

# ROMANTICISM, ROUSSEAU, SWITZERLAND

New Prospects



Edited by  
Angela Esterhammer, Diane Piccitto and Patrick Vincent

PALGRAVE STUDIES IN THE ENLIGHTENMENT,  
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# Romanticism, Rousseau, Switzerland

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Edited by

Angela Esterhammer

*Professor of English, University of Toronto, Canada*

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*Lecturer, Plymouth University, UK*

and

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Summary: "This collection brings together current research on topics that – separately and together – are perennially important to Romantic studies: the life and work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and the landscape and history of his native Switzerland. Some of the essays re-orient Rousseau back to his Swiss context, while others address a Rousseauian Switzerland, a landscape indelibly coloured for writers and travellers by his presence. Among the authors discussed are Dorothy and William Wordsworth, Byron, Mary Shelley, James Boswell, Frances Brooke, Walter Scott, Felicia Hemans, and the Swiss cartoonist Rodolphe Töpffer. Topics include Rousseau's relevance to Romantic-era discoveries and debates on education, botany, automata, and suicide. Delving into Romanticism's engagement with Switzerland, these essays examine the rise of alpine and literary tourism, technologies of the picturesque, and representations and reconstructions of Swiss landscape in verbal and visual media".— Provided by publisher.

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**Patrick Vincent** is Professor of English and American literature at the University of Neuchâtel. He is the author of *The Romantic Poetess* (2004) and has published a number of articles and books on Anglo–Swiss literary relations, including *La Suisse vue par les écrivains de langue anglaise* (2009) and an edition of Helen Maria Williams's *A Tour in Switzerland* (2011). He is currently finishing a monograph entitled *Mountain Liberty: Switzerland, Republicanism, and Romanticism* and is also working on an edition of William Coxe's *Travels in Switzerland*.

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# 1

## Introduction

*Patrick Vincent, Diane Piccitto, and Angela Esterhammer*

When Lady Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby eloped and settled in the gothic-styled cottage of Plas Newydd close to Llangollen in the early 1780s, their thoughts naturally turned to Jean-Jacques Rousseau: 'Sunday, December 4th – At one the Whalleys arrived. Mrs. Whalley wretchedly ill. After dinner talked of Rome. Talked of Rousseau. Switzerland. North Wales. The exquisite pleasures of retirement and the Luxury of Purchasing Books. At nine they went away [...] My Heart's darling and I sat by the Kitchen Fire, talking of our Poverty' (65). Throughout the winter of 1785, Butler read Rousseau to her 'darling' while they practised their needlework. In their diary, one finds miscellaneous remarks on Jean-Jacques's life and character, Genevan politics, Swiss landscape, and general rural simplicity and contentment. Robert Darnton has called such archetypal scenes of Rousseauian reading the 'fabrication of Romantic sensitivity' (215). Like the Ladies of Llangollen, thousands of readers across Europe, eager to break free from the stifling conventions of their century, picked up Rousseau's *Julie, or the New Heloise* (1761), a strong moral work written in defence of Roman virtues and against Parisian sophistication. Deliberately choosing to 'become in spirit a provincial' (Darnton 231–2), readers sought to experience feelings unmediated by the dominant values of literature and society and to test more authentic forms of sociability. They found their moral resources in the revolutionary 'ethics of Clarens' (Markovitz 323), that loving middle-class community wisely governed in book 5 by Wolmar, whose benevolent paternalism incarnated at the domestic level the utopian republicanism that Rousseau would apply to the entire nation in his *Social Contract* (1762).

As with Rousseau, the decision of the Ladies of Llangollen to live in retirement only increased their notoriety: by the 1810s, fashionable

celebrities such as the Duke of Wellington and Princess Charlotte but also many of the period's best known writers, including Thomas De Quincey, Robert Southey, William Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Lord Byron, and Walter Scott, travelled to Wales to pay their homage. Nature and feeling had become the spirit of the age, and these women's romantic community *à deux* prefigured more famous experiments in Romantic community, including the Lake School in Cumbria and the Byron-Shelley circle in Geneva and Pisa. It was also at Llangollen that William Hazlitt read a letter from the *New Heloise* to celebrate his twentieth birthday in 1798. The young Hazlitt was an unrepentant Rousseauophile who wholly identified with the Citizen of Geneva. He was staying in the village inn en route to his first meeting with Samuel Taylor Coleridge at Nether Stowey. Twenty-four years later, the writer would mark the event as the birth of his own intellectual career by associating his discovery of the Welsh valley with St Preux's first sight of the Pays de Vaud upon returning from Parisian exile, itself a repetition of Rousseau's return to his homeland in 1754. The Swiss and Welsh prospects similarly fill their viewers with sentiments of 'LIBERTY, GENIUS, LOVE, VIRTUE', all of which 'have since faded into the light of common day' (Hazlitt, 'On Going a Journey' 167).

These anecdotes remind us of the close association in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century readers' minds between Rousseau, Switzerland, and the revolution in sensibility now known as Romanticism. They also indicate the ease with which this sensibility could be imaginatively displaced onto other settings, including Wales and the Lake District, hiding from sight the role that Switzerland played as an origin and primary locus of Romantic feeling. Earlier Swiss writers such as Conrad Gessner, Josias Simmler, Albrecht von Haller, and Salomon Gessner had celebrated the country's sublime landscapes and republican institutions before Rousseau, whereas British writers on the Grand Tour, including Joseph Addison, Oliver Goldsmith, and William Coxe, helped disseminate this myth of mountain virtue back home (Schama 447–90). But it was in large part thanks to the *New Heloise's* phenomenal success that Switzerland captivated the European imagination between 1750 and 1850. For many Romantic travellers, visiting Switzerland was tantamount to re-experiencing the community of feeling fictionalized by Rousseau. As his reputation began to suffer after his quarrel with David Hume in 1766, but especially after the posthumous publication of the *Confessions* in 1781 and the outbreak of revolutionary violence in the 1790s, a distinction began to be made between the writer's celebrated romance *Julie*, with its contagious sensibility, and his more controversial

autobiographical, pedagogical, and political texts. '[E]lsewhere he is the sensualist, the madman, the egotist, the wretched politician, the worse moralist – but in Clarens he is at home – the "Child of Nature", in her loveliest scene – the Rousseau, not of the Confessions, but of the *Heloise*', writes Constantine Henry Phipps in one of his own Rousseauian romances, published in 1827 (2: 5). For Hazlitt, however, such a distinction was absurd; neither could Rousseau be confined to the shores of Lake Geneva. In 'On the Character of Rousseau' (1816), he brilliantly diagnoses Rousseau's acute self-consciousness, that 'morbid feeling of all that is related to his own impressions', as the source of his genius and the origin of all his radically modern ideas. Moreover, he argues for a close affinity between Rousseau's sensibility and Wordsworth's: 'we will confidently match the Citizen of Geneva's adventures on the lake of Bienné against the Cumberland Poet's floating dreams on the lake of Grasmere' (93).

Despite the ease with which Rousseauian sensibility could be adapted to Grasmere and elsewhere, a large number of Romantic-period travel accounts and literary works, many of which have become exemplary of Romanticism, are set at least partially in Switzerland. Few British Romantic authors did not write about the Swiss cantons, visit them, or both. Often these texts also revisit Rousseau through a rich intertextual web of citation, annotation, translation, and imitation. For example, in the second edition of *Sketches of the Natural, Civil, and Political State of Switzerland* (1780), the eighteenth century's most influential guide to Switzerland and the Alps, the Reverend William Coxe recounts touring Clarens with the *New Heloise* in hand. While Rousseau's notoriety obliges him to distance himself in a footnote, he is unable to hide his enthusiasm for the places described in the novel: 'no man has a more just sense and abhorrence of the pernicious tendency of Rousseau's writings than himself. But he presumes, that to reprobate his principles as a moralist, is by no means inconsistent with admiring his pencil as a landscape-painter' (265). It was with Louis Ramond de Carbonnières' French translation of Coxe's pocket guide that the young William Wordsworth and his Welsh companion Robert Jones set off on their walking tour to the 'distant Alps' in 1790. The nature that was 'sovereign in [his] heart' (1805 *Prelude*, book 6, lines 342, 346) was the landscape tantalizingly set forth in Ramond de Carbonnières' sublime footnote on the Alps (143), itself inspired by Rousseau's 'Letter on the Valais'. While William Godwin presents a more ambivalent picture of Rousseauian feeling in *Fleetwood* (1805), his daughter Mary and Percy Bysshe Shelley rushed to Switzerland in 1814 in a transparent and ill-planned attempt to mimic



the ethics of the *New Heloise* on site, hoping to 'seek in that romantic and interesting country some cottage where we might dwell in peace and solitude' (Shelley 45). The irony of their first visit was that neither of them had yet read Rousseau's romance, basing themselves instead on Godwin's novel. Mary picked up the *New Heloise* in 1815, whereas Percy Shelley eventually read it *in situ* during his sail with Byron around Lake Geneva in July 1816, a trip that re-enacted a similar boat trip by Rousseau in 1754 and halted at all the novel's most emotionally charged locations. According to Edward Duffy, Shelley's discovery of the novel 'marks a dramatic turning point' in his understanding of Rousseau (88), the energy of the moment reflected in his letter-journal to Peacock of 12 July 1816 in which he describes the journey as 'on every account delightful, but most especially, because then I first knew the divine beauty of Rousseau's imagination, as it exhibits itself in Julie' (Shelley 107). Byron and Shelley's voyage fast became the best known of the Romantic period's sentimental pilgrimages in the tracks of Jean-Jacques, encouraging hundreds of other travellers to follow in their turn. As late as 1825, Hazlitt would again evoke the Jura scene from the *New Heloise* on his tour of Switzerland, and rent a farmhouse close to Vevey for three months to live in the same enchanted surroundings as Julie and her tutor St Preux (*Notes* 383, 403).

While critics since Hazlitt – including Duffy, Jacques Voisine, W. J. T. Mitchell, Thomas McFarland, and Gregory Dart – have not lost sight of Rousseau's significance for British Romanticism, this relationship is rarely considered in terms of Rousseau's embeddedness within Swiss culture and landscape. Only Voisine remarks in his magisterial study that 'Jean-Jacques Rousseau, citizen of Geneva, did much to popularize in England the image at the same time of an heroic and idyllic Switzerland' (151). For Jean-Luc Nancy, Rousseau is 'the first thinker of community', meaning that he was the first to analyse his own society's sentiment of a rupture in community, a consciousness subsequently inherited by the Romantics (9). Rousseau's awareness of this loss and his desire to overcome it to produce a free, sovereign community arose not only from his reading of the classics, but also from his constant comparisons between the society and institutions of his native country and those of France, where he spent just over half his life. 'It is from having had to live among slaves that I felt the full value of liberty', Rousseau wrote to a Genevan friend in 1751 (*C'est à force de vivre parmi des esclaves que j'ai senti tout le prix de la liberté* [*Correspondance* 2: 154]). Although France has always been eager to claim him as one of her own, Rousseau remained proud of having been born a free citizen of Geneva, a city

that was known for its turbulent experiments in republican liberty and that maintained special ties to Britain. 'I am happy, every time I meditate about Governments', he states in the opening lines of the *Social Contract*, 'always to find in my research new reasons to love that of my country!' (131). If Rousseau renounced his Genevan citizenship on 12 May 1763 after the city magistrates banned his *Emile* and *Social Contract*, and closed his *Confessions* on a sour note by calling Switzerland a 'homicidal land' (549), he nevertheless died a citizen of Neuchâtel, a Prussian principality allied, like Geneva, to the Swiss Confederation. Throughout his life he never ceased to consider himself as Swiss.

A number of scholars, including François Jost and Helena Rosenblatt, have demonstrated the influence of Rousseau's Swiss background on almost all his ideas and themes, from the most general – the importance of nature, walking, the simple life, personal autonomy, domestic virtue, local attachment, and love of freedom – to the more specific – his mistrust of political representation, his advocacy of sumptuary laws to lessen the effects of commerce and luxury, his fondness for patriotic education, songs, and public celebrations, his praise of citizen militias, and his insistence on the necessity of small states to guarantee popular sovereignty. Part of the unity that Ernst Cassirer found long ago in Rousseau's oeuvre may be attributed to the ideas on morality, society, and politics that Rousseau drew from Swiss history, notably from the liberation myths of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, from the manners and institutions of the rural direct democracies of central and eastern Switzerland, from other Swiss Enlightenment writers such as Johann Bodmer and his Zurich patriot circle, and from his own experience of Genevan society, politics, and religion. Switzerland helped Rousseau above all to imagine his socio-political ideal of the republic as *patrie*. Patriotism, here understood as the love of liberty and of one's country, was for him necessary to ensure the survival of any sovereign political community formed by social contract. Rousseau shared Burke's respect for custom and patriotic attachment (Cameron 127–8), and much like Swiss culture itself, his ideal republic was at once conservative in its respect for custom, domesticity, and local attachment, and radical in its egalitarian challenge to dominant socio-political forms based on class difference and wealth. Such an understanding of Rousseau flies in the face of the anti-Jacobin myth of the Genevan citizen as a *philosophe* whose abstract theories had no grounding in reality, but also of the Romantic myth of Rousseau as an overly sensitive, misanthropic recluse whose expressive individualism has been used to define modern man. As Victor Goldschmidt writes, 'even in his most extreme solitude,

Rousseau was willing to judge himself and be judged according to the standards of the good citizen' (160–1).

Readers are often most familiar with Rousseau's representations of rural Switzerland, meant to illustrate the myth of the state of nature theorized in his *Discourse on Inequality* (1754) as a critical foil to modernity. This association of Rousseau with cultural primitivism corresponds to the high point of Rousseauomania in Britain in the 1760s. English readers liked to imagine the Swiss writer as 'a latter-day Cato', 'the champion of simple manners, and the inheritor of an ancient republican tradition cherished as the nurse of virtue' (Duffy 12, 10). The *Letter to D'Alembert* (1758) first established his English reputation. As in the two letters to the Maréchal de Luxembourg of 20 and 28 January 1763, which depict Switzerland as a picturesque combination of country and city, wild and cultivated nature, where one can find 'factories in precipices' and the whole country is like 'a big city, divided into thirteen neighbourhoods' (*Lettres sur la Suisse* 35–9), the *Letter to d'Alembert* praises the rustic autonomy, equality, and independence of the Swiss, good citizens and brave soldiers despite their petty foibles and the fact that commerce and French manners have corrupted their simplicity. Rousseau more specifically idealizes Genevan manners, which he opposes to the effeminate Parisian society. The only form of entertainment he supports is that of a public theatre inspired by the rural democracies' *Festspiel* and meant as a sort of public assembly to inspire patriotic feeling. Calvinist Geneva, unlike the Catholic republics of central and eastern Switzerland, was not a rural democracy, but a commercial city dominated by an aristocratic oligarchy. Yet Rousseau imagined his own republic as he and his fellow patriots wished to see it. In fact, his *Social Contract*, which draws its utopian ideal of political community from the ancients, was also shaped by the author's intimate understanding of Genevan history, society, and institutions as well as by his more bookish knowledge of central Switzerland's so-called Forest Cantons.

Even more influential than the *Letter to D'Alembert* is Rousseau's description of an Alpine community in book 1, letter 23 of the *New Heloise*, better known as his 'Letter on the Valais' that was excerpted in the *Monthly Review* (24 [April 1761]: 228–35). Rousseau had first travelled through the canton of Valais in 1744 on his return from Venice and then briefly visited a second time in 1754 during his tour of Lake Geneva. The sentimental set piece he draws of a 'happy and simple people' went a long way to popularize the Swiss as noble savages rather than as the goitre-swelled cretins described by earlier travellers such as John Evelyn, who crossed the Simplon in 1646, or by D'Alembert in

the eighteenth-century *Encyclopédie*. Among the many details found in the letter that would become favourite Romantic topoi are the artifice of the lovelorn traveller, the picturesque mixture of nature and culture, the strongly contrasted landscapes reproduced almost verbatim in Wordsworth's passage on the Simplon, the mountains' optical effects and revivifying air, the simplicity and hospitality of the locals, their non-commercial, semi-autarkic economy, and their patriarchal family structure. Less often mentioned is Rousseau's sympathetic evocation of their heavy drinking and of the women's large breasts. As Darnton points out (231), the philosopher never demanded that readers become Swiss peasants in order to reject society's artificial conventions; it was clear to Rousseau that one could not return to this ideal state of nature. Through the paradoxical use of artificial methods, he sought on the contrary to transform the modern individual into the ideal citizen, and hence to restore him to his original wholeness and freedom in nature through his full identification with his community (Manent 168). Rousseau returned again and again to Switzerland as a source of ideas, images, and affects to help him imagine this community of the future, a prospect that the Ladies of Llangollen and the Romantics embraced and made their own.

Rousseau's renown and his notoriety, together with the popularity of Switzerland as travel destination and fictional setting, meant that Swiss landscapes quickly became a Romantic commonplace. While it was often transformed into a romanticized image of itself, the country continued to elicit a rich multiplicity of responses in painting, poetry, fiction, travelogues, popular entertainment, natural history, education, and political economy. Various aspects of the Swiss contribution to British Romantic thought and culture have been explored in the past few decades,<sup>1</sup> although Romantic scholarship has tended to discuss Switzerland primarily in regard to the aesthetics of the sublime and the picturesque. It is well known that the *frisson* associated with the Alps from the early eighteenth century onwards captivated British travellers and readers. As in Shelley's 'Mont Blanc', the Alps increasingly served as a metaphor of the mind, a development most obviously perceptible as eighteenth-century pictorial representations shifted away from the 'laboriously conscientious' watercolours sketched by William Pars during his 1770 tour to the subjective impressionism of artists such as Francis Towne, John Robert Cozens, the Swiss painter Caspar Wolf, and J. M. W. Turner (Schama 472–3). Clarissa Campbell Orr concludes that 'Above all Switzerland was a *paysage*, a landscape, an archetype of the Romantic vision' (136).

Other aspects of the Swiss setting beyond the sublimity of the landscape have been taken for granted and merit a fresh perspective. Alongside aesthetics, Swiss intellectuals, manners, and institutions played an important role in Europe's 'discovery' of the Alps. If earlier travel accounts and poems on Switzerland never fail to mention the presence in Switzerland of foreign celebrities such as Voltaire and Gibbon, they also record visits to local personalities whose pioneering ideas and work established their international reputation and made Switzerland an Enlightenment centre. Rousseau was only the best known of a long list of eminent Swiss men of letters, philosophers, doctors, scientists, and artisans. The Zurich poet and translator Johann Jakob Bodmer prepared the way for a revolution in German literary taste starting in the 1730s with translations of Milton, Thomson, and Young. His student, the 'wild Swiss' artist Johann Heinrich Füssli, or Henry Fuseli, was forced to leave Zurich in 1761 after having openly criticized one of the city's magistrates. Fuseli was a friend of the physiognomist Johann Kaspar Lavater, whose guestbook is a who's-who of European aristocracy and British visitors, including the poet Helen Maria Williams. Salomon Gessner, another Zurich writer and painter, helped develop the romantic topos of Switzerland as a pastoral paradise in his *Idyllen* (1756, 1772), as did the Bernese writers Albrecht von Haller, author of *Die Alpen* (1729), and Johann Georg Zimmermann, author of *On Solitude* (1756). These last two were also naturalists and practising physicians like the French-Swiss Samuel Auguste Tissot, best known today for his treatise on onanism and on the benefits of fresh air. In Basle, travellers visited the Bernouilli, a celebrated mathematician family, as well as the philosopher Isaak Iselin, who wanted to adapt Rousseau's republican ideas to a commercial society. Other famous eighteenth-century Swiss included the educational reformer Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi who, influenced by Rousseau, launched the Yverdon institute that inspired Maria Edgeworth; the Genevan naturalists and geologists Jean-André de Luc and Horace-Bénédict de Saussure; the Grubenmanns, a carpenter family who designed and built bridges; and the watchmaker Pierre Jaquet-Droz. Last but not least, the more privileged foreign travellers, including Sir James Mackintosh and Lord Byron, made *de rigueur* visits to the Castle of Coppet outside Geneva, where European Romanticism's leading luminaries including Benjamin Constant, August Wilhelm Schlegel, Jean-Charles-Léonard Simonde de Sismondi, and Karl Viktor von Bonstetten met on and off between 1802 and 1816 in Germaine de Staël's salon to discuss the politics of the age and to imagine a post-Napoleonic Europe made up of free, independent nations.

Eighteenth-century Switzerland was thus a breeding ground for progressive ideas aimed at personal and collective enfranchisement. Swiss intellectuals' advances in literature, art, pedagogy, science, and political philosophy were often stimulated by, but were sometimes also the origin of, Rousseau's writings. Eighteenth-century British travel accounts make it clear that these ideas resonated with the ideology both of the ruling Whig party and of the Opposition, bringing to the fore a number of republican themes, including the necessity of public virtue, agrarian independence, distrust of commerce, and praise of the militia system. The patrician Grand Tourists who resided on the shores of Lake Geneva or crossed the Alps, like the poets who catered to them such as James Thomson and George Keate, searched for analogues of their own paternalist rule in Switzerland's Protestant city-republics. These representations became radicalized under the influence of Rousseau and the stress of the growing political unrest across Europe. By the end of the eighteenth century, Swiss liberty, increasingly idealized and associated with the rural democracies of central Switzerland, attracted Europe's radical youth to the Alps, among them Goethe and Wordsworth. Borrowing Marc Lerner's recent title, one may thus label the country a 'laboratory of liberty' that provided observers with 'models of the variety of republican possibilities' available to Revolutionary-era Europe (5–6).

The French Revolution appropriated the proverbial Swiss symbols of liberty, including William Tell and the *Landesgemeinde*. It also made the Rousseau of the *Social Contract* its own, yoking him together with Voltaire and the *philosophes* and transforming the Genevan writer into a political rather than moral philosopher. Edmund Burke's philippic against Rousseau in his 'Letter to a Member of the National Assembly' (1791) established the terms of the writer's reception in Britain during the next twenty years, casting him as 'the great professor and founder of the *philosophy of vanity*', an enemy of religion and of the social order, a sensualist, a madman, and a hypocrite (26–34; original emphasis). After the Terror, even Rousseau's most enthusiastic supporters, including the Swiss writers Germaine de Staël and Benjamin Constant, felt obliged to part ways with his 'ancient' republicanism, which they argued was ill adapted to modern civil society and to the protection of the private sphere. Because of Rousseau's controversial reception during the Romantic period and his association with Robespierre, historicist scholarship has continued to discuss him mainly in relation to Revolutionary France rather than to Switzerland, concomitantly interpreting Romantic representations of Geneva and the Alps as displaced

allegorical figurations of the French Revolution (see Liu 27–31, Mellor 70–88, Dart 163–208).

Swiss history, however, played a much more direct role in the formation of Romantic ideology, understood as the escape from history into nature through tropes of transcendence. The massacre of the Swiss guards defending the Tuileries Palace in August 1792 and especially the French invasion of Switzerland in 1798 created a wave of public indignation in Britain that was exploited by the ruling class to mobilize anti-French sentiment. It helped Foxite Whigs and former radicals, among them Coleridge and Wordsworth, turn away from Revolutionary politics, marking Swiss liberty as a counter-revolutionary alternative to French *républicanisme*. This ideological shift was complicated by the fact that Switzerland so easily acquiesced in its ‘subjugation’, large swaths of its population readily accepting the introduction of its neighbour’s modern republican institutions. Some commentators interpreted this acceptance as a sign of the Swiss population’s moral degeneration. In the early nineteenth century, on the other hand, Switzerland’s mythological past and recent struggle against France came to serve as a patriotic model of resistance, the most famous example being Friedrich Schiller’s 1804 historical drama *Wilhelm Tell*. After the instauration of the reactionary Quadruple Alliance in 1815, Switzerland’s liberation myths resonated with liberal and cosmopolitan second-generation Romantics including Lord Byron, Mary Shelley, and Felicia Hemans, as much as with conservative writers such as Wordsworth and Walter Scott.

Napoleon’s final defeat not only ushered in the restoration of Bourbon princes, but also enabled Britain’s gentry and educated middle classes, including poets and artists, retired military officers, and other professionals to travel abroad after a twenty-year hiatus. The bookseller Thomas Hookham Jr, a friend of the Shelleys who was also an inveterate Rousseauphile, recounts a conversation in September 1816 with a Swiss farmer who believed the throngs of English tourists he saw were escaping a revolution back home in Britain (103–4). Romantic-period Switzerland witnessed a cultural rather than political revolution in the form of the transition from Grand Tour to incipient forms of mass tourism, as Michael Heafford has shown. Upper-class British travellers regularly criticized the corrupting effects of their ‘Cockney’ compatriots on the locals, deploring the fact that children begged in the mountain valleys and that innkeepers always seemed to overcharge them, ruining Switzerland’s imagined purity. Bitter about the high prices and the hordes of English tourists he encountered everywhere, Byron could still complain five years after his visit that ‘Switzerland is a curst selfish,

swinish country of brutes, placed in the most romantic region of the world. I never could bear the inhabitants, and still less their English visitors' (8: 214). His influence on travel itineraries during the Victorian period partly explains why this attitude became prevalent in the mid-nineteenth century. John Murray writes in the introduction to what would remain the standard English-language guidebook to Switzerland until the 1860s: 'it is a remarkable fact that, amidst some of the most magnificent scenery of the globe, where Nature seems to have put forth all her powers in exciting emotions of wonder and elevation in the mind, man appears, from a mysterious visitation of disease, in his most degraded and pitiable condition' (lviii). Goitre and cretinism, their causes still largely a mystery in 1838, become symbols of the disassociation between Switzerland's sublime landscape and what Murray judges to be the degraded moral condition of the Swiss as a nation (xxx). Facilitated by modern guidebooks such as Murray's and Baedeker's, by the building of railroads, and by Thomas Cook's 1858 invention of the organized tour, tourism by the mid-nineteenth century was transforming the country into a virtual place where authenticity is staged. John Ruskin, a namesake of Jean-Jacques Rousseau who identified with him despite being a Tory (Hilton 417), first discovered Switzerland on a European tour with his parents in 1833 and returned to the Alps twenty-five times. In the fourth volume of *Modern Painters*, he attempts to salvage Switzerland's idealized virtue, but his is a twilight vision of the Romantic landscapes once glorified by Rousseau, Turner, and Byron. In Ruskin's later texts, including the Prefaces to *Sesame and Lilies* (1865) and *The Queen of the Air* (1869), Switzerland's despoliation is made into a metaphor for the ravages of modernity that have clouded the Romantic vista opened up a century earlier by Rousseau's writings.

Just as Rousseau has largely been viewed through the lens of the French Revolution, then, Switzerland has often been taken for granted as Romantic scenery. Contributors to the present collection revisit the relationships among Rousseau, Switzerland, and Romantic culture from different angles, thereby exposing nuances and counter-currents. Looking closely at the often conflicted Romantic response to Swiss landscape, they show how that landscape came to be both inspiring and clichéd, an object of scientific study but also of biased representation, a repository of authentic values and at the same time a packaged touristic experience. Some contributors directly address the Swiss Rousseau, viewing him outside the pall cast by the French Revolution and reorienting him back to his Swiss context, while others address a Rousseauian Switzerland, a landscape indelibly coloured for writers



and travellers by his presence. Some of these studies participate in the large-scale re-evaluation of Rousseau's writing and influence that was generated by the tercentenary of his birth in 2012, and many of them were stimulated by the 2012 conference of the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism (NASSR) in Neuchâtel, where visits to St Peter's Island, Môtiers, the Simplon Pass, Geneva, Chillon, and Byron's Alpine settings literally opened up new prospects on Romanticism and Switzerland for participating Romantic scholars. By means of the focus on Rousseau and Switzerland, these essays revisit classic topics such as nature and landscape through new approaches derived from science, materiality, and media studies and reveal surprising connections between texts, images, and ways of thinking that intersect in the Swiss context.

The volume begins with essays that reread Rousseau in relation to a range of issues that have been taken up in recent Romantic studies: childhood education, individual liberty, gender, and science. In 'Romantic Education, Concealment, and Orchestrated Desire in Rousseau's *Emile* and Frances Brooke's *Julia Mandeville*', Enit Karafili Steiner examines the theory of education outlined in Rousseau's *Emile*, with its promise of freedom, and contrasts it with Frances Brooke's *Julia Mandeville*, published the following year. Focusing on the romantic education of the two couples at the heart of each narrative – Emile and Sophie, and Henry and Julia – Steiner shows how Brooke's example, in its disastrous denouement, runs counter to Rousseau's, functioning as an early critique of the model of instruction that he sets out in *Emile*. Brooke exposes the dark undercurrent of parental tutelage, calling into question the possibility of individual freedom in Rousseau's method of educating the young as well as his model of education itself.

In 'Romantic Suicide, Contagion, and Rousseau's *Julie*', Michelle Faubert reflects on personal liberty in light of the provocative issue of taking one's own life. She highlights key interventions in the debate from Locke and Hume to Godwin, showing how – in contrast to the classical view – suicide became a taboo subject during the Romantic era, an act associated with sentimentality, irrationality, irresponsibility, and contagion. Faubert analyses the paradoxical role of Rousseau and his *Julie* in this attitudinal shift. While readers misunderstood the novel as romanticizing suicide, Rousseau actually presents a balanced view of the issues in the debate between St Preux and Lord Edward Bomston over suicide – one that might be recuperated productively for present-day reflections on this sensitive subject.