarchal hierarchy without violence by generating a community based upon love and friendship. This community both enables her to maintain her love for St. Preux, as well as to have a daughter in Henriette to carry forth her legacy, thanks to Claire, to whom her heart remains perhaps most intimately attached.

As with the religious background of Héloïse, Julie becomes increasingly absorbed in spiritual education as her death approaches, and beyond embodying a new Héloïse, she could even be viewed as a new Christ-like figure whose message is love. In stark contrast to previous models of binary pairings in love or friendship, like that in the tale of the original Héloïse, Julie's relationships and her legacy are based upon an equalizing network of relations that bond the people of Clarens together around her message,

enabling the reciprocal participation of everyone. Her reign appears democratic to a certain degree, but also evokes the menace that Derrida identifies within the silence of friendship, which becomes a deathly silence in the final lines of *Julie*, as she beckons Claire to join her, to carry forth the sacred bonds of friendship within a world that eternally transcends all language. The image of the Elysium that was once a garden of Eden for the passions reveals its Elysian side, along with glimpses of a “democracy to come,” in the friendships born of *aimance* at Clarens.

Clarens represents a dramatization of the general will as psychological polity, with friendship offering a means to explore how individuals reconcile their own interests with the greater community, which extends beyond Julie, St. Preux, Wolmar, and Claire, and into the broader Clarens population.³² Clarens is not an egalitarian society, as it is broken into different classes, and although the Wolmar estate is silently organized around a system of openness and transparency, there remains some separation between private and public society, as well as certain power asymmetries, with spaces that are off limits to the servants.³³ Much like friendship operates as a liberating constraint in regulating the passions, there is also a form of restriction exerted upon the Clarens servants, which St. Preux describes in comparison to the limitations within a republic: “Dans la République on retient les citoyens par des mœurs, des principes, de la vertu; mais comment contenir des domestiques, des mercenaires, autrement que par la contrainte et la gêne? Tout l’art du maître est de cacher cette gêne sous le voile du plaisir ou de l’intérêt, en sorte qu’ils pensent vouloir tout ce qu’on les oblige de faire.”³⁴ A characteristic move of Rousseau’s, this hidden coercion is evident within the psychological attachment of the Clarens servants to their masters, Wolmar and Julie, whose behavior and virtue they seek to emulate, which enables them to live in concord with one another; in order to truly love and to live like their masters, the servants must also love one another equally.³⁵ While classes exist within Clarens, and power enables the masters coercively to shape the climate of the community, this difference is essentially effaced through the love that the servants share for their masters and for one another.³⁶ St. Preux likens this love to the Christian charity that is merely spoken of in church, yet truly experienced at Clarens without being articulated.³⁷ As with the silence of the *matinée*, this love of the Clarens domestics is unspoken, but silently felt, as the servants emulate the equalizing and transparent climate within their own interactions, often rendering services for one another in secret, internalizing a system of self-governance based upon virtue.³⁸

While a silent *demos* formulated around collective desire creates something new and beyond the strictures of a sovereign head or coupling, as within the heightened friendship read through the lens of Derrida’s *aimance*

and enacted within *Julie*, its forceful potential carries a threat as well, one that erodes the boundaries between self and other. Clarens is constructed around the goodwill of Julie and Wolmar, but they have screened all of the servants together in order to avoid bringing in those whose presence suggests any antipathy might result, raising the question as to what comprises the criteria for such an assessment. Whereas such screening might be possible within the private realm, displacing citizens from the public sphere based upon the potential to create discord may be prejudicial. While particular interests are allowed to coexist within the context of the general will, is anything prospectively lost by its silent, equalizing force? Considering the general will as a democratic death drive is helpful for envisioning a politics of fluctuation and plasticity, but one that is also founded upon a coercive force, casting a shadow that may haunt the people in its destructive threat to the self, subordinating individual voices to a shared feeling. Just as Derrida's aimance suggests something beyond love or friendship, in the context of *Julie* it also entails sublimating a part of the self, an act that may prove beneficial or harmful. St. Preux appears to gain only a greater sense of self within the space of Clarens; however, Julie dies as a result of the act of saving her son from drowning, so she may be seen as losing her self while simultaneously sustaining life in the community that she has built.³⁹

Clarens may be considered as a political testing ground for Rousseau, incarnating the love and virtue of Julie and the silent, sacred bonds of friendship that she instills within the people, but it is also a community that must endure in her absence. The deathly finale extends the model of friendship embodied by the *matinée* beyond Julie's family and friends into the greater Clarens community, while destroying its very foundation by converting Julie into a sort of heteronomic figure, similar in ways to the legislator, whose message of love lives on within them.⁴⁰ As Julie and St. Preux learn to reconfigure their passions into something more inclusive beyond Clarens, the people must continue to reform their own passions to serve a purpose that is greater than their particular interests. Clarens stands as a space between the state of nature and the corrupted Parisian world of artifice and vain chatter, with its silence as an antidote to potentially intractable debate, and as a means of restoring the sentiment and feeling that may be lost within the misleading platitudes of language. Like the empty center of the address, Clarens possesses a silent and empty political center with the death of Julie, but one that perhaps offers a polity that endures, and the hope for a "democracy to come" within a new vision of friendship.⁴¹

Although women may not seem to hold an equal place with men in much of Rousseau's political writing, *Julie* reveals certain dimensions of his thought that privilege the female position as he adopts the perspectives

of women by composing stirring letters written by them. The unparalleled success and acclaim of *Julie* among readers suggests a unique strength in the feminine voice, which Rousseau underscores in the power he attributes to Julie in the *matinée*. Julie and her surrogate daughter Henriette assume leadership positions above the men in this scene, accentuated by a silence that is affirmative in its commanding role as a benevolent and equalizing force. In aligning this silence with that of the *demos* of *Du contrat social*, I have sought to outline how it embodies something beyond love or friendship, in a kindred spirit to Derrida's notion of *aimance*, as a new popular sovereignty aligned with the psyche. Julie furthermore rewrites the politics of friendship in her relationships with St. Preux and Claire, forging bonds that transgress prescribed roles, reconfiguring the passions to construct purposeful social bonds around desire. Extending the political model of friendship beyond its past social inequalities, Clarens comes to embody a political microcosm for Rousseau's vision of the social contract, with Julie breathing life into this community, which is born as the *demos* around her love and sustained in her absence. Julie is exceptional as an agent producing general will of silence at Clarens, channeling the oppressive silencing of women under patriarchy into a more just system, albeit one that still contains elements of inequality and force. Clarens inevitably falls short of an egalitarian society; yet, Rousseau does channel a powerful female protagonist in Julie, who may be seen as haunting his political writing by transcending the very limits that he seems to prescribe, as other commentators have similarly articulated. I have aimed to build upon this claim to demonstrate how Julie coopts silence, employing it towards emancipatory ends. While the general will cannot be represented and does not possess a body with a mouth to express itself, Julie dramatizes its potential, feminizing it and underwriting it with desire reformed into a silent political bond of friendship that overwrites or suppresses an originary division in the community. As Julie is ultimately unable to live in Clarens, her spirit endures, along with the silent resonance of the *matinée* as a moment to further democratize by incorporating those who remain excluded.

NOTES

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1. “L’ordre qu’il a mis dans sa maison est l’image de celui qui règne au fond de son âme, et semble imiter dans un petit ménage l’ordre établi dans le gouvernement du monde.” Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse: lettres de deux amans habitans d’une petite ville au pied des Alpes*, in *Œuvres complètes*, Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1961), 371. “The order he has brought into his house is the image of the one that prevails in his heart, and seems to imitate in a small household the order established in the governance of the earth.” Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie, or the New Heloise: Letters of Two Lovers Who Live in a Small Town at the Foot of the Alps in The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, vol. 2, ed. Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly, trans. Philip Stewart and Jean Vaché (Hanover, NH: Univ. Press of New England, 1997), 305–6. It is worth noting that Rousseau also at times claims the family should not be considered a model for the political order.

2. See Elizabeth Rose Wingrove, *Rousseau’s Republican Romance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2000) and Lori Jo Marso, *(Un)Manly Citizens: Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s and Germaine de Staël’s Subversive Women* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

3. Juliet Flower MacCannell, *The Regime of the Brother: After the Patriarchy* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 89.

4. Andrew G. Billing, “Political and Domestic Economy in Rousseau’s *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*,” *Romantic Review* 100, no. 4 (2009), 473–91. Billing refers to political education in Rousseau as a process of metaphorical adoption, as the state must take over the duty of educating future citizens from their natural fathers, and become a surrogate or adoptive parent, substituting law for nature. The state, however, substitutes for the father by becoming like a mother, with its love embracing the children as a condition for patriotic sentiment and identification of citizens with the general will. The state functions as such to provide for and to conserve the liberty of its citizens and thus must take on the appearance of a nurturing mother.

5. Rousseau, *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*, 441. “Here I lead a life to my liking, here I find a society after my heart.” Rousseau, *Julie, or the New Heloise*, 363.

6. Fayçal Falaky draws one such vivid comparison in *Social Contract, Masochist Contract: Aesthetics of Freedom and Submission in Rousseau* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2014), describing the legislator as, in many respects, “the carbon copy” of Wolmar, who exerts influence through “hidden and seemingly nonauthoritarian measures” (149–50).

7. Rousseau, *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*, 508. “That they should burn more ardently than ever for each other, and that nothing more than an honest attachment should any longer prevail between them; they should still be lovers and be no longer but friends.” Rousseau, *Julie, or the New Heloise*, 417.

8. “Les étrangers ne sont jamais admis le matin dans ma chambre, et déjeunent dans la leur. Le déjeuner est le repas des amis; les valets en sont exclus, les importuns ne s’y montrent point, on y dit tout ce qu’on pense, on y révèle tous ses secrets, on n’y contraint aucun de ses sentiments; on peut s’y livrer sans imprudence aux douceurs de la confiance et de la familiarité. C’est presque le seul moment où il soit permis d’être ce qu’on est; que ne dure-t-il toute la journée!” Rousseau, *Julie, ou la*

Nouvelle Héloïse, 488. “Outsiders are never admitted to my room in the morning and have breakfast in their own. Breakfast is the meal of friends; the house staff are excluded, the unwanted do not intrude; we say everything we think, we reveal all our secrets, we constrain none of our sentiments; there we can give in without imprudence to the satisfactions of confidence and intimacy. It is practically the only moment when we are permitted to be what we are; would it could last all day!” Rousseau, *Julie, or, the New Heloise*, 401.

9. Rousseau, *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*, 557–58. “After six days wasted in frivolous discussions with indifferent people, we have today spent a morning in the English manner, gathered in silence, enjoying at once the pleasure of being together and the bliss of contemplation. How few people know the delights of that state! I saw no one in France who had the slightest notion of it. Conversation among friends never runs dry, they say. It is true, the tongue furnishes mediocre attachments with a facile babble. But friendship, Milord, friendship! Powerful and heavenly sentiment, what words are worthy of thee?” Rousseau, *Julie, or the New Heloise*, 456.

10. Philip Stewart also notes the potential religious significance of the fact that Rousseau always writes “St. Preux,” in contrast to Saint Preux, making reference to a playfully fictive saint (Rousseau, *Julie, or the New Heloise*, xvii).

11. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Du contrat social, Œuvres complètes*, vol 3 ed. Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1964), 371. “If, when an adequately informed people deliberates, the citizens were to have no communication among themselves, the general will would always result from the large number of small differences, and the deliberation would always be good.” Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract in Social Contract, Discourse on the Virtue Most Necessary for a Hero, Political Fragments, and Geneva Manuscript. The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, vol. 4, ed. and trans. Judith R. Bush, Roger D. Masters, and Christopher Kelly (Hanover, NH: Univ. Press of New England), 1994, 147–48. While this silent deliberation could on the one hand be viewed as stifling dissent, it could also be viewed more affirmatively as preventing the possibility of misleading rhetorical appeals in order to sway the debate. Rousseau also makes it clear that the lack of communication prevents the formation of what James Madison later defines as “factions” in *The Federalist Papers* (Federalist No. 10).

12. Christie Vance [McDonald] describes the sentimental language of Clarens in relation to the artificial one of Paris in “*La Nouvelle Héloïse*: The Language of Paris” *Yale French Studies* 45 (1970), 127–36, 134: “The exquisite silence of this small society completely opposes the inane babble which St. Preux describes at the dinner party in Paris. Far from being a measure of friendship, language in Paris tends to alienate men from any real communication. In Clarens, silence becomes the true language of friendship—and friendship is the basis for all relationships in this ideal society.” See also Christie McDonald, “From Rousseau to Occupy: Imagining a More Equal World,” in *Rousseau and Dignity: Art Serving Humanity*, ed. Julia V. Douthwaite (Notre Dame, IN: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 2017), 132–55.

13. As Helena Rosenblatt notes, by removing himself from society as he increasingly does in his life, Rousseau could also be seen as a sort of *étranger*, or stranger, *everywhere* in the world, offering lessons to all people and paradoxically

serving as the truest cosmopolitan of all. See Helena Rosenblatt, “Rousseau, the Anticosmopolitan?” *Daedalus* 137, no. 3 (Summer 2008): 59–67. See also Neil Saccamano, “‘Savage Patriotism,’ Justice and Cosmopolitics in Smith and Rousseau,” in *Rousseau and Adam Smith: Ethics, Politics, Economics*, ed. Maria Pia Paganelli, Dennis C. Rasmussen, and Craig Smith (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2018), 284–312.

14. “Il porte ma propre mort et, d’une certaine façon, il est le seul à la porter, cette propre mort de moi ainsi d’avance expropriée.” Jacques Derrida, *Politiques de l’amitié* (Paris: Galilée, 1994), 30. “He bears my own death and, in a certain way, he is the only one to bear it—this proper death of myself thus expropriated in advance.” Jacques Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, trans. George Collins (NY: Verso, 1997), 13.

15. Rousseau, *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*, 424. “Our friendship is beginning, its dear link is here, may it be indissoluble.” Rousseau, *Julie, or the New Heloise*, 349.

16. Rousseau, *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*, 705. “Nothing hurts women as much as silence!” Rousseau, *Julie, or the New Heloise*, 579.

17. Derrida, *Politiques de l’amitié*, 43. “O my friends, there is no friend.” Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, 27.

18. For more on Derrida’s critique of Schmitt, see Andrew Johnson, *Viral Politics: Jacques Derrida’s Reading of Auto-Immunity and the Political Philosophy of Carl Schmitt* (Saarbrücken, Germany: Lap Lambert Academic Publishing, 2010).

19. “La protection de cette garde assure la vérité de l’amitié, sa vérité ambiguë, celle par laquelle les amis se protègent de l’erreur ou de l’illusion qui fondent l’amitié, plus précisément sur le fond sans fond desquelles se fonde une amitié pour pour résister à son propre abîme.” Derrida, *Politiques de l’amitié*, 71–72. “The protection of this custody guarantees the truth of friendship, its ambiguous truth, that by which friends protect themselves from the error or the illusion on which friendship is founded—more precisely, the bottomless bottom founding a friendship, which enables it to resist its own abyss.” Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, 53.

20. My thinking here is informed by Jacques Rancière’s excluded “part of no part” in *La Méésentente: politique et philosophie* (Paris: Galilée, 1995), or Claude Lefort’s “empty place” of power at the heart of democracy in “The Question of Democracy,” *Democracy and Political Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988).

21. Derrida, *Politiques de l’amitié*, 73. “And as the friends know this truth of truths, they had better keep silent together. As in a mutual agreement. A tacit agreement, however, whereby those who are separated come together without ceasing to be what they are destined to be—and undoubtedly what they more than ever are: dissociated, ‘solitarized’, singularized, constituted into monadic alterities (*vereinsamt*).” Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, 54.

22. Keith Ansell-Pearson, *An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker: The Perfect Nihilist* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994), 42. Collective autonomy for Rousseau is self-legislation whereby citizens join together to make laws for themselves that reflect their collective understanding of the common good, or the general will.

23. Étienne Balibar, *Citoyen sujet et autres essais d'anthropologie philosophique* (Paris: PUF, 2011).

24. Étienne Balibar, *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon*, ed. Emily Apter, Jacques Lezra, and Michael Wood (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2014), 605.

25. For an astute analysis of gender roles and of this role reversal in the *matinée* and elsewhere in *Julie*, see John C. O'Neal, *The Progressive Poetics of Confusion in the French Enlightenment* (Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, 2011).

26. Rousseau, *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*, 559. "Envy nothing," her husband said in a tone of voice he should have left to me; "We have all long been your subjects." At this word, her needlework fell from her hands; she turned her head, and cast on her husband such a touching look, so tender, that I myself thrilled at it. She said nothing: what could she have said to equal that look? Our eyes also met. I could tell from the way her husband clasped my hand that we were all three caught up in the same emotion, and that the sweet influence of that expansive soul was acting around her, and overcoming insensibility itself. It was in this frame of mind that the silence I was speaking of began; you can well imagine that it was not one of coldness and boredom. It was interrupted only by the children's little frolics; even then, the minute we stopped talking, they moderated their chatter in imitation, as if fearing to disturb the general contemplation." Rousseau, *Julie, or the New Heloise*, 457.

27. Thank you to Neil Saccamano for noting that love and friendship here could also be aligned with subjection to Julie as sovereign, in which case the political structure of monarchy configures their love for Julie as a mechanism of power, and not its emancipatory dissolution. This reign of love could also be seen as borrowing from the courtly love tradition that idolizes and deifies the power women supposedly exert over their male lovers.

28. Rousseau, *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*, 409. "My Julie, you are born to reign." Rousseau, *Julie, or the New Heloise*, 336.

29. See Jean Starobinski, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau, la transparence et l'obstacle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976).

30. Rousseau, *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*, 409–10. "Your empire is the most absolute I know. It extends even to the wills of others, and I am more subject to it than anyone. . . . Your heart vivifies all those around it and gives them so to speak a new being for which they are forced to pay tribute to yours, since they would not have obtained it otherwise. . . . Is it possible to see you for long without feeling one's soul filled with the charms of virtue and the comforts of friendship?" Rousseau, *Julie, or the New Heloise*, 336.

31. Peggy Kamuf, *Fictions of Feminine Desire: Disclosures of Heloise* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1982), 10.

32. Here, I follow Balibar, Kamuf, and especially MacCannell's description of how Rousseau employs a vocabulary of desire at the very point where the democratic body emerges: "The motive of the 'people,' the 'democratic' drive is thus seen by Rousseau as a dialectic of desire, of a competition between eros and thanatos" (MacCannell, *The Regime of the Brother*, 66). This competition is not to

be considered a binary pairing but as interrelated expressions of the Freudian death drive.

33. These spaces include the Elysium, the Apollo Room where special meals are held, as well as some of the inner chambers. See John C. O’Neal, “Morality in Rousseau’s Public and Private Society at Clarens,” *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* 89, no. 1 (1984): 58–67.

34. Rousseau, *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*, 453. “In a Republic citizens are restrained by morals, principles, virtue: but how can domestics, mercenaries, be contained other than by constraint and coercion? The master’s whole art consists in hiding this coercion under the veil of pleasure or interest, so that they think they desire all they are obliged to do.” Rousseau, *Julie, or the New Heloise*, 373.

35. Similar hidden force is evident in the *Du contrat social* notion of forcing a people to be free and in the figure of the legislator, as well as in the tutor of *Émile*.

36. A paradigmatic example of the equality at Clarens is the moment of the grape festival, when masters and servants work and eat together side by side.

37. St. Preux contrasts the love experienced at Clarens with Christian charity: “C’est ce qu’on nous dit tous les jours au Temple sans nous le faire sentir; c’est ce que les habitans de cette maison sentent sans qu’on leur dise.” Rousseau, *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*, 462. “That is what they tell us every day at Church without bringing us to feel it; it is what all the inhabitants of this house feel without being told.” Rousseau, *Julie, or the New Heloise*, 380.

38. “On fait plus; on les engage à se servir mutuellement en secret, sans ostentation, sans se faire valoir.” Rousseau, *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*, 463. “They go further; they invite them to help each other silently, unostentatiously, without making a show of it.” Rousseau, *Julie, or the New Heloise*, 380.

39. Julie’s sacrifice could further situate her as a Christ-like figure, as previously noted.

40. It is also important to note the distinction between the heteronomic figure of the legislator and that of Julie, as she is said to “reign” at Clarens prior to her death, whereas Rousseau notes that examples of lawgivers such as Lycurgus abdicate *before* giving laws to Sparta. The Clarens community may be considered as founded upon the love that Julie elicits as the social bond, and as Rousseau notes the test of the true legislator is the endurance or longevity of the polity, the Clarens political community must be able to live on after the death of Julie.

41. While need dictates the first gestures, language for Rousseau is born of passion, and it is initially figurative. Only poetry is spoken at first, with reasoning coming later, as the transposition of ideas for passion is linked to words. He describes this process in his *Essai sur l’origine des langues* with the fable of the giant, an initial act of denomination. As Derrida and Paul de Man have argued, this passage illustrates the referential indeterminacy of language, or the empty center of the address to another. Much like the figurative nature of the initial languages that Rousseau describes in the *Essai*, he also creates “un monde idéal,” an ideal world, at the beginning of his *Dialogues*, where communication seems to be largely nonverbal. For more silence in the *Essai*, see Adam Schoene, “Reuniting Speech and Song: Reading on Sebban with Rousseau,” *The French Review* 90.3 (2017): 39–49.