



Ce que la réflexion nous apprend là-dessus, l'observation le confirme parfaitement : l'homme sauvage & l'homme policé diffèrent tellement par le fond du cœur & des inclinations que ce qui fait le bonheur suprême de l'un réduirait l'autre au désespoir. Le premier ne respire que le repos & la liberté, il ne veut que vivre & rester oisif, & l'ataraxie même du Stoïcien n'approche pas de sa profonde indifférence pour tout autre objet. Au contraire, le citoyen toujours actif sue, s'agite, se tourmente sans cesse pour chercher des occupations encore plus laborieuses : il travaille jusqu'à la mort, il y court même pour se mettre en état de vivre, ou renonce à la vie pour acquérir l'immortalité. Il fait sa cour aux grands qu'il hait & aux riches qu'il méprise ; il n'épargne rien pour obtenir l'honneur de les servir ; il se vante orgueilleusement de sa bassesse & de leur protection, & fier de son

esclavage, il parle avec dédain de ceux qui n'ont pas l'honneur de le partager. Quel spectacle pour un Caraïbe que les travaux pénibles & enviés d'un ministre Européen ! combien de morts cruelles ne préféreroit pas cet indolent sauvage à l'horreur d'une pareille vie qui souvent n'est pas même adoucie par le plaisir de bien faire ? Mais pour voir le but de tant de soins, il faudrait que ces mots *puissance & réputation*, eussent un sens dans son esprit, qu'il apprît qu'il y a une sorte d'hommes qui comptent pour quelque chose les regards du reste de l'univers, qui savent être heureux & contents d'eux-mêmes sur le témoignage d'autrui plutôt que sur le leur propre. Telle est, en effet, la véritable cause de toutes ces différences : le sauvage vit en lui-même ; l'homme sociable toujours hors de lui ne fait que vivre que dans l'opinion des autres, & c'est, pour ainsi dire, de leur seul jugement qu'il tire le sentiment de sa propre existence. Il n'est pas de mon sujet de montrer comment d'une telle disposition naît tant d'indifférence pour le bien & le mal, avec de si beaux discours de morale ; comment tout se réduisant aux apparences, tout devient factice & joué ; honneur, amitié, vertu, & souvent jusqu'aux vices mêmes, dont on trouve enfin le secret de se glorifier ; comment, en un mot, demandant toujours aux autres ce que nous sommes & n'osant jamais nous interroger là-dessus nous-mêmes, au milieu de tant de philosophie, d'humanité, de politesse & de maximes sublimes, nous n'avons qu'un extérieur trompeur & frivole, de l'honneur sans vertu, de la raison sans sagesse, & du plaisir sans bonheur. Il me suffit d'avoir prouvé que ce n'est point-là l'état originel de l'homme, & que c'est le seul esprit de la société & l'inégalité qu'elle engendre, qui changent & altèrent ainsi toutes nos inclinations naturelles.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, *Second discours sur l'origine, et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*, Marc Michel Rey, 1762, p. 177-8 .

(English translation)

Reflection teaches us nothing on that Head, but what Experience perfectly confirms, Savage Man and civilized Man differ so much at bottom in point of Inclinations and Passions, that what contributes the supreme Happiness of the one would reduce the other to despair. The first sighs for nothing but Repose and Liberty; he desires only to live, and to be exempt from Labour; nay, the Ataraxy of the most confirmed Stoic falls short of his consummate Indifference for every other Object. On the contrary, the Citizen always in Motion, is perpetually sweating and toiling, and racking his Brains to find out Occupations still more laborious: He continues a Drudge to his last Minute; nay, he courts Death to be able to live, or renounce Life to acquire Immortality. He cringes to Men in Power whom he hates, and to rich Men whom he despises, he flicks at nothing to have his Honour of serving them; he is not ashamed to value himself on his own Weakness and the Protection they afford him; and proud of his Chains, he speaks with Disdain of those who have not the Honour of being the Partner of his Bondage. What a Spectacle must the painful and envied Labours of an *European* Minister of State form in the Eyes of a *Carribbean*! How many cruel Deaths would not this indolent Savage prefer to such

a horrid Life, which very often is not even sweetened by the Pleasure of doing good? But to see the drift of so many Cares, his Mind should first have affixed some Meaning to these Words *Power* and *Reputation*; he should be apprized that there are Men who consider as something the looks of the rest of Mankind, who know how to be happy and satisfied with themselves on the Testimony of others sooner than upon their own. In fact, the real Source of all those Differences, is that the Savage lives within himself, whereas the sociable Man, constantly beside himself, knows only how to live in the Opinion of others; insomuch that it is, if I may say so, merely from their Judgement that he derives the Consciousness of his own Existence. It is foreign to my subject to show how this Disposition engenders so much Indifference for good and evil, notwithstanding so many and such fine Discourses of Morality; how every thing, being reduced to Appearances, becomes mere Art and Mummery; Honour, Friendship, Virtue, and often Vice itself, which we last learn the secret to boast of; how, in short, ever inquiring of others what we are, and never daring to question ourselves on so delicate a Point, in the midst of so much Philosophy, Humanity and Politeness, and so many sublime Maxims, we have nothing to show for ourselves but a deceitful and frivolous Exterior, Honour without Virtue, Reason without Wisdom, and Pleasure without Happiness. It is sufficient that I have proved that this is not the original Condition of Man, and that it is merely the Spirit of Society, and the Inequality which Society engenders, that thus change and transform all our natural Inclinations.

Rousseau, *A Discourse Upon the Origin and Foundation of the Inequality Among Mankind*, Dodsley, 1761, p. 180-1

There is another circumstance which methinks gives us a very high idea of the nature of the soul, in regard to what passes in dreams: I mean, that innumerable multitude and variety of ideas which then arise in her. [...] What I would here remark is, that wonderful power in the soul of producing her own company upon these occasions. She converses with numberless beings of her own creation, and is transported into ten thousand scenes of her own raising. She is herself the theatre, the actor, and the beholder. This puts me in mind of a saying which I am infinitely pleased with, and which Plutarch ascribes to Heraclitus, that all men whilst they are awake are in one common world; but that each of them when he is asleep is in a world of his own. The waking man is conversant in the world of nature: when he sleeps he retires to a private world that is particular to himself.

Addison's Essays, 'On Dreams', in *Selections from the Spectator*, London: W. Tegg, 1876, p. 456.

It is very fortunate that men are a long time but just above the brute creation, or the greater part of the earth would never have been rendered habitable, because it is the patient labour of men, who are only seeking for a subsistence, which produces whatever embellishes existence, affording leisure for the cultivation of the arts and sciences that lift man so far above his first state. I never, my friend, thought so deeply of the advantages obtained by human industry as since I have been in Norway. The world requires, I see, the hand of man to perfect it, and as this task naturally unfolds the faculties he exercises, it is physically impossible that he should have remained in Rousseau's golden age of stupidity. And, considering the question of human happiness, where, oh where does it reside? Has it taken up its abode with unconscious ignorance or with the high-wrought mind? Is it the offspring of thoughtless animal spirits or the dye of fancy continually flitting round the expected pleasure?

The increasing population of the earth must necessarily tend to its improvement, as the means of existence are multiplied by invention.

You have probably made similar reflections in America, where the face of the country, I suppose, resembles the wilds of Norway. I am delighted with the romantic views I daily contemplate, animated by the purest air; and I am interested by the simplicity of manners which reigns around me. Still nothing so soon wearies out the feelings as unmarked simplicity. I am therefore half convinced that I could not live very comfortably exiled from the countries where mankind are so much further advanced in knowledge, imperfect as it is, and unsatisfactory to the thinking mind. Even now I begin to long to hear what you are doing in England and France. My thoughts fly from this wilderness to the polished circles of the world, till recollecting its vices and follies, I bury myself in the woods, but find it necessary to emerge again, that I may not lose sight of the wisdom and virtue which exalts my nature.

What a long time it requires to know ourselves; and yet almost every one has more of this knowledge than he is willing to own, even to himself. I cannot immediately determine whether I ought to rejoice at having turned over in this solitude a new page in the history of my own heart, though I may venture to assure you that a further acquaintance with mankind only tends to increase my respect for your judgment and esteem for your character. Farewell!

Wollstonecraft, Mary, *LETTERS written during a short residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*, 1796