

## Émile

©2009 eNotes.com, Inc. or its Licensors. Please see [copyright information](#) at the end of this document.

### Characters Discussed

Jean Jacques Rousseau (zhahn zhahk rew-SOH), the author, who assumes the role of a tutor in this work, which is less a novel than a treatise on education. With the imaginary Émile as a pupil, he illustrates his theories of education as he tries them out on his student. The tutor prescribes for the child's surroundings, diet, and hygiene and gives him the freedom to learn the natural limits of his powers. For the adolescent Émile, he provides an education of the intellect, and for his maturing pupil, a moral education and the study of human relationships. The tutor, all through the life of the pupil, follows a philosophy of learning designed primarily to create neither a noble savage nor a cultivated gentlemen but rather a man living freely and fearlessly according to his nature.

Émile (ay-MEEL), an imaginary French orphan who is used as a child-symbol in the illustrations of Rousseau's theories of education. Fulfilling Rousseau's requirements for an ideal subject for experimentation, he grows to manhood under his teacher's guidance. As a prospective father, he announces his determination to educate his child according to the theories of his beloved tutor.

Sophie (soh-FEE), a woman- symbol used by Rousseau to enable him to discuss marriage problems with his pupil Émile.

### ***Bibliography:***

Blanchard, William H. *Rousseau and the Spirit of Revolt: A Psychological Study*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967. Explores the psychological motivation for the educational reforms developed in *Émile*. Describes well the many contradictions in Rousseau's writings on education.

Cranston, Maurice. *The Noble Savage: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1754-1762*. London: Penguin Press, 1991. Explores Rousseau's aesthetic and literary evolution during this prolific period in his career as a writer. The chapter on *Émile* describes both practical and unreasonable recommendations by Rousseau on educational reform.

Crocker, Lester G. *The Prophetic Voice (1758-1778)*. Vol. 2 in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*. New York: Macmillan, 1968. Analyzes the last twenty years of Rousseau's career. The lengthy chapter on *Émile* examines the conflict between Rousseau's praise of freedom and his desire for the teacher to control his pupils' activities.

Havens, George R. *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*. Boston: Twayne, 1978. Contains an excellent general introduction to Rousseau's life and career and an annotated bibliography of important critical studies on his work. The analysis of *Émile* stresses the positive elements in Rousseau's desire to sensitize parents and teachers to the emotional needs of children.

Wokler, Robert. *Rousseau*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. A thoughtful study of Rousseau's belief that successful educational reform will eventually make citizens unwilling to tolerate despotic

## Émile: Émile

governments. Describes well the many connections between *Émile* and Rousseau's *Social Contract* (1762).

### Copyright Notice

©2009 eNotes.com, Inc.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

No part of this work covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, Web distribution or information storage retrieval systems without the written permission of the publisher.

For complete copyright information, please see the online version of this work:

<http://www.enotes.com/emile-salem>