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CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

"论文"及其他早期政治著作

The Discourses and other early political writings

Rousseau

卢梭

Edited by
VICTOR GOUREVITCH

中国政法大学出版社

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CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE
HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

ROUSSEAU
The *Discourses* and other early political writings

剑桥政治思想史原著系列

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在政治理论领域，“剑桥政治思想史原著系列”作为主要的学生教科丛书，如今已牢固确立了其地位。本丛书旨在使学生能够获得从古希腊到20世纪初期西方政治思想史方面所有最为重要的原著。它囊括了所有著名的经典原著，但与此同时，它又扩展了传统的评价尺度，以便能够纳入范围广泛、不那么出名的作品。而在此之前，这些作品中有许多从未有过现代英文版本可资利用。只要可能，所选原著都会以完整而不删节的形式出版，其中的译作则是专门为本丛书的目的而安排。每一本书都有一个评论性的导言，加上历史年表、生平梗概、进一步阅读指南，以及必要的词汇表和原文注解。本丛书的最终目的是，为西方政治思想的整个发展脉络提供一个清晰的轮廓。

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Preface

I am grateful to the many colleagues and friends from whom I have learned about Rousseau, or who have called my attention to infelicities or occasional mistakes in the translations and in the Editorial Notes, among them Steven Angle, Joshua Cohen, Maurice Cranston, Lydia Goehr, Wolfgang Iser, Leon Kass, Sam Kerstein, Ralph Leigh, Mark Lilla, John McCarthy, Terence Marshall, Heinrich Meier, Donald J. Moon, Robert D. Richardson Jr., Charles Sherover, Karl Heinz Stierle, William Trousdale, Robert Wokler. Professor Raymond Geuss has been unstinting in his advice regarding the content and the form of the Introductions.

Annotating texts as varied and as rich in references of every kind as these is a cumulative task. No single editor is so learned as to pick up and identify every one of Rousseau's sources and allusions. All students of these rich and rewarding texts are in debt to the learned editors who have come before us, and we can only hope to repay a part of that debt by doing our share in helping those who will come after us. After a time some references become common property. I have named the sources and editions I have consulted in acknowledgment of such general debts. In the cases where I am aware of owing information to a particular editor, or an accurate or felicitous rendering to a particular translator, I have indicated that fact. In some cases I mention differences with a given edition; it should be clear that by doing so, I also indicate my esteem for that edition: it is the one worth taking seriously. I have recorded specific help in making sense of a particular passage or in tracking down an obscure quotation in the corresponding Editorial Note.

Several of the translations and of the critical apparatus accompanying them in this volume originally appeared in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The First and Second Discourses, together with the Replies to Critics and Essay on the Origin of Languages*, Harper & Row, New York, 1986. All of them have been reviewed, and wherever necessary revised.

I am indebted to Joy Johanessen, Revan Schendler and Mark Lilla for their care in going over some of the new translations.

Virginia Catmur has been the most vigilant and tactful copy-editor, and I am most grateful to her for catching embarrassingly many errors and correcting numerous infelicities.

I did some of the research for these volumes during a year's fellowship at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. The Kolleg, its Director, Professor Wolf Lepenies, and his staff have created a uniquely congenial setting for productive scholarship. I welcome this opportunity to thank them publicly.

I wish also to acknowledge research assistance from Wesleyan University over a period of years.

I am most grateful to the reference staff of Wesleyan University's Olin Library, and especially to the late Steven D. Lebergott, for their assistance.

I wish most particularly to thank Mary Kelly for her many years of generous and patient help in transforming often untidy manuscripts into legible texts.

I must thank The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, for permission to reproduce the frontispiece and title page from its copy of the first edition of the *First Discourse* (PML 17422) and the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Yale University for permission to reproduce the frontispiece and the title page from its copy of the first edition of the *Second Discourse*.

My greatest debt is to my wife, Jacqueline, who has again sustained and inspired me far beyond anything I could hope adequately to acknowledge.

I dedicate these volumes to the memory of my father.

Introduction

Rousseau has permanently altered how we perceive ourselves, one another and the world about us, and in particular how we conceive of politics and what we expect of it. The power and challenge of his thinking were recognized from the first, with the publication in 1750 of his *Discourse on the Sciences and Arts*, the so-called *First Discourse*. His influence grew steadily during his lifetime, and it has continued to grow ever since. The French Revolution was profoundly influenced by his teaching, as, to a lesser extent, was the American Revolution. Romanticism, in all of its forms, was set and kept in motion by his thought and example more than by anyone else's. German Idealism owes its most powerful impetus to him. Kant's debt to him is well known.

Rousseau is one of the two or three great thinkers who chose to present their thought in dramatic form, through the speeches and deeds of a large and varied cast of characters who explore the alternatives, sometimes by themselves alone, sometimes in dialogue or even in confrontation with one another. Rarely if ever does he present wholly disembodied argument, sense dissociated from sensibility. The alternatives he has his characters explore are always also alternative ways of life. Two poles as it were define the territory they explore: the public, political life in its various guises; and the essentially private, "solitary" life in its various guises. The public, political life is most typically the citizen life, and its exemplary representative is the Younger Cato, "the greatest of men" (*Ineq.* II [57]); the private life is most typically the philosophic life, and its most exemplary representative is Socrates, "the wisest of men" (*Pol.*

Ec. [30]); but it is also the life of the pre-political savage and, at the other extreme, the life of what for want of a proper term might be called the trans-political life of the solitary walker and of cosmopolitan benevolence. For the most part Rousseau presents the two ways as mutually exclusive. The many other figures to whom he assigns featured roles represent variations on these alternatives. Some are historical or quasi-historical figures: the great law-givers, Lycurgus, Moses, Romulus and Numa, and the Plutarchian heroes of Republican Rome; some are characters of his invention: Emile and his wife Sophie, the Savoyard Vicar, Julie, whom he calls the new Héloïse, her Abélard, St. Preux, and her virtuous atheist husband Wolmar. The first person singular, the most prominent, best-known member of this cast, is so many-faceted, that it is safer to begin by respecting the different identities Rousseau assigns to it in different contexts: the Citizen of Geneva who aspires to live beyond his century by identifying with the unsophisticated mass of men in the *First Discourse* ([2], [60]), but in the *Second Discourse* proclaims himself a student in Aristotle's Lyceum "with the likes of Plato and Xenocrates as my Judges, and Mankind as my Audience" (*Ineq.* E [6]); the thinker who assumes the proud motto *vitam impendere vero*, to dedicate life to truth; the tutor of the none-too-bright Emile; the ostensible compiler and occasional annotator of the vast correspondence that makes up the *Nouvelle Héloïse*; and of course the subject and author of several autobiographies. Even these autobiographies are clearly not the mere outpourings of an excessively effusive exhibitionist, but case studies and illustrations of his theories. After all, a work called *Confessions* announces in its very title that it is entering the lists with Augustine.

By presenting his thought in dramatic form, and alternatives as alternative ways of life, Rousseau effectively undercuts the sharp traditional distinction between strictly theoretical and strictly practical writings. In the words of his memorable formula, he seeks both to persuade and to convince. By undercutting the traditional distinction between theoretical and practical writings, he also effectively undercuts the sharp traditional distinction between the branches of philosophy: first philosophy or metaphysics, the philosophy of nature, ethics/politics. At times it may appear that he writes about ethics/politics to the exclusion of the other traditional domains of philosophical or human concern. Indeed, at times it may

appear that he subordinates all other domains to the political, that he radically politicizes life and philosophy. Further reflection proves that he does not. He remains ever mindful of the pre-political foundations and the trans-political aspirations of political life. He does, however, write about all domains of philosophical or human concern from a political perspective. It is, for him, *the* organizing perspective. He saw that political life, life in political societies – that is to say, at a minimum, in stable associations of large numbers of people under law, sharing beliefs and practices ordered by an at least tacit conception of the good and hence also of the common good, and embodied in representative human types – is our "common sense," workaday frame of reference. That is what he means when he says that he came to see that "everything is radically dependent on politics" (*Conf.*, IX, *OC* I, 404). Precisely because he regarded political life as our medium, he was ever mindful of its distinctive character and constraints. Much as he wanted to change political conditions in his time, he was keenly alive to how precarious decent political life is. He anticipated revolutions, but he did not advocate them or hold out high hopes for them (*Observations* [62], *Ineq.* II [56], *Languages* 20 [1], *Emile* III, *OC* IV, 468, tr. 194). Even the best intentions in the world have unforeseen consequences. One of the dominant themes in his last political work, the *Considerations on the Government of Poland*, is how to reform without revolution (13 [13], [20], [24]; cp. *Judgment of the Polysynodie* [5], *OC* III, 637f.). All of his writings are, then, political also in the sense of being politic.

Although he was without formal education, Rousseau had early read the classical historians, but especially Plutarch, whose heroes peopled his imagination and nourished his thought throughout his life. By presenting, or at least illustrating much of his own thought through representative persons in whose deeds and thoughts we become personally involved, he is taking Plutarch's *Lives* as his model just as much as he is Plato's dialogues. He seems to have read Grotius's *Of the Right of War and Peace* when he was quite young. He studied closely most of the classical, and many more ephemeral contemporary, works of political philosophy and of history. In his early thirties, between 1745 and 1751, while employed by Mme. Dupin, he studied and wrote abstracts of Plato, Bodin, Hobbes and Locke, of Montesquieu's *Of the Spirit of the Laws* soon after its publication, and of the Abbé de Saint Pierre's projects for

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a European Federation and for Perpetual Peace. In his day, the most systematic, comprehensive compendium on political philosophy was Pufendorf's *Right of Nature and of Nations*, especially in Barbeyrac's learnedly annotated French translation, *Droit de la nature et des gens*. He seems to have kept its massive two tomes at his elbow whenever he undertook a major project in political philosophy. He had contemplated writing a work on *Political Institutions* ever since 1743–1744. The Dijon Academy Question, "Has the Restoration of the Sciences and Arts Contributed to the Purification of Morals?", announced in late 1749, prompted his first publication on the basic problems of politics, but it did not prompt his first thinking about them. The scope and depth of his reflections on the Academy's Question were certainly not simply the result of what in later years he came to speak of as the inspiration of Vincennes (see p. 320). Rather, the Academy's Question seems to have suggested to him a way of ordering his thoughts, and to have given direction and a strong impetus to his further reflections. The *Discourse* which he submitted as his entry in the competition, and which won him that year's Prize, aroused intense debate throughout Europe. His occasional *Replies* to one or another critic give ample evidence of the comprehensiveness and the coherence of his position. He said that he did not encounter a single reasonable objection which he had not considered beforehand (*Last Reply* [2]*), and if one re-reads the *Discourse* in the light of the debate, one finds no reason to doubt him. Before long he came to speak of his "system," his "sad and great system" (*Narcissus* [13], *Second Letter* [6]). He seems to have meant no more by the expression than that his views were comprehensive and coherent. He did not ever deduce his "system" *more geometrico*, as, for example, Hobbes had sought to do. Like the most thoughtful of his characters, the love of truth kept him from systematizing [*l'esprit des systèmes*] (*NH* IV, 7, *OC* II, 427). This is one reason why his work has given rise to so many often contradictory, and occasionally downright bizarre, interpretations. He sets out some of his reasons for proceeding as he does in the early and important programmatic *Method of Composing a Book*, and he restates them most succinctly at the end of Part I of the *Discourse on Inequality* ([53]).

The formulation of the newly formed Dijon Academy's Question for its first Prize Essay competition, "Has the Restoration of the

Sciences and the Arts Contributed to the Purification of Morals?" may sound somewhat quaint and antiquated. Yet the problem which it raises is one which every thoughtful person of our time is forced to confront: does progress in the sciences and the arts promote – or even go hand in hand with – moral progress? The Academy's question would seem to suggest a "yes" or "no" answer. Rousseau restates the Question, and in the process changes its focus: Has progress in the arts and sciences led to moral progress or has it led to moral decline ([4])? It is this third, new, alternative that he chooses to defend: not only does progress in the arts and sciences fail to foster moral/political progress, it actively fosters its very opposite; and it does so always and necessarily. In awarding Rousseau's *Discourse* first place, the Dijon Academy expressly stated that it did so because it had answered the Question in the negative. The only other entry also to have done so took second place.

Rousseau's argument challenges head-on the premise of enlightenment, not just the premise of the Enlightenment, but what all of us would like to believe, that the unfettered public pursuit of the arts and sciences – of what we call "culture" – enhances men's moral and political life. In following his criticism of this view, it helps to keep in mind that he is primarily concerned with the effects of the arts and sciences on the public life, and that he consistently distinguishes between the pursuit of them in public by the public, and in private by individuals. His argument is not that all uncultured, savage or barbarous nations are necessarily morally/politically excellent, but that assigning priority to "culture" in the public life threatens and, in the long run, destroys freedom and justice. The most representative spokesmen for enlightenment immediately recognized the challenge. In the "Preliminary Discourse" to the great *Encyclopedia* which Rousseau's friend d'Alembert wrote the very same year in which Rousseau's own *Discourse* was taking Europe by storm, he raised the objection so many critics, then and now, have raised:

> . . . even assuming we were ready to concede the disadvantage of human knowledge, which is far from being our intention here, we are even farther from believing that anything would be gained from destroying it. We would be left the vices, and have ignorance in addition.

Rousseau fully grants the point. He never ceases repeating that there is no return. It is one of the constants of his thought that

once decline has set in, it will run its full course. However, it can be delayed.

The conclusion of his argument regarding the arts, reduced to its simplest form, is that they are bad for good societies, and good for bad ones (*Narcissus* [37]). His argument regarding the sciences, again reduced to its simplest form, is that the medium of public life is public opinion or fashionable prejudice, and that, as he puts in another context, for the most part opinions and prejudices are replaced by other opinions or prejudices, not by knowledge or by a reasoned suspension of judgment (*First Discourse* [2], [40], *Franquières* [2]). Moral/political excellence can, therefore, not be achieved – or even preserved – by the public pursuit and dissemination of knowledge, or by a so-called rational choice of enlightened self-interest, any more than it can be guaranteed to result from the working of institutions or procedures. It can only be achieved by everyone's recognizing the shared concern for the common interest or good as the organizing principle of their cares and pursuits, in short by the education – or re-education – of the passions. This is the premise underlying all of the arguments of the *First Discourse.*

Writing in absolutist France, Rousseau hesitated to go on and openly say that in his view the common weal consists in political freedom, that is to say in political self-rule. He says so indirectly in a number of ways, most immediately by identifying himself as a Citizen of Geneva, a Republic, on the very title page of the *Discourse.* The Dijon Academy understood him perfectly. In awarding the *Discourse* first prize, it took note of its strongly republican tone, and expressly stated that it was awarding it the prize in spite of it. From the principle that the common weal consists in political self-rule, it follows that anything that causes the citizens to be distracted from pursuing and preserving political freedom threatens it. That is why the pursuit of the arts and sciences to the neglect of civic virtue imperils political freedom. That is also why Rousseau rejects the modern argument that the unfettered pursuit of private interest only redounds to the public interest, the argument Mandeville summarized as "Private Vices, Public Benefits."

At a minimum, political freedom requires subordinating the private to the public good; and at its fullest, it requires finding one's private good in the public or common good. Insofar as subordinating the private to the common good requires an effort, it requires

virtue: "the strength [*force*] and vigor of the soul" (*First Discourse* [11], *Hero* [35]). While Rousseau tends, for the most part, to equate "virtue" with "civic virtue," he is fully aware of how restrictive this equation is. The competing claims of the intellectual and the civic virtues is a classical problem. He explores this problem in remarkable detail in the early *Discourse on Heroic Virtue*, and he returns to it in every one of his works. It is the theme of his repeated comparisons between Socrates and Cato, but also of the tension he describes between himself the solitary walker and himself the Citizen of Geneva. He never went as far as Kant in proclaiming the priority of the practical to the theoretical reason, but he significantly contributed to their re-ordering.

From the *First Discourse* onwards, Rousseau argues that the main reason why civic virtue is so difficult to achieve is that political society tends to force its members to seek their private good at the expense of their fellows, and hence of the common good; they need one another in order to prey on one another; they are therefore compelled to *be* one way, and to *seem* another (*Narcissus* [27]).

The question inevitably arises whether these conflicts – these "contradictions" as Rousseau himself sometimes calls them – are due to some flaw inherent in human nature, whether they are due to some flaw inherent in political society as such, or whether – and how – they might be avoided or mitigated. In short, how did they arise? It is therefore to the beginnings that Rousseau next turns.

In the so-called *Second Discourse* Rousseau describes himself as digging to the very roots of these problems (*Ineq.* 1 [47]). He wrote the *Discourse* between November 1773 and June 1754 in answer to another Prize Essay Question proposed by the Dijon Academy. The *First Discourse* had won the Academy's Prize, and had made him famous. The *Second Discourse* did not win the Prize, but it made him immortal. The question the Academy had proposed was: "What is the Origin of Inequality among Men, and is it Authorized by the Natural Law?" He begins by considering the key terms of that Question.

He distinguishes two kinds of inequality: "physical" inequality, by which he means not only inequality of bodily powers, but also, perhaps somewhat unexpectedly, of powers of mind, wisdom and virtue; and "moral" inequality, by which he means ruling and being

ruled on the basis of some form of agreement or consent (*Ineq.* I [2]). With this distinction he, in effect, turns the Academy's Question about the origin of inequality into a question about the origin of rule; and since political rule is the most authoritative and comprehensive form of rule, the Academy's "What is the Origin of Inequality?" in effect becomes "What is the Origin of Civil or Political Rule?"; and hence "What is the Origin of Civil or Political Society?" (P [11]). It is to this question that Rousseau devotes the major portion of the *Discourse*.

The Academy had gone on to ask whether inequality is authorized by the natural law, and this leads Rousseau into what proved to be his most comprehensive thematic discussion of "natural law." Once again, he begins with a distinction: natural law may be understood either as a law of nature to which all living beings are subject, or as the moral law to which only we humans, as free and rational agents, are subject. The Academy question manifestly refers to natural law understood as the moral law. Rousseau devotes his entire *Discourse* to proving that natural law so understood cannot account for the origin of political society, and of "moral" inequality. As for whether natural law "authorizes" political society and rule, he initially leaves this question open: in the title which he gives to his answer, *Discourse on the Origin and the Foundations of Inequality among Men*, he recasts the Academy's Question, just as he had recast its earlier Question about the Arts and Sciences, by substituting the non-committal "foundations" for the Academy's "authorized by the natural law" (cp. p. 113 with p. 130). The substitution also incidentally alerts us to Rousseau's reluctance to speak about "natural law" when he speaks in his own name (see also the Introduction to *"The Social Contract" and other Later Political Writings*, edited and translated by Victor Gourevitch, hereafter referred to as *SC* tr.)

He very correctly remarks that everyone who has inquired into the bases of political society has been led to inquire into man's pre-political condition. He refers to this pre-political condition as the "state of nature," an expression introduced, for all intents and purposes, by Hobbes, who defines it as "the state of men without civil society," or without an acknowledged common superior on earth (*De cive*, Preface). While he adopts Hobbes's expression, his account of this state is sharply at odds with Hobbes's account of it.

Hobbes "very clearly saw the defect of all modern definitions of Natural right," namely that they assumed that man is by nature rational and political. Yet Hobbes goes on to commit essentially the same fallacy: he erroneously attributed to man in the state of nature passions and needs which he could only have acquired after the rise of reason and political society (*Ineq.* I [35]). Because of this fallacy, Hobbes erroneously concludes that the state of nature is a state of war of all against all. If it indeed were, then, Rousseau argues, mankind would have been forced to abandon it from the very first or to face extinction. Hobbes's fallacy prevents him from accounting for mankind's long, stable pre-civil existence. He spoke of savage man, but depicted civil man (*Ineq.* I [38]; *War* [8]).

Rousseau sets out to correct Hobbes's account by adhering to his premises more consistently than Hobbes himself had done. To this end, he conjectures what human nature must have been in "the embryo of the species," by so to speak "bracketing" all the changes which it must have undergone as reason and sociability develop. This reductive analysis leaves him with two principles prior to reason and independent of sociability, self-preservation and pity, which, in his view, suffice to allow men to act in conformity with natural right. Rousseau is not denying that men are rational or sociable; he denies that prior to the development of reason and sociability humans cannot act in conformity with natural right (see also the Introduction to *SC* tr.). By speaking about self-preservation and pity as "principles," Rousseau is calling attention to the fact that they manifest themselves in different forms at different stages of the development of individuals and of the species: thus "the principle of pity" assumes different forms in the *Discourse on Inequality*, in the *Essay on the Origin of Languages* (*Languages*, 9 [2]), and in the *Emile*. In the *Discourse* pity manifests itself primarily as a revulsion at inflicting or even witnessing hurt (*Ineq.* P [9], I [35]; cp. *Geneva ms.* II 4 [15]), and Rousseau goes so far as strongly to suggest a natural propensity to vegetarianism. However he also calls the reader's attention to the fact that the claims of self-preservation "legitimately" take precedence over the claims of pity (*Ineq.* P [10], I [38]), that the state of nature is a state of violence, and that the law of nature is the rule of the stronger (*Ineq.* E [4], II [56], *Poland* 13 [3]). Yet this law of the stronger does not lead to serious conflict,

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