

Interpretation

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Rousseau's Socratism:

The Political Bearing of "On Theatrical Imitation"

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ABSTRACT

Rousseau's "On Theatrical Imitation" has been ignored by Rousseau scholars for a good reason. Rousseau himself gives the reader the initial impression that it may not contain his own teaching. It appears as a kind of imitation by Rousseau of Plato's Socratic teaching in preparation for the writing of his *Letter to D'Alembert on Spectacles*. I present evidence to support the conclusion that the work does contain Rousseau's own teachings and then proceed to give an account of those teachings. Rousseau is famous for teaching that virtue is required for liberty which is a proper end of politics. It is my contention, however, that in "Imitation" Rousseau presents that teaching within a larger horizon. Although virtue is a condition of liberty, Rousseau indicates in "Imitation" that liberty is a condition of philosophy. In "Imitation" virtue and liberty are presented as subordinate and instrumental to philosophy.

I. THE INNOVATION OF "IMITATION"

Since its appearance, Rousseau's "On Theatrical Imitation" has been uniformly ignored by scholars.¹ Even those especially interested in Rousseau's teaching on politics and the arts have confined their attention to his *First Discourse*, *Letter to D'Alembert*, and to his own experiments with various forms of poetry. One is surprised to discover that since its appearance no one has even attempted to justify ignoring it.

Yet this essay intends more. After I provide an explanation for the obscurity of "On Theatrical Imitation," I proceed to establish its authority and then to present an account of two of its major teachings.

The admission of "On Theatrical Imitation" into Rousseau's corpus, the recognition and defense of it, for the first time, as even fit for serious study, will also prove innovative on the plane of the substance of Rousseau research. Rousseau's teachings in this essay, as in no other, illuminate and clarify—if

not resolve—certain critical ambiguities recognized by many in his more famous works. I must add the following claim: In “On Theatrical Imitation” Rousseau even boldly indicates a line of reasoning that forces the reader to envision his whole political teaching in a new, fresh light.

Examination of “On Theatrical Imitation” forces one to call into question certain crucial dimensions of the current state of opinion. As will be shown, Rousseau indicates the priority of philosophy and, as he argues in his other works, its ground in natural inequality.² This thesis calls into question not only Rousseau’s simple adaptation of the principle of natural equality but also the exclusive identification of the natural being with solitary reverie. This thesis forces us as modern heirs of Rousseau’s vision to reconsider the possibility that he grasped a ground upon which to root and nourish the philosophic way of life even while apparently adapting those modern premises which seem to contribute to the demise of philosophy.

Rousseau also can be shown to teach that though virtue is required for freedom, virtue and freedom, in turn, are also instrumental to philosophy. Rousseau presents his “closed” society, that which is required to cultivate virtue, as more conducive to the development of a true philosopher than is the “open” enlightened society. He presents his version of civic virtue as required for liberty and as beneficial to philosophy. His civic virtue is presented as less harmful to philosophy than modern enlightened society and as the best “fence” against tyranny, the common enemy of freedom and philosophy. This thesis calls into question not only the simple self-sufficient status of virtue and liberty as the highest ends of political society, but also the contradictory hostility between “natural” man and “virtuous” citizen. To grant that, in principle, the former cannot be made into the latter and that neither can be fully both, does not require the conclusion that, in practice, each cannot be made to live in a somewhat harmonious, naturally beneficial, relation.

II. THE OBSCURITY OF “IMITATION”

Rousseau’s “Imitation” has been abandoned to obscurity for good reasons. The content as well as the dramatic context of the work all but sealed its fate. The essay presents a version of the theory of intelligibility, one example of which is the doctrine of ideas, which Rousseau modified but never denied. The essay also indicates that the philosophic way of life is the highest way of life. These ideas understandably perplex those familiar with the teachings for which Rousseau became famous, historicism and the unnatural status of reason. It also does not contain some of his other famous teachings such as natural equality and the doctrine of the general will. Moreover, the Rousseau of “Imitation” simply does not present himself as the Rousseau of his other works. He appears foreign and even downright strange, thereby calling into question the authority

of the whole manuscript as a serious presentation by Rousseau of his own teaching.

Students of Rousseau are, however, or should be, thoroughly acquainted with the wily Rousseau, the master of drama who can take on all manner of shape or form, the Rousseau who, behind various masks, in different guises, some even related to the different elements of his own name, presents a vast range of various, even contradictory, teachings. Certainly, then, Rousseau as strange or foreign, even to himself, has not deterred his best students from hanging on his every word, from rightly taking his teachings with utmost seriousness. The unusual content of Rousseau's teaching in "On Theatrical Imitation," though contributory to, cannot completely explain its unhappy fate.

The more comprehensive explanation of the fate of "Imitation" and the most perplexing problem or obstacle facing the reader is Rousseau's own contribution to the impression that it may not be a presentation by him of his own teaching. He claims in its "Advertisement" that the piece was published by accident but with his retroactive approval. Before publication, he was not yet sure whether it should be "completely suppressed" by him or published. He describes the work itself as a "trifle" and as a kind of extract from or imitation of Plato's Socratic teaching on imitation, drawn, in particular, from Book X of the *Republic*.³ In addition, the "occasion" of the work was his preparation for his presentation of his teaching on theater in his *Letter to D'Alembert on Spectacles*. But he found that he was not able to employ it there "easily." Rousseau gives the impression that "Imitation" contains the substance of Plato's Socratic teaching on imitation which he merely imitated—in a modified form of the Platonic Dialogue—to prepare himself to write his letter to D'Alembert. Rousseau even appends notes to the body of the text which elaborate on the teachings of Plato's Socrates, thereby strengthening the impression that the body of "Imitation" is merely a correct imitation, in a different form, of Plato's Socratic teaching and therefore does not necessarily contain his own views.

If one suspends judgement on the status of "Imitation" as presented by Rousseau in his "Advertisement" in order to pursue the question by means of an examination of the body of the work, one immediately confronts another obstacle. Rousseau's first act is to present himself to the reader in the first person, "I," as speaking in the guise of Socrates, as imitating Plato's Socratic teaching on imitation in his *Republic* (I:1).⁴ Rousseau's first act in the body of the work appears to be a confirmation, in dramatic form, of the substantive teaching of his "Advertisement" concerning the status of the work and, therefore, to deter further the reader concerned with Rousseau's—as opposed to Plato's—teaching from continuing to read the work. At this point, the serious reader must be inclined to abandon "Imitation" and to turn either to Plato himself to grasp his teaching or to Rousseau's other works to discover Rousseau's own teaching on imitation. The ignorance and complete obscurity of Rousseau's "Imitation" appears well deserved.

III. THE AUTHORITY OF "IMITATION"

A moment's reflection requires a reconsideration of the status of Rousseau's "Imitation." The very theme of the work, in accordance with the title—"On Theatrical Imitation"—given it by Rousseau himself, not by Plato, necessitates an investigation into the following hypothesis: perhaps there are teachings on imitators or imitation in "Imitation" that bear on the question of the status of Rousseau's imitative act. If, sustained by this necessary question, one proceeds to read "Imitation," certain very relevant considerations emerge, considerations which demonstrably establish the whole of "Imitation" as Rousseau's own teaching.

A major teaching is that imitation signifies agreement. For instance, the "Imitators of Homer" become poets, thereby indicating their agreement with Homer, their "model," that the teaching and way of life of the poet is best. The same is true of those who come to imitate Homer's heroes or certain founders and even some philosophers (I:9, 12, 22, 25, 26, 28–31). Although Plato's Socrates in Rousseau's "Imitation" blames Homer, his poets, the imitators of his hero, and even imitation itself, Rousseau nevertheless chose to present himself as author of "Imitation" in the dramatic mode of a kind of imitator, an imitator of Plato's Socrates. According to Rousseau, Plato's Socrates taught that imitation signifies agreement. Rousseau imitates Plato's Socrates. He repeats, imitates, the *teaching* that imitation signifies agreement and he presents himself as an imitator, as an *example* of that teaching, thereby indicating his agreement with the content of that and the other teachings he imitates. The whole of "Imitation," therefore, is Rousseau's own teaching on imitation.

This thesis appears to be confirmed by a second major and more specific teaching on imitation. Rousseau presents Plato's Socrates as introducing his account of imitation with the teaching that one should approach "all dramatic authors" in a manner that corrects (is a "corrective" of) their imitation in accordance with the criterion of "truth" or that which one thinks is "true" (I:1). Plato presents a dramatic imitation of Socrates as teaching the need for "corrective" imitation even of Plato's Socrates, at least on those points of disagreement, if there are any. Hence, if "Imitation" is an imitation in the form of a simple repetition of the teaching of its original model, and if Rousseau is correctly imitating its teaching on imitation, that "corrective" imitation is a sign of disagreement, then it could be concluded that Rousseau's whole "Imitation," insofar as it is a correct imitation, is Rousseau's teaching, which is in agreement with Plato's Socratic teaching. Since "corrective" imitation signals disagreement, correct imitation indicates agreement.

Of course, one can correctly respond to this thesis with the claim that Rousseau in "Imitation," following his indications in his "Advertisement," is merely recapitulating the opinion of Plato's Socratic teaching on imitation and in so doing is neither adapting nor employing in his imitative act the content of the

teachings on imitation in "Imitation." One need not explain the status of Rousseau's imitative act by reference to the teachings on imitation that he imitates. If Rousseau's imitation is a substantially correct imitation, however, then it is more proper to conclude that one cannot resolve these two apparently contradictory theses regarding the status of the work. In other words, if "Imitation" is a correct imitation, then the work could *either* be merely a neutral recapitulation or be Rousseau consistently following the content of the teachings on imitation in "Imitation" in his own imitative act, and hence "Imitation" could be a presentation of his own position. The teachings of "Imitation" can never be taken as Rousseau's own teaching as long as this problem is not resolved.

Rousseau himself suggests a solution. A second-level comparison of the dramatic setting with the teachings on imitation points the way. Rousseau himself raises the problem of the status of "Imitation," and the very elements which give rise to the question invite the reader to compare "Imitation" with its original model to solve the problem. For if "Imitation" is a substantially incorrect imitation, a "corrective" imitation, then it could be concluded, by demonstration, that Rousseau did imitate, adapt and employ in "Imitation" itself, the teachings on imitation in "Imitation," namely, that imitation signifies agreement and that "corrective" imitation indicates disagreement and hence that the whole piece constitutes Rousseau's own teaching.

Comparison of Rousseau's original model with his imitation reveals that Rousseau's "Imitation" is a "theatrical" imitation, a substantially incorrect imitation. The "corrective" imitations can be shown to be neither accidental nor superficial but by design and concerning the most crucial teachings. For instance, the very teaching that one should employ "corrective" imitation is itself an example of "corrective" imitation. Whereas, Rousseau claims that Plato has Socrates claim that one should engage in "corrective" imitation of others, Plato actually has Socrates merely claim, at that point in his text, that poetry itself, not its imitation, can, in certain circumstances, be a "remedy" (compare I:1; 595B). Rousseau's teaching in "Imitation" on "corrective" imitation is Rousseau's *own* teaching on imitation, and he employs that teaching in the very act of presenting it. Rousseau himself therefore shows himself to adapt and employ in his own imitative acts the teaching on imitation in "Imitation" that imitation signifies agreement and that "corrective" imitation indicates disagreement. The whole of "Imitation" therefore must be Rousseau's own teaching.

Rousseau not only teaches, in incorrect imitation of Plato's Socrates, that one should engage in "corrective" imitation, but he also proceeds to follow his own teaching and to further employ "corrective" imitation concerning some of the most crucial dimensions of the Platonic-Socratic teaching. At the beginning and end of "Imitation," Rousseau incorrectly imitates two of the most famous and important teachings of Socrates on the beginning and end of political society. Whereas Socrates actually claimed that the city of which he is speaking is "entirely right" but exists only in "speeches" oriented to a model in "heaven,"

Rousseau presents Socrates as claiming that he is considering, or dreaming of, the actual “establishment” of an “imaginary Republic” which is described as one “useful and appropriate to the nature of man,” crucial phrases not appearing in the original (compare 595A, 592B; I:1). And whereas Socrates claimed that “virtue” is the end of his city in speech, Rousseau presents Socrates as teaching that which Rousseau himself teaches in other contexts, namely, that “order and liberty” are proper ends of political society. Socrates in the original does not speak of “liberty” (compare 608B–C; I:31). Socrates spoke of an imaginary city in “speech” oriented to “virtue”; Rousseau, incorrectly, presents Socrates as speaking of a real, future, city in which order and “liberty” will be the end. A close comparison of Rousseau’s imitation with its original model reveals many other important examples of Rousseau’s “corrective” imitation of Socrates.⁵

Just as Plato’s Socrates corrects Homer on the basis of “truth,” so Rousseau corrects Socrates when he thinks he is in error and imitates him when he thinks he is correct, in correct imitation of the true Socratic teaching that one owes more to “truth” than to one’s model. To imitate Socrates, whose work consisted in self-correction and the correction of others in the search for truth, would be to correct even Socrates if one thinks he is in error. The conclusion is clear. When Rousseau in “Imitation” correctly imitates a teaching of Plato’s Socrates, he is in agreement; and when he engages in “corrective” imitation, he is in disagreement. In either case, it necessarily follows that the *whole* of Rousseau’s “Imitation,” independent of its original model, can and should be read as Rousseau’s own teaching. We can now proceed, with good reason, to investigate Rousseau’s teachings in “Imitation.”

IV. THE THREAT OF IMITATION TO PHILOSOPHY

In “Imitation,” Rousseau, in the guise of Socrates, as philosopher-founder, proposes and defends laws which ban imitative artists as “useful and appropriate to the nature of man” (I:1). He does so by means of first seeking a definition in answer to the question, What is imitation? (I:1). The reader must ask the question, what is the “nature of man,” on the basis of which such laws are defended as “useful and appropriate.” The definition of and Rousseau’s arguments against imitation reveal his answer to our question. As will be shown, imitation is blamed from two, related perspectives: it deceives as to the truth, and the content and consequences of that deception constitute a world hostile to true knowledge-seekers, philosophers. The “nature of man” points to philosophy, and laws against imitative artists are defended as “useful and appropriate” to philosophy.

Rousseau defines imitation as an “image of an image” of the “truth.” He is able to do so on the basis of the assumption of the truth of the following

tripartite, hierarchical, model or image (a truth which Rousseau represents in a considerably modified form in the second movement of his thought, presented in section V below). The first level refers to true being, the invisible, incorporeal, unchanging, self-subsistent, single, intelligible: the ideas whose source is nature or its author in whose intelligence resides "all" the "possible" ideas or definitions. The second level refers to all "visibles," the natural or artificial things all of which are made by some craftsman, human or divine, each in imitation of its single "idea" or "model" or definition. The products of the "universal" craftsmen, like painters, who make images of all the visible artifacts, exist on the third level along with the poets (I:1–6).

Rousseau's original model contains two necessary implications which raise two questions which, in turn, he answers in the rest of the work. Since all "visibles" are artifacts, and human beings are among the visibles, and since poets imitate acting human beings among the visibles, it necessarily follows that human beings must be second-level artifacts as well as third-level artisans and imitators. If so, then there must be a human-maker. Further, since all visibles have "ideas," and man is a visible, there must also be an "idea" or nature of man, that which serves as the criterion of human making. The questions are: what is the standard of human making and who or what is the human-maker? Rousseau proceeds to begin to answer these questions by the employment of his original tripartite model to criticize painters and then poets (I:6–9, 10–14).

Rousseau presents the painter and the citizens, the audience, as kinds of knowers. The painter "knows . . . how to paint" and the audience "knows" what it sees, the visible world (I:8, 7). Rousseau's most basic criticism of painting and the witnessing of a painting is that they contribute to the "corruption" of both the painter and the audience, the consequence of which is to create or reinforce in each an antiphilosophic disposition hostile to true knowledge-seekers (I:1, 28).

Though a painter may know "how" to paint, a painting is, as such, of something, something visible—not of the knowledge of painting. A painting is a kind of statement by the painter of more than the knowledge of painting. It is a claim by the painter to "know" that the visible object exists and what that object is or is like (I:3, 6, 9, 18).

As a public statement, a painting is witnessed and judged by others. The audience judges whether the painter knows "how" to paint on the basis of the criterion of whether the content of the painting conforms to their own prior knowledge of the visible object (I:7). If the audience likes the painting, the painter's knowledge of both how to paint and of the object is confirmed. The internalization of this confirmation actualizes the self-consciousness of the painter on the plane of knowledge. The painter comes to take as the object of his knowledge not only how to paint and the object painted but also, and more importantly, the state of his knowledge: the painter comes to think that he knows that he is a knower (I:19).

This self-conscious knower learns even more. The painter discovers his superiority in knowledge to others. He, not the audience, knows how to paint and he, as confirmed by the audience, knows how to paint better than other painters; and he also knows the object better than either the audience or other painters. As a consequence of his knowledge of his superiority in knowledge, the painter's pride is activated, and hence the status of the object of his craft and subject of his knowledge, the visible world, is enhanced in his eyes. The visible must be the most real and important if knowledge of it and how to paint it is to be elevated. The painter comes to think that the way of life of the painter is the superior way of life. Any threat to the reality and importance of the visible world would constitute a threat to the painter.

If the audience, in turn, likes a painting, it is because there occurs, let us say, a moment of "recognition" (I:7). The painting is seen to be like something they already know. The necessarily partial spatial perspective of a painting of a visible object activates in the imagination of the viewers a "whole" image of the real thing corresponding to their previous visually based knowledge of the whole real thing, the visible object (I:6, 7). Hence, the audience also learns by looking at a painting that it knows. The painting, so to speak, tells them that they are knowers, knowers of the real object of the painting. As a result, they too are rendered by the painting self-conscious knowers. They "know" the visible world, and after viewing a painting they learn that they know that they know. The viewers learn to think in a new way: they learn to think that they know that they know (I:18, 19).

The audience, like the painter, also learns more. After all, the painter submitted the painting to them for their judgement, and though the painter may know how to paint, he paints a defective image from the perspective of the standard for the image, the visible world, that which they already know (I:7). The audience comes to think itself superior to the painter in knowledge of the visible object. As a consequence, the audience comes to take "pride" in its knowledge (I:7). They, too, must come to invest the visible world with reality and importance since it is the ground for the status of their prideful knowledge. Again, any threat to the status of the visible world, the world in which they live and which they know, would call into question their prideful knowledge. Moreover, both the painter and the audience must blindly cling to the ground, the ground of their prideful knowledge, the visible world, and protect it from any threat to its solidarity and hence to their status as knowers.

But according to Rousseau's original model, the most real is the invisible, the intelligible, the definitions of the visibles. This model or image is the ground of the superiority of the philosophic way of life which seeks knowledge of the truth of the invisible intelligibles. If the most real is the intelligible, and if the visibles and their images are defective in truth, then knowing how to paint and the painting lose their status, and "knowledge" of the visible world would be knowledge of partial illusion. Seeking to know the invisible intelli-

gible, not knowing how to paint or knowing the visibles, would be the most important human activity. Given Rousseau's original model, philosophy would take precedence over both painting and the citizens' "knowledge" of the visibles. The serious painter cannot take Rousseau's philosopher seriously, or must take the philosopher as the most serious threat to his way of life. Since the philosopher is the enemy of the painter, the painter must become the enemy of the philosopher. Rousseau dramatizes this tension by depicting the painter who takes knowledge-seekers as his object. His all-too-human tendency is to depict them falsely and as objects of any due ridicule (I:8). The painters and their audience, as prideful knowers of the visible, are open to those who would argue that philosophy is a threat. They are natural allies of the accusers of Socrates.

But Rousseau, as philosopher-founder in "Imitation," defends laws "useful" and "appropriate" to the "nature of man," the first of which is the abolition of the painters. We are now in a position to give concrete content to the meaning of the "nature of man," the standard of the law.

Humans, by nature, seek to know but divide into the very few true knowledge-seekers moved by love, not pride, to grasp truth, and others who can be deceived and flattered into thinking that they know that they know, that they know more than they know, what they do not know, and who take pride, derive a sense of superiority to others, in their knowledge. The philosopher as lover of truth and hence enemy of prideful, false knowledge is a threat to such men, and hence they become enemies of philosophy. The fundamental reasons Rousseau bans imitative artists from the city are that they deceive as to truth and that they are, and cause citizens to become prideful, false knowers of themselves as knowers and hence are enemies of the philosopher, the highest expression of the "nature of man." Rousseau bans art for the sake of the truth and the good of its seeker, the philosopher.

Rousseau now turns to the poets and Homer, their "leader." Poets are even more "dangerous enemies" (I:10, 1). The poet, like the painter, is a knower of something. As the painter knows how to paint, so the poet knows how to imitate by means of speech. But a poem, like a painting, is of something. Whereas the object of a painting is the fixed visible, the object of the poet is acting man. The poet presents by means of speech the actions, speeches, and passions of man and gods (I:10, 28, 30). As such, the poet is thought of and must be presumed to be a knower of that which he imitates. And since others come to imitate either, for instance, Homer as poet or the deeds, passions, and speeches, or his heroes as the right way of life, the poet must also be judged as teacher. According to Rousseau, the poet must be judged as knower and teacher as well as imitator (I:10–12, 18, 28, 30).

According to Rousseau, if one knew the right way of life, one would live it, not merely speak of it. One can, therefore, discover what another thinks is the right way of life at least as much from his deeds as from his speeches. One tells

what one knows and teaches others as much by “example” as by “speech.” In addition, if the right way of life is knowable and known, Rousseau insists that the knower could give an “account” by reasoned speech of that way of life, could defend it as the true way. Such a one must present a vision of a world in which man could be known and know the true way and defend by reason in speech one’s knowledge. One shows that one knows and teaches others by reasoned “speech” as well as by “example” (I:10, 11, 12, 30).

On the basis of the premise that there is one single or “unique” idea or “model” of man, Rousseau indicates that whatever the right way of life is, it must be unified, noncontradictory, single, or one (compare I:13, 12, 2–4, 5, 14). One who possessed such a truth could therefore live and teach, “at the same time,” a single way (I:12). The true knower and teacher of man could, so to speak, do what he says and say what he does, give an “account” of himself by reasoned speech (I:13, 12).

The poet, according to Rousseau, fails these tests. The poet does not do any of the deeds of which he speaks. How could he then either know them or think of them as the right way? The poet is a speechmaker not a deed-doer. Yet he praises in his speech deed-doing and the priority of deed-doing to speechmaking. The poet does not live the way of life he praises as right. His deed, speechmaking, supposes and teaches that speechmaking, not deed-doing, is the right way of life. The poet is in contradiction and presents a contradictory lesson to others. He teaches others, in speech, that deed-doing is the right way. He teaches others, by being a poet, not a deed-doer, that making poetry is the right way of life (I:11, 12). Neither does the poet give an “account” by reasoned speech of his knowledge of that of which he speaks. Such an “account” would include a presentation of the kind of world in which man is knowable, a world in which there is an idea or nature of man which he knows and can defend by reasoned speech. Otherwise, the audience must merely trust Homer’s account of man and of the source of his knowledge of man. The poet, according to Rousseau’s dual criteria, does not show himself to be either a knower or the proper teacher of man (I:11, 12, 30).

Rousseau proceeds, on the basis of the same criteria as applied to Homer, to examine the credentials of some founders to qualify as knowers and teachers of man. Some founders do better than the poets in that they at least attempt to defend in speech the truth of the way of life that they propose, by founding, for others. But these founders are also found defective. They, like the poets, act differently, or on different principles, than the way of life they make by founding, and defend in speech, for others. They do not do that which they make and teach for others. They defend what they make, not what they do. By “example” they teach founding as right. In “speech” they defend the way of life they found for others as right (I:11, 12).

The poets and the founders founder on the same point. They each teach contradictory ways of life. Not only does the poet teach both poetry-making

and deed-doing as right but also, if all tend to follow the model of deed-doing, there would be no poets to record for posterity great deeds, one of the reasons for doing great deeds; and if all tend to become poets, there would be no great deeds to depict in poetry (I:11, 12, 30). Founders not only teach both founding and the way of life they found as right, but also, if founders only founded other founders, there could be no successful founding and a successful founding intends to preclude future foundings. Since, by definition, the right way must both be and teach one way, such poets and founders must not be either knowers or the proper teachers of man (I:12).

Some founders and philosophers have managed to render themselves more of a one by making their way of life an example of that which they defend in speech (I:12). Yet, they are also found defective by Rousseau. On the one hand, they defend in speech certain deeds as known as the right way. On the other hand, they do the deeds they claim are the right way. When doing the deeds, they are not defending them in speech. And when defending the deeds in speech, they are not doing the deeds. According to Rousseau, to be a one, that which the nature or the idea of man requires, the "example" and the "account" must be able to occur "at the same time" (I:2).

Rousseau's criteria, that if man is to be known there must be a single model, idea or nature, of man and hence one right way of life that is unified and that the *one* right way must include *both* an "example" and an "account" of the knowability of the way, precludes any way of action from qualifying as the right way (I:12).

The speechmaker, perhaps, can meet Rousseau's criteria in the following way. The one who in speech praises speechmaking as the right way would seem to be a one. The way, the "example," would be speechmaking, from which one could conclude, by Rousseau's first standard, that the one thinks that speechmaking is the right way. And the content of the speechmaker's "speech" is that speechmaking is the right way. Such a one could, so to speak, say at one and the same time that he does what he says and says what he does and is, therefore, one in deed and speech. But praise of speechmaking is not reasoned speech, an "account" in speech of the knowability of speechmaking as the right way. And if one could present as knowable speechmaking as right, it could be claimed that one is teaching that knowing, not speechmaking, is the right way.

The way to meet Rousseau's criteria, the way to be one but include both an "account" as well as an "example," is to subsume the "way" to the "account" in the following way. A knowledge-seeker whose reasoned speech proved that he did not know but presented a world in which such knowledge is not impossible would be more of a one than the others. For such a one, the "way" would indicate what he supposes as true right, seeking knowledge, and the "account" would include the demonstration of the truth of his "way." The "account" of the truth of his "way," proof that he does not know and hence must seek, would be his "way." Rousseau points to the philosophic way of life as the most

one, the least contradictory, and as the right way of life, as the way which most exhibits itself as a one in imitation of the single idea or nature of man. Rousseau points to the philosopher, not the poet or founder, as the proper knower and teacher of man (I:12, 18).

But the philosopher is more of a threat to the poet than to the painter. The philosopher's claim and his arguments undermine the dignity of both the Homeric and the heroic way of life. Knowing or knowledge-seeking, not imitating or speaking or doing deeds, is the highest way of life. From the perspective of philosophy, the poet cannot justify his way of life and the human "action" he depicts. In fact, all human action is a defective imitation of the true idea or "nature" of man. As the status of the painter and his knowledge rests upon the status of the visible world, so the status of the poet and the hero rests upon the status of human "action" altogether. But philosophizing, not human "action," is the highest way of life. Thinking and speaking in pursuit of truth, not deed-doing or speaking about either deeds or speech, is the right way of life. The philosopher as threat to the poet requires that the poet take the philosopher as the enemy and become antiphilosophic. Therefore, Rousseau, as philosopher-founder, bans the poets and hence their heroes of action from his city since they, along with the painters, are threatened by and therefore constitute a threat to philosophy.

By the conclusion of his ban on the painters, poets, and founders, Rousseau's founding is, to say the least, odd. It is a negative founding, a founding by exclusion. Unless it is to remain a city consisting wholly of a philosopher or a few philosophers, it must consist of Rousseau, the philosopher-founder, and nonphilosophic citizens, as well as a philosopher, or a few philosophers. There are no painters or poets or other founders or heroes of action for nonphilosophic citizens to imitate or by which they can be formed. The questions therefore raised by the conclusion of this section are: What is the way of life for nonphilosophic citizens, and What is the standard for human-making? The latter question is addressed by Rousseau in the second section of "Imitation" and the former in its third, concluding section (I:15–18, 19–31).

V. THE STANDARD FOR IMITATION

The next, central, section of "Imitation" begins with its central paragraph, includes its most fundamental teaching, and is a new beginning which responds to one of the questions raised by the conclusion of the preceding section, namely, What is the standard of human-making (I:15, 15–18)?

The general theme of this section is the "true intelligence" of a "thing" (I:15). Rousseau specifies, and in so doing translates the meaning of, this general theme into the particular subject of the purpose or standard of human-making. To address the general theme, Rousseau returns to his original tripar-

tite model but re-presents it in a considerably modified form. According to Rousseau's original model, the standard for a thing or artifact is its "idea" or definition. The definition constitutes the "true intelligence" of a "thing" or artifact (I:2, 4–5). Further, according to the original model, the maker is said to "know" but not to be the ultimate locus or "source" of the intelligible, the criterion of making (I:2–4). However, in Rousseau's new image, the "model" or "form" is now said to be constituted as useful to the purpose of its source, which purpose—not the idea—is now claimed to be the "true intelligence" of a "thing" (I:15). And this purpose or "true intelligence" of a thing or artifact, as opposed to its idea or definition, is now claimed by Rousseau not even to be "known . . . by their authors," by the "one who has made it," by the knower of the idea and maker of the thing (I:14, 15, 13, 16).

Moreover, Rousseau now distinguishes between the "idea" of a thing and its purpose, associates purpose with the "true intelligence" of a thing and its idea, and claims that the maker of the thing knows its idea but not its purpose, whereas the "source" of the idea constitutes the idea and hence its thing as useful to the purpose of the source which is known only by the source (I:14, 15–16). Comparison of the new with the original model raises the following questions: Who or what is the "source" and What is the purpose of making?

According to the original model, God or nature is the "source" of the ideas, and they are not presented as serving a purpose beyond themselves, except as the intelligible ground of the visible world (I:2, 4–5). In this new beginning, however, Rousseau replaces nature or God with a human being, a user with a purpose, as the "source" of the ideas for manmade inanimate artifacts, at least initially (I:4, 15). For instance, the user of a horse, Hector, is said to best "know" the proper "form" or "model" of the various paraphernalia for his horse. That knowledge is derived from his knowledge of the purpose for which he uses the horse. Use is derived from purpose, and the idea is determined by use. The horseman then instructs the craftsman of the "form," who then makes the paraphernalia in imitation of the "form," and the artifact is the object of imitative artists, like painters (I:15). The craftsman knows the "form" or definition but not its ultimate purpose. The user "determines" the "form," idea, or "model," from its "use" to his purpose (I:15–16).

The import of this new model seems innocuous, since Rousseau introduces it by means of restricting its application to inanimate manmade artifacts. This initial impression is quietly but quickly dispelled by Rousseau however, as he fills in the model with some detail. He expands the user to the universal user and similarly the objects or beings that properly come under the purview of the user. Rousseau proceeds to include in the new model all that exists on the second rung of his original model, that is, all that is "imitatable in nature," all that "nature produces . . . which can be made visible," all the "sensible productions of nature" as well as the works of artists (I:15, 3, 6). The model applies to every "possible instrument" (I:15). In the original model, natural things were

said to be constituted by nature or God in accordance with their own standard, idea, or definition, not by their use for human purpose. In the new model, all things can and should be fashioned in accordance with a form determined by man for human purpose. The purpose of a tree, for example, is more to become a house than to exhibit its treeness, its form or shape as informed by its natural or God-given definition or idea.

Rousseau next adds “animal(s)” in particular and even “action” in general to the list of that to which his new model applies (I:16). Whereas in the original model a horse must be thought of as naturally tending towards its own idea or definition, in Rousseau’s new model the proper horse is one shaped or formed in accordance with the given purpose of a given human user of horses. The same is true of “action” in general. Even the “goodness” or “beauty” of an “action” is determined by the “use” that “one draws out of it” (I:16). Since the new model, like the old, applies to all “action” and to all imitables, one is forced to wonder if the new model, like the old, also applies to imitable human action. Thus far, Rousseau does not exclude this possibility which, barring its exclusion, would have to be included by necessary implication.

That which cannot be excluded by necessary implication is, without fanfare, expressly included in his new model in the following way. He includes the product of the “poet” and “beautiful” human action, such as the “valor” of an Achilles, which is the object of imitation by the poet, as both within the purview of his new model existing, respectively, on the third and second rungs (I:16, 17). Rousseau extends the “beauty” of “action” to include “beautiful” human action, and he includes among the third-rung imitators not only “painters” but also “poets,” those who have human action as their specific object (I:16, 17, 10, 28, 30). Since Rousseau insists that beautiful action is determined by the useful, and that beautiful human action is included in the category of beautiful action, it must be concluded that beautiful human action is determined by human use (I:16–17). And since he places beautiful human action on the second rung, it is presented as that which is imitated by the poet on the third rung, the questions remain: Who, once the model is extended beyond the artifacts of horses, is the proper human user; What is his purpose; What is beautiful human action; and How does it serve his purpose?

Rousseau answers the first two questions by identifying the proper “source,” the one whom he has replace Hector, who, in turn, replaces nature or God (I:4, 15). Rousseau boldly claims that it is the philosopher who is the proper human user. The “philosopher is the architect who raises the plan” in the new, corrected, tripartite model (I:18). God is replaced by Hector, who is replaced by the philosopher as the proper human user (I:4, 15, 18). In Rousseau’s new image, it is the philosopher who should “determine” the “form” or “model” of man or human action on the basis of the standard of its use for his purpose. His purpose is said to be to search for truth by means of reason (I:18).⁶ The proper definition of man must be the one which renders human action useful to the

philosophic project. The philosopher, as human user, raises a “plan” to be embodied by a founder, a human maker, whose product is the subject of the human imitators.

It must not be forgotten that in “Imitation” it is Rousseau himself as philosopher-founder who is raising a “plan,” a city “useful” to the “nature of man,” a city “useful” to philosophy (I:1, 15, 18). It is Rousseau himself, in the guise of a philosopher-founder, who presents the corrected tripartite model in which the philosopher replaces God and which teaches that a philosopher should, by presenting a “model” of beautiful human action to a founder, make or establish a city useful to the philosophic quest. It is therefore no accident that the next, concluding, section of “Imitation” is a presentation by Rousseau of proper human practice or “action,” the proper way of life for nonphilosophers in his city (I:19–31, 21).

VI. THE THREAT OF IMITATION TO POLITICAL VIRTUE

Rousseau's conclusion to “Imitation” constitutes a kind of second new beginning (I:19–31). After denigrating human action in favor of philosophy, Rousseau now proceeds to rehabilitate a certain kind of human action (I:21, 30). After insisting that the proper employment of human reason is its theoretic-philosophic search for truth, he now redirects reason to proper practice (I:22–27). Human reason is now presented as instrumental to proper human action. It dictates “virtuous” action which is defined as “moderation” which, in turn, is presented as a condition of possibility for human freedom or “liberty” (I:22–24, 26, 28). Rousseau attacks the poets again but now on the basis of the more familiar reasons which he employed in his *First Discourse* and his *Letter to D'Alembert*. Poets undermine virtue or moderation and hence liberty and thereby contribute to tyranny (I:26–31). And ultimately, as will be shown, liberty is defended as good, since it protects against tyranny, that which the poets, perhaps unknowingly, encourage, and that which is the true enemy of philosophy.

More specifically, Rousseau presents his citizen as possessing a “soul” which consists of “parts” or “faculties” or “powers” (I:19, 20n., 21, 24, 27, 28, 30, 31; 19, 24, 25; 20, 20n.; 21). The dimensions of the soul can and ought to exist in an “order” or hierarchy. The consequence of a properly ordered soul is a “harmony” or “accord” of the soul. This harmonious soul state should constitute the identity of the citizen. It renders the citizen one or “always similar to himself.” This soul state is a condition of virtue or strength of soul which, in turn, allows the citizen to be the “master” of himself and therefore to be as free from chance or the vicissitudes of the passions and of practical life in general as is possible (I:27, 28; 21, 30, 25, 26, 28, 29; 28, 25, 26). A proper political order, a “republic,” should have laws which encourage by education, habitua-

tion, and force the proper soul state of citizens, the condition of possibility of their “liberty” (I:26, 27, 30, 31; 31).

In particular, the soul consists of reason and the passions. Reason can grasp a truth about practical life, namely, that it is subject to chance or irrationality or incommensurability. Good and bad men suffer similar misfortunes. The just suffer. The consequences for oneself and others of one’s character and actions are not simply predictable. Specifically, virtuous action does not necessarily lead to practical happiness. Even present misfortune may be a condition of possibility for future good fortune and vice versa. One cannot therefore even say for sure what is good or ill fortune (I:27–28).

Reason’s proper response to this human condition is to teach the proper stance towards the passions, that which move and react to practical life: pleasures, hopes, and fears. One should bear necessary evils without complaint while prudently attempting to remove changeable evils without undue hope of success. One should attempt to maintain present good fortune without undue self-satisfaction or the presumption that it will continue, even given proper efforts. Moreover, reason teaches “virtue,” which is moderation in all things. This moderation distances one from passionate responses to one’s practical fate and as a consequence dilutes the strength with which one feels and is moved by such passions. As a further consequence of moderation, man becomes free, which is to say, no longer simply the “plaything of events” beyond man’s control (I:22, 23, 26).

This hierarchy of the parts of the soul produces a harmony of the soul. Such a citizen is not simply under the sway of diverse, contradictory, passions. The passions of such a citizen are not in contradiction with the teachings of his reason. The passions themselves even come to tend to react habitually in accordance with the proper reaction as dictated by the teachings of reason.

Virtue or moderation, the effect of the harmony produced by the hierarchy of the parts of the soul, gradually comes to constitute the unchanging ground for the citizen’s own sense of identity. Such a citizen is “always similar to himself” in that he is habitually “firm” or “strong” in “resisting” the indulgence of extreme, unpredictable, fluctuating passions or actions (I:25, 28, 29, 26). This practical oneness of the citizen is a kind of imitation of the philosopher in his imitation of the single idea or nature of man.

Moreover, the key point is that Rousseau teaches the citizen to transfer, in large measure, his sense of pride or dignity away from prideful knowledge and an assessment of his practical condition, including the consequences of his actions and the state of his passions, which are subject to chance and to others, and to link that dignity to the condition of his soul, which is more subject to his own rule and which is therefore that for which he can take responsibility and thus proper pride (I:28, 31).

Such self-rule or self-“mastery” constitutes human “liberty” in that it frees

one, in so far as possible, from the vicissitudes of practical life. Such a one is no longer so subject to or at least affected by the whims of others or chance. Such a one is no longer merely the “plaything of events” or of the “blind inclinations of the heart” (I:26). The true citizen, the ruler of self or self-ruler is, as such, inclined neither to rule others nor to be ruled by others, especially a tyrannical other.

Rousseau blames and bans the poets, especially the tragic poets, for “revers[ing]” the proper order of the soul, for disrupting the proper hierarchy and harmony of the soul (I:21). The subject matter of the poets is human action and its attending passions. They present man as a particular, as an individual, concerned above all else with his own individual practical fate. Especially, they focus on the heroic individual, the noble deed-doer, and the consequences of his action on himself and others. They share reason’s insight into the irrationality of practical life. They depict the downfall of the hero and typically attribute the cause to the unpredictable intervention of chance, or the like. They depict in a public and powerful way for all to see the all-too-human tendency to respond to such a fate with extreme passions, fear or hope. Instead of teaching moderation, they amplify and nourish, elevate and glorify, these passions as the only reasonable response to the irrationality of the human condition. They encourage their audience to become more attuned to their own actual or potential practical misfortune. If such a fate could happen to a hero, what is to happen to others? They come to imitate, act and react, after the manner of the poet’s hero. Passionate dissatisfaction comes to inform reason rather than reason forming the passions.

The viewers of tragedy tend to respond, following the lead of the hero, in one of two equally extreme ways. Some react to the excess terror, caused by the vision of a world in which chance or others can unpredictably intervene, with the fanatical desire to master all, including other humans. They attempt to control all in order to insure the predictable satisfaction of their passions. They attempt to render the whole commensurate with their individual will or desire. Others come to capitulate to fate and retreat from action to the passive indulgence of fleeting, fluctuating, passion. If one’s practical fate is out of one’s control, the proper response is to go with the flow. The latter make no attempt to rectify or improve changeable conditions; the former attempt to overcome fate and render all subject to will. Tyranny or slavery come to appear as rational responses to reason’s insight into the irrationality of the practical human condition, at least under the tutelage of the tragic poet.

If some respond tyrannically and others slavishly to the tragic vision, then the practical consequence is tyranny. Rousseau is of the opinion that tragic poetry is a preparation for political tyranny.⁷ Rousseau’s philosophic presentation of the tragic possibility encourages all to virtue, to the rule of one’s own soul, and hence to freedom. Poetic tragedy leads to tyranny, philosophized

tragedy to freedom. The philosophic founder bans tragic poetry as conducive to tyranny and presents in its place a philosophic poetry conducive to “liberty” (I:21, 26–31).

VII. POLITICAL VIRTUE AND PHILOSOPHY

Rousseau, as philosopher-founder, concludes “Imitation” with a “soul” teaching oriented to proper practice or action. The proper “soul” state leads to virtue or moderation which results in freedom and protects against tyranny. Tragic poetry is banned because it corrupts the proper “soul” state and leads to tyranny. But it was also Rousseau, as philosopher-founder, who taught in the immediately preceding section that a philosopher-founder should present a “plan,” a model of “goodness” or “beauty,” of “beautiful” practice or “action” derived from the criterion of its usefulness to philosophy. If Rousseau’s teachings in “Imitation” are consistent, the following conclusion must emerge. Rousseau encourages virtue as instrumental to liberty and philosophy and bans tragic poetry as harmful to philosophy, since it is instrumental to tyranny, the enemy of philosophy. As if to alert the reader to the teaching of the preceding section, to compare it to his concluding teaching, and to consider their consistency and its meaning, Rousseau concludes “Imitation” with a portrait of virtue that cannot but remind one of the teaching of the preceding section. He does so in the following way. For the first time since the teaching of the preceding section, Rousseau raises again the theme of the “good and the beautiful.” For the first and only time in his treatment of virtue in the concluding section, he teaches that it is the virtuous “actions of men” that constitute the “good and the beautiful.” “Virtuous” actions are the “beauties” that result from a proper “soul” state (I:30).

The conclusion is clear and raises our concluding question. Citizen virtue as presented in the third section of “Imitation” must, according to the teaching in its second section, be conducive to philosophy. Even if citizen virtue is a good in itself, as required for liberty, it is also instrumental to philosophy. Although virtue is conducive to philosophy as a protection against tyranny, it could also be plausibly claimed that virtue is antiphilosophic and that nontyranny can be secured by other means than virtue, means even more compatible with philosophy. Therefore, the question is, How is the practical virtue of nonphilosophers conducive to philosophy? Rousseau places his answer in his teaching in section I when compared with his teaching in section III. In the latter, Rousseau orients pride or dignity to virtue or liberty and disjoins it from knowledge or the form of general enlightenment caused by the imitative arts and criticized as harmful to philosophy in section I. Primarily for the sake of philosophy, Rousseau enlightens nonphilosophers to unenlightened virtue. Unenlightened virtue, not

seeing itself in need of knowledge or as in prideful competition with philosophy on the plane of knowledge, is less threatened by philosophy (especially by the philosopher who is convinced by Rousseau's teaching that virtue is instrumental to philosophy), and therefore unenlightened virtue is less the enemy of philosophy. Just as Rousseau's contemporary, Lessing, argued for the importance of a "curtain" between unenlightened religious orthodoxy and philosophy for the sake of the health of philosophy, so Rousseau, for the same reason, took pains to attempt to overcome enlightenment and establish virtue in its place. In each case, the hope was that the possibility would emerge that "behind" that curtain "each" could more freely go its "own way" without "disturbing the other."⁸ Virtue protects against enlightenment as well as tyranny, the two converging enemies, in Rousseau's era, of philosophy.

NOTES

1. See "De L'Imitative Théâtrale," *Oeuvres De J.J. Rousseau*. Nouvelle Edition, Tome Dixieme (A Paris, Chez le Joux et Tenre, Libraires, Rue Pierre-Sarrazin, N8. 1819; de L'Imprimerie De Crapelet), pp. 224–25. Hereafter, this piece is cited as "Imitation" in the text and (I:paragraph number) in the citations and the notes. To my knowledge, it has only been translated once. That translation can be found in *The Miscellaneous Works of Mr. J.J. Rousseau* (London: Printed for T. Becket and P.A. De Honst in the Strand, 1767), vol. 2 of 5 volumes, pp. 264–91. It has been reprinted once by Burt Franklin Reprints in 1973. The translation is very loose and unreliable. The translations in this essay are my own. "Imitation" is merely mentioned once by Allan Bloom in his Introduction to his translation of the "Letter to D'Alembert on Theater" in his *Politics and the Arts* (Ithaca; N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1960). It is also briefly quoted three times on two general introductory pages by Christopher Kelly in his article "To Persuade Without Convincing: The Language of Rousseau's Legislator," *American Journal of Political Science* 31, no. 2 (May 1987), 323–24. I know of no substantial references to the piece since its appearance. See Roger Masters, *Philosophy of Rousseau* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp. x–xi. It is to be included in a future volume of *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, edited by Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly; translated by Judith R. Bush, Christopher Kelly, and Roger D. Masters (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England).

2. Rousseau's praise of philosophy, as opposed to modern science as enlightenment, is not found only in "Imitation." It is spread unsystematically throughout his works, as are the links between nature, inequality, and philosophic reason. Many of the relevant passages are noted by Strauss followed by Masters (see Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, pp. 258–62, 290–93; Leo Strauss, "On the Intention of Rousseau," *Social Research* 14 [December 1947], pp. 455–87, 464, 464 n.35, 467, 468, 476–77, 477 n.58, 482, 487; Masters [1968], pp. 33, 36, 62, 62 n.29, 75–76, 90, 96, 104, 153, 181–82, 241 n.32, 226, 228, 229, 231, 233, 241 n.117, 254). Both authors leave this reader unclear. Strauss does not address the issue of how Rousseau could link philosophy to natural inequality, given that reason is presented by Rousseau as unnatural, as a product of an accidental, arbitrary, history. Masters adapts the idea of "natural potential" to explain how the philosophic capacity could be an unoriginal inequality and yet still be natural, as Rousseau claims (1968, pp. 153, 181–82, 296, 433). But he does not explain either on what grounds Rousseau can also claim that reason is unnatural or how a natural potential developed over history is compatible with the idea of accidental, arbitrary, history. Strauss also claims that Rousseau both did and did not teach the priority of philosophy to reverie. Rousseau did not attempt "to restore" and did attempt "to preserve" the "classical idea of philosophy" (1974, pp. 211; 1947, p. 487). Further, he

claims that Rousseau did identify “the philosopher” as his “contemplete solitaire” and did not “understand philosophy or the culmination of philosophy” to be “solitary contemplation,” from which the former is “altogether different” (1947, pp. 467; 1974, pp. 291–92). He does not claim that his ambivalence reflects Rousseau’s own ambivalence. Masters also appears to contradict himself and present Rousseau as contradictory without claiming as much. He claims that “philosophy” or “thought” is both “subordinate” to and either the same as “or” coequal with the soul’s experience of its own present existence (1968, pp. 62, 62 n.29, 90, 96, 414). He also claims that “philosophy” or “thought” is ultimately both instrumental or “useful” to practice and is an “end in itself” (1968, pp. 214, 214 n.32, 226, 228, 229, 231, 233, 241, 241 n. 117, 254, 368, 409, 413–15). He does merely assert without evidence that the philosophic “quest” is “only ‘naturally good’ because it is . . . isolated, self-sufficient . . . independent” (1976, pp. 413–14). Neither Strauss nor Masters employs “Imitation” in his argument. This essay supports one of the strands of their presentations; that philosophy is in accordance with nature and distinguished from and higher than reverie. Perhaps further study of “Imitation,” once it is recognized by the scholarly community, can help clarify or resolve these basic issues in Rousseau scholarship. For a review of the literature on, and my account of, this theme, see “Natural Inequality and Rousseau’s Political Philosophy in his *Discourse on Inequality*,” *Western Political Quarterly* (December 1990), pp. 763–80.

3. One of Rousseau’s sources for his reading of Plato was Marsilo Ficino’s Latin translation. See M.J. Silverthorne, “Rousseau’s Plato,” *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 116 (1973, 235–49), cited by Frank E. Manuel, “A Dream of Eupychia,” *Daedalus*, 107, no. 3 (1978) 1–12, p. 12, n.2. Citations in the text and notes of Plato are from *The Republic of Plato*, translated with notes and an Interpretative Essay by Allan Bloom, (New York: Basic Books, 1968).

4. See the “Advertisement” to “Imitation” and note that Rousseau begins “Imitation” with “I” and concludes as if he has been addressing “Glaucou,” Socrates’ interlocutor in the *Republic* (I:1, 30). Whereas in “Imitation” Rousseau calls Homer the “master” of the poets who imitate him, Rousseau himself imitates Plato or his Socrates, and in the *Second Discourse* he claims to be merely “repeating the lessons of” his “masters,” including Plato (I:1, 10; *First and Second Discourses*, translated by Roger D. and Judith R. Masters [New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1978], p. 103). “Rousseau” does include, in his *Rousseau, Judge of Jean Jacques*, “On Theatrical Imitation” as among the “Estimable Writings” of “Jean Jacques” (*The Collected Writings of Rousseau* [1990], vol. 1, p. 101). Yet the fact remains that he cast the work itself in the form of a mere imitation. It is incumbent upon the reader to show, on the basis of evidence derived from the piece itself, in relation to its original model, that it is as a whole a presentation of Rousseau’s own teaching. Compare Rousseau’s own account and assessment of Montesquieu’s failed attempt to conceal his work, the “Temple of Gnide” in 1725, by presenting it as a mere translation of the “Greek Manuscript” and by his claim concerning the discovery of the work, with Rousseau’s own dramatic approach in his “Advertisement” to and the beginning of “On Theatrical Imitation.” See Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, edited by Charles Butterworth (New York: Harper, 1979), pp. 49–51.

5. See, for instance, I:7, 8, 17, 18, much of which is not to be found in Plato’s text. Since the main purposes of this essay are to establish the authority of “Imitation” as Rousseau’s own teaching and to give an account of the major dimensions of that work, no attempt is or need be made here to identify all of the other differences between Rousseau’s and Plato’s texts and give an account of them. That project constitutes another work, soon to be completed by me, which depends upon the present work. One cannot even begin to account for the difference until one has first fully grasped Rousseau’s teaching on its own terms. It is sufficient for the present purpose to compare the texts only to the extent necessary to demonstrate the mere fact, not its substantive bearing, that Rousseau engaged in “corrective” imitation in order to demonstrate that “Imitation” itself is, as a whole, Rousseau’s own teaching.

6. Just as there is no single Platonic dialogue entitled or devoted to philosophy or “The Philosopher,” so Rousseau does not in any one place systematically address the questions of the theoretical conditions of possibility of philosophy or whether philosophy can be a rational choice, etc.

7. That Rousseau is of the opinion that tragic poetry prepares for political tyranny by means of the corruption of the proper order of the soul is also clear from his persistent presentation of the

parts of the city and their relation as analagous to the parts of the soul and their relation (compare I:27, 30, 31).

8. See Ernest L. Fortin, "Rational Theologians and Irrational Philosophers," *Interpretation*, 12 (1984) 353–54, for the quotation from Lessing. For a review of the literature on and my account of the major dimensions of Rousseau's political teachings, see "Rousseau's Liberalism," *History of Political Thought* 11, no. 3 (Autumn, 1990).