

Interpretation

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Interpretation

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The Citizen Philosopher: Rousseau's Dedicatory Letter to the *Discourse on Inequality*

In Memoriam
Robert H. Horwitz
1923–1987

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It was not Jean-Jacques Rousseau's practice to write dedicatory letters for his philosophic works. He made one exception: the *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality Among Men (Second Discourse)*.¹ In his *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences (First Discourse)*, Rousseau had attacked what the Enlightenment extolled. His thesis, in a sentence, was that developments in the arts and sciences, far from generally improving human life, had actually corrupted mankind, and were paving the way for the greatest of political evils: despotism. At the same time, the new understanding of human wisdom that culminated in the "progressive" views of the *philosophes* of the Enlightenment was actually destructive of philosophy.

But it was the *Second Discourse*, according to Rousseau, that revealed his principles "completely," which made it "a work of the greatest importance" (Gagnebin and Raymond, 1959, p. 388). And the *Second Discourse* is not merely an attack on the Enlightenment view of progress in the arts and sciences, but on civil society as such. It apparently leads to the conclusion that all civil societies stand on illegitimate foundations, thus anticipating the famous beginning of the *Social Contract*: "Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains." The picture of human society presented in the *Second Discourse* certainly gives cause for deep pessimism. It is a picture of man's decline from his natural beginnings, complicated by Rousseau's admission that the "happiest and most durable epoch" in human history, the age that was "best for man," and "the veritable prime of the world," was a social condition (Masters, 1964,

A substantially different first version of this paper was presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Montreal, 1985. I am grateful to several anonymous referees, and especially to Professors David Lowenthal and Daniel Cullen for their generous and painstaking criticisms of subsequent drafts.

While revising this paper for publication, I was saddened to hear of the death of Robert Horwitz, of whose generosity I was more than once the beneficiary. I dedicate this article to his memory. For this reason more than any other, I wish it were better.

pp. 150–51). This is the *Discourse*, paradoxically, to which Rousseau affixed his only dedicatory letter, addressed to the city of his birth, the republic of Geneva.

Controversy over Rousseau's intention arose immediately, and has never abated. The best known comment on the letter is that of Du Pan, a former First Syndic of Geneva, writing to Rousseau shortly after its publication: "You have followed the movements of your heart in the Dedicatory Epistle, and I fear it will be found to flatter us too much; you represent us as we ought to be, not as we are" (Masters, 1964, p. 229). (For this and other contemporary reactions in Geneva, see Starobinski, 1964, pp. 1286–89, Cranston, 1983, and Miller, 1984.) The controversy concerns whether Rousseau wrote the letter to pay "honor to the ideal Citizens of the ideal State" of Geneva, at least the Geneva of his dreams (Miller, 1984, p. 25), or whether this "flattering image" is meant "to teach the Genevans a lesson" concerning their political deficiencies (Starobinski, 1964, p. xlix).

Guéhenno (1966, 1:304) suggests Rousseau may have written the dedicatory letter simply to expedite the restoration of his Genevan citizenship, lost years earlier, at the age of sixteen, when he had fled the city of his birth and converted to Catholicism in Turin. Miller (1984, p. 25) has adequately responded by showing the letter was not published until months after Rousseau left Geneva, his citizenship already recovered, and that while at Geneva he showed the manuscript to almost no one. Indeed, Rousseau notes in his *Confessions* that when he read the manuscript of the *Second Discourse* to Jean Jallabert, a professor of mathematics and experimental physics at Geneva (later Councillor and Syndic), he omitted reading the "Dedication" (Gagnebin and Raymond, 1959, p. 394).

For more on the adventures in Geneva of the manuscript of the letter, see Launay (1971, pp. 233–34). The view of Cranston (1983, pp. 9, 52) that, at the time of writing the letter, Rousseau was "an uncritical patriot" who had not yet been "robbed . . . of his illusions about his native city," or its variation in Miller (1984, p. 25), that Rousseau "safeguarded his ignorance" of the real Geneva by completing the letter to his "ideal republic" before his actual return to Geneva, is untenable, as I hope my reading of the letter demonstrates. On this point, I follow Masters (1968, pp. 192–95). For Masters, too, the "Dedication" concerns Rousseau's teaching about the "best regime," and he indicates that Geneva, or any Christian regime, must fall short of the best for Rousseau.

I hope to demonstrate that the key to understanding Rousseau's letter to the Genevans is an appreciation of its rhetorical context. How can the virtuous "Citizens of Geneva" of the *First Discourse* justify publishing a philosophical essay revealing "completely" the truth about the origins of humanity and the illegitimate foundations of civil society? This dilemma was present, implicitly, even for the author of the *First Discourse*, and was resolved, implicitly, in that

essay. Rousseau there distinguished the classical understanding of philosophy, grounded on a radical distinction between knowledge and opinion and exemplified by the Platonic Socrates, from the pursuits of his own fellow Encyclopedists who aspired to reconcile philosophy and politics, knowledge and opinion, and to become public educators in the name of progress. (For a brief discussion of this thesis, see Masters, 1964, pp. 7–14; for a fuller treatment, see Strauss, 1947.)

I maintain that the “Dedication” to the *Second Discourse*, addressed explicitly to the citizens of Geneva, is simultaneously addressed implicitly to the *philosophes* of Enlightenment Europe, with the intention of enlightening them, by example, concerning how *philosophes* should address *citoyens*. Rousseau demonstrates that a *political* philosopher must address nonphilosophic citizens politically and that *political* philosophy is as much the political treatment of philosophic questions as the philosophical treatment of political ones.

To understand properly the letter to Geneva is not only to determine whether Rousseau is sincere or saucy, whether his “eulogy” to Geneva is zealously hyperbolic, or even “couched in terms sufficiently extravagant to permit one to question its sincerity” (Masters, 1964, p. 15). The letter is, in fact, both—and more. It is Rousseau’s public presentation of his understanding of the relationship between the republic of Geneva and his philosophic thought. The letter reveals that Rousseau’s thinking about the deepest questions can be presented, and may be understood, without reference to Geneva, because his philosophizing is free of any limitations that the brute facts of his birth and childhood in Geneva might have imposed upon him. Rousseau *qua* philosopher (as he understands the philosopher) distances himself from Geneva. Indeed, he states explicitly in the introductory section of the *Second Discourse* that he will use a language that suits all nations, or, rather, will forget time and place altogether to think only of the men to whom he speaks. And are these the academicians of Dijon? No. Rousseau rather imagines himself in the Lyceum of Athens, with Plato and Xenocrates for judges, and the human race for his audience (Masters, 1964, p. 103).

But Rousseau intends also to relate his philosophical concerns and the political concerns of the republic of Geneva. The “Dedication” lightens the “pessimism” of the picture of human society found in the *Second Discourse* by offering these thoughts to a fatherland that gives some ground for optimism, modern republican optimism. It reveals both how the philosopher’s true fatherland must remain his own philosophical “ideal,” and how the philosopher can responsibly address his concerns to the citizens of the fatherland of his birth. Rousseau’s praise of Geneva thus displays both philosophic irony and patriotic sincerity. (On “philosophic irony,” see Strauss, 1964, p. 51; compare Plato, *Lovers* 133d–e, 134c.) Geneva is flawed, but attachment to it is reasonable because it keeps alive the possibility of republican government amidst the gen-

eral monarchical corruption of eighteenth-century Europe. Rousseau intends neither simply to flatter nor insult the Genevans, but to instruct them, and at the same time to instruct the *philosophes*. The Genevans are (or should be) citizens; the *philosophes* are cosmopolites. Rousseau is essentially a philosopher, not a patriot. (Or, we might say, he is a philosophical, i.e., a critical, patriot.) But he refuses to parade himself before the country of his birth as a cosmopolitan sophisticate. He wishes to demonstrate the superiority, both philosophical and political, of his “patriotic” social criticism to the *philosophes*’ cosmopolitan social criticism. He instructs the Genevans concerning patriotism and the *philosophes* concerning philosophy.

What follows takes the form of a commentary on Rousseau’s letter. As such, it may be compared with the similar effort of Einaudi (1967, pp. 150–65). Miller (1984) writes extensively on the letter, but analyzes it on the basis of assumptions very different from mine: “I will attempt to reanimate and give fresh force to the whole of Rousseau’s Alpine fantasia. . . . My primary guide in this task will be Rousseau’s own dedication of his *Second Discourse* to Geneva, although supplementary material will be drawn from the passages on Switzerland and Geneva in the *Letter to D’Alembert* (1758), *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761), and a few other sources. The goal is to restore for the purposes of study the Alpine city of Rousseau’s reveries: a model of harmony, a world of perfection” (p. 26). Miller has written an informative and imaginative book, but fails to understand the letter to Geneva correctly; for one thing, in his speculations on Rousseau’s “Alpine fantasia” he treats various writings of Rousseau, from the *Social Contract* to letters to Mme. Dupin, without discrimination, despite his professed awareness that the question of Rousseau’s “audience” is an important one to consider when reading him (pp. 67–68). Throughout my commentary, I have followed the laconic suggestions of Strauss (1953, pp. 253–54).

Rousseau’s letter consists of an opening salutation, twenty-two paragraphs, and a closing, which are consistent in Starobinski (1964), Masters (1964), and Cranston (1984). The letter divides itself neatly in half. After the opening salutation, Rousseau devotes eleven paragraphs to a portrait of the society into which he would have chosen to be born had he been (per impossible) free to choose. Examination reveals it is not Geneva but what I call “the philosopher’s fatherland.” After repeating the opening salutation in the twelfth paragraph, in the second half of the letter Rousseau presents to his “distant fellow citizens” an idealized portrait of Geneva, which serves to promote political reconciliation on the ground of love of country. This I discuss under the rubric “the citizen’s fatherland.”

Between my discussions of the two halves of the letter, I digress to comment briefly on Rousseau’s epigraph to the *Second Discourse* in order to indicate the philosophic ground on which Rousseau establishes his ideal fatherland and from which he offers patriotic criticism of his real one.

THE PHILOSOPHER'S FATHERLAND

Rousseau begins his letter "TO THE REPUBLIC OF GENEVA" with the salutation "MAGNIFICENT, MOST HONORED, AND SOVEREIGN LORDS."² His contemporaries must have been startled to discover this salutation, of such aristocratic tenor, directed to the Genevan people, not the magistrates—an indication of the republican thrust of Rousseau's intention. Rousseau begins by addressing, and for most of the letter speaks to, the Genevan people as a whole. Rousseau was well aware how unorthodox it was to address his dedicatory letter to the republic of Geneva rather than its magistrates; see Cranston (1983, p. 349) who cites Rousseau's response to a letter of Jean Perdriau ("Pedriau" throughout Cranston), a pastor and one of Rousseau's associates in Geneva, who had raised this objection.

The opening sentence asserts "only the virtuous citizen may properly give his fatherland those honors that it may acknowledge." Rousseau himself has worked for thirty years to deserve the appellation "virtuous citizen," but in vain. Rather than by the right that ought to be his authorization to pay public homage to his fatherland, Rousseau is prompted by "zeal." He very zealously praises the Genevans. They seem to "possess society's greatest advantages and to have best prevented its abuses." They have combined "the equality nature established among men" and "the inequality they have instituted . . . in the manner most approximate to natural law and most favorable to society." (Genevan society has achieved only an approximation of what would be in accordance with natural law.) Even had he not been born in Geneva, Rousseau would have felt himself "unable to dispense with offering this picture of human society" to the Genevans.

Starobinski (1964, p. 1289) interprets Rousseau's statement to mean he would freely choose citizenship in Geneva even had he not been born there. This view is held, explicitly or implicitly, by all Rousseau's commentators. Miller (1984, p. 43) states it forcefully: "How emphatically Rousseau approves of this society is made clear by the rhetorical device that structures the early paragraphs of the dedication. . . . Geneva is not simply the *patrie* of Rousseau's birth. That is a contingent fact of his existence. More significantly, Geneva is his city of choice, an emblem of his self-conscious freedom, the essence of what human society ought to be—an eidetic intuition achieved by his inability, in the free play of his reveries, to 'imagine that the nature of human things could admit of a better one.'" But neither Starobinski's view that Rousseau makes his actual past the object of a wish (1958, Part 1), nor Miller's variation, that Rousseau is swept away in an Alpine reverie, is adequate. In this first half of the letter, Rousseau reveals a standard for political life utterly unrestricted by accidents of time and place. For an interesting discussion of the roles played by "Geneva" and "Switzerland" in Rousseau's intellectual odyssey, see Barber (1985). Barber chronicles Rousseau's disenchantment with Ge-

neva; I am suggesting Rousseau was never as enchanted as he led the Genevans, and others, to believe.

Having noted the historical fact of his birth within the walls of Geneva, in the immediate sequel Rousseau liberates his mind from those confining walls, and describes the society into which he would have chosen to be born, had he been free to choose. In this section of the letter—his vision of his true fatherland—Rousseau never deigns to mention, nor even allude to, Geneva.

Rousseau's freely chosen birthplace would be "a society of a size limited by the extent of human faculties—that is, limited by the possibility of being well governed"; one where "all the individuals knowing one another, neither the obscure maneuvers of vice nor the modesty of virtue could be hidden from the notice and judgment of the public." In short, Rousseau would have chosen to live in a society modelled on the ancient *polis*, a city restricted in size by the natural limits of the human capacity for trust and a truly common good. Perhaps more than any other writer in the modern period, Rousseau understood and appreciated the virtues of the ancient city (Strauss, 1953, p. 254); his model society, however, is not the ancient city as it understood itself, as we shall see.

In addition to preferring a *polis*, Rousseau would have chosen to be born in a democracy, "wisely tempered," where the sovereign and the people would have "only one and the same interest, so that all movements of the machine always tended only to the common happiness." And this is not possible "unless the people and the sovereign [are] the same person." Democratic government is the only government that can secure the "common happiness," thus the only desirable government. (What is meant by the qualification "wisely tempered" will emerge below.) Miller (1984, p. 41) remarks, "This is the kind of democracy Rousseau imagined in Geneva: this is the homeland of his dreams." To the contrary, it is precisely "the kind of democracy Rousseau imagined in Geneva," and "the homeland of his dreams," that Rousseau distinguishes in the letter.

Rousseau "would have wished to live and die free." To "live free" means to live in a particular relation to the laws, not to live without the constraint of laws. It is to bear their "honorable . . . salutary and gentle yoke" proudly, the condition being that everyone do so equally.

Rousseau is especially concerned "that no one in the state could declare himself above the law and that no one outside could impose any law the state was obliged to recognize—a wish laden with significant political implications. No man—no king, priest, or pope (not even a messiah?)—is to be above the law. And no one outside, no power temporal or spiritual, is to be able to impose any law—especially "divine" or religious law—upon the state. The reason? It is "impossible," writes Rousseau, for both a "national chief" and a "foreign chief" to be well obeyed "whatever division of authority they may make"—even to render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's. In short, Rousseau opposes the "modern" dualism of the earthly and

heavenly fatherlands. (By “modern,” I mean here what Machiavelli and his followers meant: Christian as opposed to pagan.)

The central and longest of the eleven paragraphs between Rousseau’s first and second salutations to his “MAGNIFICENT, MOST HONORED, AND SOVEREIGN LORDS” provides the key for understanding the letter as a whole. The paragraph addresses the problem of the founding of a free republic, one where all are equal before the law; the work to which the letter is attached is devoted to the question of the origin and foundations of inequality among men. What is most striking is that here in the middle of this address to the Genevan people, Rousseau calls not the Genevans but the early Romans “the model of all free peoples.”

Rousseau “would not have wished to live in a newly instituted republic, however good its laws might be.” The difficulty with newly instituted republics is that the government may have to be constituted differently than one in a long-established republic. Indeed, there is an initial period of indeterminate duration in which the people and the government may prove incompatible, a period in which the state would be subject to disturbances, even destruction. The characteristic of republics is freedom, but freedom is not for all peoples: “once peoples are accustomed to masters, they are no longer able to do without them.” Rousseau adds a strikingly anti-revolutionary statement: in attempting to shake off the yoke of their masters, a people moves *farther* from freedom, “mistaking for freedom an unbridled license which is its opposite.” Peoples’ revolutions “almost always deliver them to seducers who only make their chains heavier.”

We get an intimation of how the author of the *Second Discourse*—a work that profoundly calls into question the foundations of all civil society—could at the same time speak of revolution in so guarded and even discouraging a manner. Whatever truth there is in the view that Rousseau is the father, or grandfather, of the modern revolutions of the left, for “Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains,” to become “Workers of the world unite; you have nothing to lose but your chains,” something had to be added to Rousseau’s thought, something non-Rousseauan, perhaps anti-Rousseauan. What had to be added, and what the author of the *First Discourse* would not have added, is the modern belief in a univocal history of social progress. Rousseau knew a revolution was coming, that the *ancien régime* was finished. But he did not share, as Marx did, the modern faith in progress. He consequently was very much bothered by what seems to bother Marx very little: the problems that shall have to be faced *after* the revolution (compare Gildin, 1976, p. 247).

People’s revolutions “almost always” deliver them to seducers—but the debased, slavish, stupid mob that emerged from the oppression of the Tarquins eventually became the most respectable of all peoples. What the Roman mob needed was to be guided through the transition period with great wisdom, and then, once their origins had been “in a way lost in the night of time,” they

could become the constituent element of the kind of republic into which Rousseau would have wished to be born, the home of the most respectable of all peoples because of their “severity of morals” and “spirited courage”—a people “not only free but worthy of being so.”

Rousseau does not share the characteristically modern conviction that fundamental political problems can be solved by institutional means. A republic’s government and laws, “however good,” cannot assure the freedom of its citizens: severity of morals and spirited courage are necessary. Rousseau thus adopts something like the ancient view, but not simply the ancient view. The ancients considered the most important thing politically to be the question of the regime, the *politeia*: is the regime democratic or oligarchic? From the regime everything else follows. For Rousseau, the question is narrower. It is transformed into a question about the “government” as opposed to the “society,” a distinction that would scarcely have been understood in antiquity, and which is, in fact, incompatible with the classical conception of *politeia*. (See Jaffa, 1972, pp. 65–67, for a clear statement distinguishing the classical conception of *politeia* from the modern conceptions of “state” and “society.”)

In addition, for Rousseau, “freedom,” not “virtue,” is the standard by which to judge political life. The Romans are the “most respectable of all peoples” because they are the “model of all free peoples.” One might think the most respectable of all peoples would be the most moderate, most pious, justest, or wisest: the most virtuous of all peoples. Not Rousseau. Rousseau’s model may be the ancient *polis*, but he understands it differently than it understood itself. Rousseau understands virtue as a means toward the higher end of freedom. (But once we have accepted an instrumental view of virtue, is it not legitimate to look for other, perhaps surer, means to freedom?) To put it differently, Rousseau appears to reduce virtue to freedom. In any case, just as it had long been understood that not all peoples are capable of virtue, Rousseau maintains that not all peoples are capable of freedom. (On the difficult question of the meaning of “freedom” in Rousseau’s thought, see Strauss, 1953, pp. 277–82; compare Plattner, 1979, pp. 12–13.)

Concerning Rousseau’s tendentious presentation of the character of the ancient city, consider the observation of Fustel de Coulanges (1956, p. 11):

In our system of education, we live from infancy in the midst of the Greeks and Romans, and become accustomed continually to compare them to ourselves, to judge of their history by our own, and to explain our revolutions by theirs. What we have received from them leads us to believe that we resemble them. . . . Hence spring many errors . . . not without danger. . . . Having imperfectly observed the institutions of the ancient city, men have dreamed of reviving them among us. They have deceived themselves about the liberty of the ancients, and on this very account liberty among the moderns has been put in peril.

The “ancient city” must be distinguished not only from interpretations of it made by the modern philosophers, but as well from the “city of the philosophers” of antiquity (Strauss, 1964, pp. 240–41).

Does Rousseau, himself, not appeal from ancient philosophy to ancient practice? Is this not implied, for example, by the comparison between Cato and Socrates in *Political Economy* (Masters, 1978, p. 219)? Compare the extended treatment of Rome in Book 4 of the *Social Contract*.

Having observed that Rousseau's model republic is not Geneva but ancient Rome (albeit understood in a special way), we are struck that the next condition he places on his chosen fatherland is that it be "diverted by fortunate impotence from a fierce love of conquests." As every schoolboy knows, the Roman republic was the conquering republic *par excellence*. Rousseau appeals from the Genevan to the Roman republic, but here is another indication that his standards are not those of antiquity.

Coupled with its fortunate impotence, the city would have an "even more fortunate location," which would relieve it from any fear of being conquered. In a word, the city would desire, like the "wise" Otares of Rousseau's sole footnote to the letter, neither to rule nor be ruled. The citizens would be trained in the use of arms in order to maintain that "warlike ardor and spirited courage which suit freedom so well and whet the appetite for it, rather than from the necessity to provide for their own defense."

In the next four paragraphs, Rousseau indicates what he had in mind when he stated, "I would have wished to be born under a democratic government—wisely tempered." The right of legislation would be common to all citizens. But Rousseau would not have approved plebiscites like those of the Romans, because they excluded from the deliberations on the safety of the state those who were most interested in its preservation, absurdly depriving the magistrates of the rights enjoyed by common citizens. Rousseau would prefer that only the magistrates had the power to propose new laws. Even then he would have that power used cautiously, and hope, in addition, that on those rare occasions the people would hesitate to give its consent to any changes in its constitution, for "it is above all the great antiquity of laws that makes them holy and venerable." Rousseau adopts the "ancient" view, what may properly be called the "conservative" position, that all but the most necessary changes in a regime tend to undermine its stability, and that even necessary changes (e.g., changes dictated by the exigencies of military policy; consider Aristotle, *Politics*, 1268b22–1269a29, 1274b11–23) are not necessarily without harm. But note how Rousseau follows Machiavelli's "modern" reading of the Bible in attributing the "holiness" of laws to their antiquity—and to nothing else. (Machiavelli would insist, of course, that Moses' "executive" modes after he descended Mount Sinai had more than a little to do with the success of his Decalogue!)

Rousseau "would have fled as necessarily ill-governed" a republic where the people augmented its legislative power by retaining the administrative and executive functions in its own hands—one of the vices that in his view ruined (democratic) Athens. Rather, they should merely sanction the laws and important decisions proposed and reported by the city's magistrates. The latter would be elected on the ground of merit alone, annually, to administer justice and

govern the state. Rousseau concludes these remarks with comments on the “fatal misunderstandings” that may beset republics, and the requisites for “sincere and perpetual reconciliation”—comments which are usually taken to be allusions, albeit ironic, to certain events in the history of eighteenth-century Geneva (see, for example, Masters, 1964, pp. 229–30).

Such are the advantages Rousseau would have sought in the fatherland of his choosing. He again addresses his “MAGNIFICENT, MOST HONORED, AND SOVEREIGN LORDS.” He avers that if Providence smiled on his fatherland in a few other respects, for example, if it were granted a fertile countryside (as Geneva was not), he would have happily enjoyed these things “living peacefully in sweet society with my fellow citizens, practicing toward them . . . all the virtues; and leaving behind me the honorable memory of a good man and a decent and virtuous patriot.” We cannot help reminding ourselves that Rousseau did not reside in Geneva.

In the first half of the letter, Rousseau has indicated to the Genevans why he is addressing them, and has described the kind of society he would have chosen for his birthplace, had he been free to choose. To casual readers, it appears to be a description of Genevan society. To less casual readers, like the former First Syndic Du Pan, it appears to be a zealously exaggerated, if well-meaning, description of Geneva’s virtues. In fact the letter has (thus far) not been about Geneva at all.

Careful readers should not be surprised, then, to find Rousseau *now*, after a dozen paragraphs, saying that if he were reduced to living in other climes than those of his (actual) fatherland (as he was, in fact, by an “imprudent youth”), he would, “moved by tender and disinterested affection” for his “*distant* fellow citizens,” address to them “approximately the *following* discourse” (my emphases), that is, *not* the preceding one.

What, then, was the *preceding* description? Starobinski describes the *following* as a description “*Discours dans le discours*” (1964, p. 1291). I should think it is rather the other way around. We have already had what might helpfully be called a “*discours dans le discours*” (a “discourse within the discourse”)—Rousseau’s tendentious eulogy to the ancient *polis*—and *now* we are going to get Rousseau’s zealously exaggerated, if well-meaning (or not), description of Genevan society.

But why two “discourses” within the letter? In the last sentence of the first paragraph, Rousseau writes: “even had I not been born within your walls, I should have believed myself unable to dispense with offering this picture of human society to that people which, of all others, seems to me to possess society’s greatest advantages and to have best prevented its abuses.” What picture of human society? Rousseau never refers explicitly to the *Second Discourse* in the letter. Is it possible that the “picture of human society” Rousseau has in mind is as much the one we find in the immediate sequel, the succeeding eleven paragraphs of the letter, as the one we find in the *Second Discourse*

itself? Does Rousseau even purport to describe Geneva, however hyperbolically, in the paragraphs between his first and his second salutations to his “MAGNIFICENT, MOST HONORED, AND SOVEREIGN LORDS?” Is the picture of human society Rousseau felt himself unable to dispense with offering to the Genevans the picture of the fatherland he would have chosen instead of Geneva, had he been free to choose?

Cranston (1984, p. 52) offers this judgment concerning the letter as a whole: “It was not unnatural that some readers should even suspect Rousseau of having intended all the time to attack the Genevan regime by the device of praising it where it least deserved praise and of showing how far it had fallen from its principles by expounding the principles which it had most conspicuously betrayed. But this, I believe, is to impute to Rousseau a more devious sophistication than he possessed as a polemicist.” I believe Cranston underestimates both Rousseau’s talents as a “polemicist,” and his propensity for “devious sophistication.” Rousseau describes two fatherlands in the “Dedication” to the *Second Discourse*: the one of Rousseau the philosopher; the other of the citizen of Geneva. To clarify the relation between the philosopher’s fatherland and the citizen’s, not so much to dedicate the *Second Discourse*, is the *philosophic* purpose of Rousseau’s letter to the republic of Geneva. Starobinski correctly suggests the letter is meant “to teach the Genevans a lesson”; but Rousseau also intends to teach a lesson to the *philosophes* of Enlightenment Europe.

DIGRESSION ON AN EPIGRAPH

Rousseau’s model for political life is the ancient *polis*, but he “improves” upon it. He follows Machiavelli in admiring antiquity as against modernity, but “nature”—as Rousseau understands it in the *Second Discourse*—is the standard by which he criticizes both. Rousseau’s disagreement with both the early moderns and Aristotle stems from their disagreements about “nature.” It is helpful here to reflect for a moment on the only writing other than the dedicatory letter that Rousseau places between the title of the *Second Discourse* and the discourse itself: the epigraph from Aristotle. This is not the place for an extended interpretation, but I digress to adumbrate one.

The epigraph is a Latin translation of a sentence from Aristotle’s *Politics* (1254a36–38). In English it reads: “Not in corrupt things, but in those which are well ordered in accordance with nature, should one consider that which is natural” (Masters, 1964, p. 229). It calls to mind the famous statement from Rousseau’s introduction to the *Second Discourse*: “The philosophers who have examined the foundations of society have all felt the necessity of going back to the state of nature, but none of them has reached it” (Masters, 1964, p. 102).

Rousseau uses the quotation from Aristotle to indicate his criticism of the modern “state of nature” theorists, most obviously Hobbes and Locke. He ap-

peals to classical political philosophy to begin his critique of modern political philosophy, just as he appeals from modern Geneva to ancient Rome. But if we turn to the context of the quotation in the *Politics*, we find that it implies, when juxtaposed with its context on the title page of Rousseau's *Second Discourse*, a critique of classical political philosophy as well. (Note how Rousseau invites us to compare the contexts by supplying the citation to Aristotle; he did not supply the citation for the epigraph on the title page of the *First Discourse*.)

The context in the *Politics* is Aristotle's discussion in the first book of the "first pairing" of human beings forming the household from which the *polis*, the association most salubrious to the development of human virtue and the good life, will emerge. This first pairing includes that of "female and male for the sake of generation" and that of "ruler by nature and ruled by nature for the sake of preservation," that is, it appears that for some persons to be enslaved by others is as natural a human phenomenon as procreation. Aristotle deals with the immediate objection, that slavery is merely conventional and not at all natural, in a perplexing manner: he discusses property and the art of acquisition (1253b23ff.). We learn that the just acquisition of slaves is a kind of hunting, and that man's hunting is natural and just and should be used against "wild beasts and that part of mankind which is meant by nature but is unwilling to be ruled" (1256b25–27). It is in the middle of this discussion—a demonstration that the distinction of ruler and ruled pervades all of nature—that we find Aristotle's remark about corruption and nature that Rousseau cites.

The *Second Discourse* is Rousseau's work on man's origin and nature, especially the origin of inequality among men. This inequality is inextricably linked with the unjust origins of private property. It is not a frolic in the esoteric garden to suggest that Rousseau chose his epigraph carefully, and that reflection on his choice may be a helpful entry point to his philosophic teaching.

Citing the authority of Aristotle on the title page of the *Discourse*, Rousseau appears to be appealing to Aristotle's understanding of nature, according to which the nature of a being is best seen in its perfection; but he manifestly rejects that teleological understanding, as well as the crypto-teleology of Hobbes and Locke (the substitution of a *summum malum* for a *summum bonum*). Rousseau's natural man is peaceable, herbivorous, solitary, and asocial. Aristotle's is a hunter of wild beasts and other men, naturally part of a household, and intended by nature for life in a *polis*; a man without a city is like a beast or a god. According to Rousseau, the city is always unnatural, although we may observe that for Rousseau, too, a man without a city is like a beast or a god: consider his "natural" man, and his dreaming, solitary walker, respectively. In particular, for Rousseau slavery is unnatural and wholly unjust, but the ancient city was impossible without slavery. Rousseau may appeal from modern to ancient political philosophy, from the modern to the ancient city, but he appeals from ancient political philosophy and the ancient city to nature, understood in a new, radically modern way in the *Second Discourse* (see Strauss, 1953, pp. 252–94; compare Plattner, 1979).

In challenging slavery, Rousseau could also be said to accept the ancient tradition according to which society arose from a contract, an ancient tradition that denied “natural slavery,” in particular Lucretius’ account of the genesis of civil society in *De Rerum Natura*, which serves, according to Strauss (1953, p. 271 n. 37), as the “model” for Rousseau’s own account in the *Second Discourse*. We have already remarked that it is ancients—Plato and Xenocrates—whom Rousseau accepts explicitly as his judges. Illuminating discussions of Aristotle’s understanding of the “naturalness” of the family, acquisition, and slavery are Ambler (1984, 1985, and 1987), Nichols (1983), and Zuckert (1983).

But let us return to the letter.

THE CITIZEN’S FATHERLAND

The second half of Rousseau’s letter “TO THE REPUBLIC OF GENEVA” can itself be divided into sections corresponding to its various addressees. Rousseau speaks directly to three classes of Genevans: his “dear fellow citizens” or rather his “brothers”; the “MAGNIFICENT AND MOST HONORED LORDS” of Geneva, her magistrates; the “*aimables et vertueuses Citoyennes*” of Geneva, that is, the women or, we might say, his “sisters.” In the course of his address to the magistrates of Geneva, Rousseau speaks about, but does not directly address a fourth element of Genevan society: the clergy. It is in these passages that Rousseau will (to echo the words of Du Pan) represent the Genevans as they ought to be, not as they are—and what they *all* ought to be is *citizens*.

Rousseau begins his address to his “brothers” sounding very much like he did in the first paragraph of the letter: “The more I reflect upon your political and civil situation, the less I can imagine that the nature of human things can admit of a better.” But between the first paragraph and its echo, here, Rousseau has precisely imagined and described in some detail a better political and civil situation. The two complementary sentences serve as something like bookends for the “*discours dans le discours*” that comes between them. (Note that Miller’s judgment, cited above, that Rousseau would have chosen to be born in Geneva begins by quoting from the first sentence of the second paragraph of the letter, and ends with a quotation from the fourteenth paragraph, conflating the two “discourses” [Miller, 1984, p. 43]. This is symptomatic of his failure to recognize correctly the significance of what he calls Rousseau’s “rhetorical device.”)

What makes Rousseau and his dear fellow citizens “brothers”? “The bonds of blood as well as the laws unite almost all of us.” In addition to the explicit qualification (“almost”), we should note that while Rousseau may be united with a portion of Geneva’s population, an extremely small portion, by bonds of

blood, he is actually united with none by Geneva's laws, neither the first nor last time he draws our attention to this fact.

Essentially, what Rousseau has to say to his dear fellow citizens is their lot is a very good one, for which they may claim no credit. The full and universal recognition of their sovereignty, their excellent constitution, their precious freedom—all are due to the efforts of their ancestors: their happiness is “all established.” The only precaution left for them to take is to remain united, obey the laws, and respect their magistrates. Rousseau queries rhetorically: “Does anyone among you know a more upright, more enlightened, more respectable body in the universe than that of your magistracy? Do not all its members give you the example of moderation, of simplicity of morals, of respect for the laws, and the most sincere reconciliation?” Masters (1964, p. 230) notes the irony of this passage; it should also be remarked that Rousseau's rhetorical question precludes the answer that Geneva's Calvinist clergy might be such a body. This is all the more striking since Rousseau has just bid the Genevans to look deep into their hearts and consult that specifically Christian phenomenon: “conscience.”

Rousseau's address to those “MAGNIFICENT AND MOST HONORED LORDS,” Geneva's magistrates, may be divided into four parts: a praise of the Genevan people in general; a praise of Rousseau's father in particular; advice to the magistrates concerning the people; praise of Geneva's clergy.

Rousseau addresses the magistrates as “MAGNIFICENT AND MOST HONORED LORDS”; they are not sovereign. All commentators remark on this implication. (See, for example, Cranston [1983, pp. 51–52; 1984, p. 349], and Ellenburg [1976, p. 256]; note Ellenburg's remark that this anticipates the important distinction between sovereign and government in the *Social Contract*.)

Rousseau reminds the magistrates that they have been raised to their position by their fellow citizens, and by no one else. He speaks of the magistrates' “talent,” “virtue,” and “merit,” but their particular superiority to magistrates of other cities derives from their relation to the free people of Geneva, “men capable of governing others,” who have chosen magistrates “in order that they themselves be governed.” It is the character of the people of Geneva that adds special luster to the magistracy of these magnificent and most honored lords. In his letter to Perdriau (see Cranston, 1983, p. 349), Rousseau defends having addressed his letter to the Genevans as a whole, rather than the magistrates, by claiming he reserved his eulogies in the letter for the magistrates, and his exhortations for the citizens. It is perhaps more helpful to observe that Rousseau eulogizes the rulers when speaking to the ruled, and the ruled when speaking to the rulers, but leaves no question where sovereignty lies. Political strife in eighteenth-century Geneva consisted essentially of quarrels between democrats and oligarchs. Rousseau does not try to adjudicate the rival claims to rule; he emphasizes, rather, the good that the two factions possess in common: the fatherland.

The republic of Geneva was in fact a functioning oligarchy in the eighteenth

century (Cranston, 1983, pp. 13–17, 340–41). It was Machiavelli who taught us how to manage the conflicts between the popular and princely “humors.” Rousseau strives rather to eradicate them by encouraging a common love. Rousseau, in concert with all the “moderns,” shares Machiavelli’s perspective on many things political, but where Machiavelli in the end relies on fear, Rousseau does not.

Rousseau wishes to speak of one “virtuous citizen” of Geneva in particular: his father, Isaac Rousseau. Anyone who knows anything about Rousseau’s father must find these passages rather hilarious (see Masters, 1964, pp. 230–31, and Green, 1955, pp. 1–12). There is no question that Isaac Rousseau was “not distinguished among his fellow citizens.” But was he really “only what they all are”? And what are they all? Why, the equals “by education, as well as by the rights of nature and of birth” of the magistrates, inferior to them only by their own will, for which the magistrates owe them a debt of gratitude. Suffice it to say, as much as Rousseau may claim to wish better records remained of the example his father set for the Genevan people, he was fortunate they did not! That Rousseau’s father is the only Genevan named in the letter who is said to deserve the cherished appellation “virtuous citizen” adds ironic insult to injury. (Crocker [1968, p. 251] remarks the insolence of this “exaltation of a citizen who had been in bad odor until he was finally forced into exile.” For an “historical” portrait of Isaac Rousseau, see Cranston [1983, chap. 1, and pp. 37–38, 50, 93–94, 114, 192, 255].)

Rousseau discusses but does not directly address the clergy of Geneva. Would it be inappropriate to address members of the clergy in a letter to a “republic”? Is their status different from that of the citizens, male and female, and the magistrates of Geneva? Are they somehow excluded from the body constituting Rousseau’s “MAGNIFICENT, MOST HONORED, AND SOVEREIGN LORDS”? Does it not go without saying that Rousseau would never address the clergy, even hyperbolically, as “SOVEREIGN LORDS”?

The clergy, Rousseau tells us, are “those who consider themselves as the magistrates, or rather the masters, of a more holy and sublime fatherland.” But Geneva’s are a “rare exception”; they love the glory and happiness of the Genevan republic, and may be placed in the ranks of its “best citizens.” What is the ground of this eulogy? In Geneva, these “venerable pastors of souls” are the “zealous trustees of the sacred dogmas authorized by the laws,” that is, *not* zealous trustees of any dogmas *not* authorized by the laws. Just as Geneva’s magistrates are superior to other magistrates especially because of their relation to the Genevan people, her clergy are superior to other clergy especially because of their relation to the Genevan, and precisely no other, laws. “I note, with a pleasure mixed with astonishment and respect,” Rousseau writes, “how much they abhor the atrocious maxims of those sacred and barbarous men of whom history provides more than one example, and who, in order to uphold the pretended rights of God—that is to say their own interests—were all the

less sparing of human blood because they flattered themselves that their own would always be respected." Rousseau does not hesitate to call such men, despite their barbarity, and the atrociousness of their maxims, "sacred"! (This is more shocking than the "Machiavellian" understanding of the "holy" that emerged in the first half of the letter.) And who are these "sacred and barbarous men" who uphold the "pretended rights of God"? Starobinski (1964, p. 1293) dares suggest this remark may apply to Calvin himself (but Rousseau may have in mind even greater examples—biblical ones, like Moses and David). The clergy are, indeed, those most prone to disturb the public repose. They may regard themselves as masters of another fatherland, or rather servants of another master, and Rousseau has already insisted there must be no "foreign chief" in a good regime.

Finally, Rousseau has a few words for the women of Geneva. Addressing them as "*aimables et vertueuses Citoyennes*," he indicates he considers them as worthy of the appellation "virtuous citizen" as the men. He demonstrates, in addition, his willingness to grant Genevan citizenship to others as well as to himself: not only does he refer to himself in the letter, and sign it, as a citizen of Geneva, which at that time he was not, but he also calls Geneva's women "citizens," which at that time they were not. (Miller, 1984, p. 222 n. 60, asserts that "the question of Rousseau's patronizing attitude toward women" is uncontroversial. I controvert him. I rather think Rousseau may be counted in some respects, along with Locke, among the founders of the women's liberation movement; compare Schwartz, 1984, and Nichols, 1984).

According to Rousseau, women commanded at Sparta by means of their "chaste power," and thus do they deserve to command at Geneva. The "power" here is the granting of sexual favors, the "chastity" of which appears to consist in its being "exercised solely in conjugal union." Cranston (1983, p. 319) notes the irony: "Notwithstanding these words in praise of chastity, Rousseau set off for Geneva in the company of his mistress, Therese." (He also humorously reports how the "virtuous aunts" who helped raise Rousseau wielded their "chaste power," p. 19.) It is interesting that Rousseau should claim that the primary effect of female command will be to teach the men of Geneva to "despise vain luxury." According to ancient authorities, the exercise of their "chaste power" by the Spartan women resulted precisely in the Spartan men becoming lovers of luxury (consider, for example, Aristotle's *Politics* 1269b12ff.). Rousseau is not blind, however, to bad effects that may result from the rule of women over men. Indeed, the "extravagances" of the young people of Geneva, their "childish tone and ridiculous airs," their admiration for "pretended grandeurs, frivolous compensations for servitude, which will never be worth as much as august freedom," are due to their having come under the influence of "debauched women."

Is Rousseau suggesting these problems could be obviated by granting the women of Geneva citizenship, as he does in his salutation to them? (Presuma-

bly, this would entail the kind of civic education Aristotle suggests might have mitigated the problems created by the position of women at Sparta.) In any case, Rousseau's flattery of the women of Geneva is in the same ironic voice as the rest of the letter. To correct the "extravagances" of the youth, Geneva's women need only be always what they are, "the chaste guardians of morals and the gentle bonds of peace; and continue to exploit on every occasion the rights of the heart and of nature for the benefit of duty and virtue." Consistent with his reinterpretation of the ancient *polis* in the first half of the letter, Rousseau emphasizes the importance of peaceableness, and the role women can play in promoting it. Note that the women of Geneva, not Calvinist religion, are praised for making the city austere. The women, in a way, replace the clergy as the city's moral guardians, and attach the citizens to the fatherland through the family.

To whom is the penultimate paragraph of the letter addressed? There is no salutation, yet Rousseau clearly is no longer speaking solely to Geneva's women. He expresses hopes for the "happiness of the citizens and the glory of the Republic." "It will not shine," he admits, "with the brilliance that dazzles most eyes." "Dissolute youth" will find no satisfaction here, nor will "the supposed men of taste" find anything to admire: "all the refinements of softness and luxury" will be absent. There will be only men, a spectacle possessing a value surpassing that of all others.

What sort of glory is this? In the first half of the letter Rousseau cites the Romans as the model of all free peoples, and the most respectable of all peoples. Sparta and Athens have also been mentioned, but it is the Spartan women who are praised and the Athenians are an example not to be emulated. Historically, Sparta's glory—like Rome's—was based on her outstanding military prowess; Athens' lasting glory on her intellectual virtues, or, we might say, her achievements in the arts and sciences. Neither Rousseau's freely chosen fatherland nor his reformed Geneva will shine for its accomplishments on the battlefield, and there are not even allusions made, except proscriptively, to achievements in the arts and sciences.

But do Rousseau's actions not speak louder than his words? We may be reminded in this respect of Thucydides. While Thucydides nowhere in his narrative discusses the intellectual life that thrived at Athens, the accomplishments of which have brought her more everlasting glory than anything Pericles praises in the funeral oration, Thucydides does not fail, subtly but powerfully, to indicate Athens' superiority over Sparta in this sphere: he begins his narrative, his "possession for all time," with, "Thucydides, *an Athenian*, wrote the war of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians" (my emphasis). On the title page of Rousseau's discourse we find, "By Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Citizen of Geneva." Rousseau's picture of Geneva may be closer to Sparta than to Athens; Rousseau, himself, is more Athenian than Spartan. This is why, in fact, it was practically out of the question that Rousseau should settle at Geneva after recover-

ing his citizenship (consider Cranston, 1984, p. 51). (The most recent detailed account of Rousseau's "exile" from Geneva is Miller [1984, pp. 52–54]. For a commentary on Pericles' praise of Athens in his famous funeral oration, and Thucydides' judgment of Pericles, see Palmer [1982].)

In the final paragraph, Rousseau again addresses his "MAGNIFICENT, MOST HONORED, AND SOVEREIGN LORDS." He begs pardon for any "indiscreet excess" of which he may have been guilty. He refers again to himself as a "patriot," and again also to his "zeal," which in this last paragraph as opposed to the first, is called "legitimate."

The closing reads: "I remain, with the most profound respect, MAGNIFICENT, MOST HONORED, AND SOVEREIGN LORDS, Your most humble and most obedient servant and fellow citizen, Jean-Jacques Rousseau." The letter is dated from Chambéry on June 12, 1754. Rousseau officially returned to the Protestant religion, and regained his Genevan citizenship (which was afterwards again revoked, permanently), on August 1, 1754. On the date the letter is signed, then, Rousseau was neither a member of the Genevan church, nor a Genevan citizen, nor a Genevan resident. We can only conclude that he consciously chose to leave a permanent record of these facts.³

CONCLUSION

Rousseau's letter "TO THE REPUBLIC OF GENEVA" must be seen to consist of two distinct parts. In the first half, Rousseau addresses the question of the society into which he would have chosen to be born, had he been free to choose—the timeless question of "the best regime." Einaudi (1967, p. 158) remarks that the letter contains "the most complete outline of Rousseau's theory of the state before the *Social Contract*" (compare Grimsley, 1983, p. 121, and Miller, 1984, p. 72). What are its main features?

Rousseau's political ideal is a *polis* with a democratic *politeia* (regime). This requires a social approximation to the equality of condition enjoyed by human beings in nascent civil society, and consequently the abolition of the radical social inequality that developed historically. Both that nascent social condition and the history of the emergence of radical inequality are described in detail in the *Second Discourse*. Social equality—indeed, virtue entire—serves the political goal of freedom. Among the requisites of freedom are "severity of morals" and "spirited courage," not in the service of conquest, but of independence; the ideal is neither to rule nor be ruled.

The democracy must not be participatory, plebiscitary democracy. There must be no doubt where sovereignty resides—in the will of the people—but the democratic regime must be "wisely tempered." This requires, among other things, what we call the separation of church and state, or rather, the subordination of divine authority to civil authority, and what we call separation of

powers, at least between the legislative and executive functions. Magistracy must be elective, and for brief tenure.

In the second half of the letter, Rousseau presents a portrait of Genevan society that ironically praises the Genevans for virtues they do not possess, or rather, insufficiently possess, in light of the ideal. The letter as a whole is Rousseau's public presentation of the relation, in his own mind, between the timeless concerns of political philosophy and the temporal concerns of political life.

Rousseau's major writings may be distinguished, like the two halves of this letter, according to whether they deal primarily with the permanent question of the best regime, or with Rousseau's assessment of contemporary political life. A prime candidate for the former category is the *Social Contract*; for the latter, *Letters Written from the Mountain*. (For discussion of Rousseau's critique of Geneva, and argument that the society of the *Social Contract* is not Geneva, see Ellenburg [1976, pp. 239–40], Starobinski [1964, pp. 1664–65], and their references; compare Shklar [1969, chap. 1].)

The view of Cranston (1984, p. 13) that “we must remember that at the time he [Rousseau] was working on the *Discourse on Inequality* he had not looked far behind the splendidly republican facade” of Genevan society, is untenable. The “picture of human society” Rousseau finds himself unable to dispense with offering to the city of his birth is as much the picture of the society into which he would have wished to be born instead of Geneva as it is the picture found in the *Second Discourse*. Republican Geneva of the eighteenth century is not Rousseau's model for “the best regime.” Rather, Rousseau's reflections on “the best regime” permit him to correct the deficient politics of eighteenth-century republican Geneva.

Rousseau exhorts the Genevans to put aside their differences—especially class differences—and devote themselves to the common good of their fatherland. He emphasizes, indeed exaggerates, the equality that reigns among them. He wishes to reconcile the oligarchs and the democrats, the magistrates and the clergy, the men and the women. Perhaps most noteworthy (today) are Rousseau's remarks concerning women. He calls for female citizenship; he certainly appreciates the political importance of women. He highlights the critical role they can play in nurturing the “severity of morals” and “spirited courage” that are requisites of political freedom. It is above all the mediation of the women, as moral guardians, that will conduce to the unprecedented combination of martial virtue and peaceableness that is to characterize Rousseau's new regime.

Rousseau also indicates in the letter how the “political philosophy” of the Enlightenment *philosophes* is insufficiently political, that is, politic. His famous quarrel with the *philosophes* concerned (among other things) the goodness of an enlightened citizenry, and how the latter could be produced. Rousseau, himself, abjures all displays of cosmopolitan sophistication before the Genevan citizenry. In the *Second Discourse*, he questions the origin and foundations of political society more radically than any Enlightenment *philosophe*.

But he does not revel in flaunting the politically dangerous aspects of his teaching before the unenlightened. He rather speaks to them—ironically—as one of them. He is the self-deprecating “citizen of Geneva” who has labored for three decades to earn the appellation “virtuous citizen,” but who lacks sufficient virtue.

The letter “TO THE REPUBLIC OF GENEVA” serves as a bridge between the *First Discourse* and the *Second Discourse*, and indicates how the “Citizen of Geneva” of the former can publish the latter. In the light of the “Dedication,” the radical teaching of the *Second Discourse* is perceived to be in the service of civil society. This is precisely the manner in which Socrates, the founder of political philosophy, introduced philosophy into the city (*Republic* 471c–472a). Following Socrates, whom he praises so highly in the *First Discourse*, Rousseau gives *philosophes* of all times and places an exemplary lesson in how to speak to citizens—a lesson of more than “historical” interest.

NOTES

1. In 1753, Rousseau dedicated his opera *Le Devin du Village* to M. Duclos, and declared it would be his only dedication. The exception of the dedicatory letter to the republic of Geneva was made with Duclos' permission. (See *Confessions*, Gagnebin and Raymond, 1959, p. 382.)

I have followed the Masters (1964) translation of the *Second Discourse*, with only occasional alterations, and the French text of Starobinski (1964). Where I quote Rousseau in English, but the citation is to a French text, translations are mine.

2. Rousseau's letter in its entirety can be found in Leigh (1965—, III: 55–64). In my commentary, I will usually omit references for quotations because I will follow Rousseau so closely as to render frequent citation superfluous.

3. It was in Chambéry that Rousseau spent his early adult life after his flight from Geneva. Miller (1984, p. 25) suggests Rousseau's completing the dedicatory letter at Chambéry “safeguarded his ignorance” of Genevan reality. In his *Confessions* (Gagnebin and Raymond, 1959, p. 392), Rousseau claims he dated the letter at Chambéry to avoid quibbling in France or Geneva. Cranston (1983, p. 323) suggests Rousseau wished to avoid embarrassment in France or Geneva.

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