

# Interpretation

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# Interpretation

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# Rousseau Under Surveillance: Thoughts on a New Edition and Translation of *Rousseau, Judge of Jean-Jacques: Dialogues*

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Remember that piercing eyes are incessantly watching you. (Rousseau, *Dialogues*, p. 72)

What does it matter to me if men want to see me other than as I am? Is the essence of my being in their looks? (Rousseau, *Dialogues*, p. 252)

An important new edition and translation of Rousseau's second major autobiography, entitled *Rousseau, Judge of Jean-Jacques: Dialogues*, edited by Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly, and translated by Judith R. Bush, Christopher Kelly, and Roger D. Masters, has recently been published.<sup>1</sup> Long needed, this is the first translation to appear in English; it is a superb translation—accurate, literal, and highly readable. There are three (or perhaps four) complete manuscripts of *Rousseau, Judge of Jean-Jacques: Dialogues* and an additional manuscript of the part called the "First Dialogue." The Bush, Kelly, and Masters translation is based on the text in Volume 1 of the Pléiade *Oeuvres complètes* (1958), the first complete edition to appear in French and now the standard for the original French text.<sup>2</sup> The Pléiade edition relies on the third and latest manuscript, the one given by Rousseau to the Genevan minister Paul Moulou in 1778.

The new Masters and Kelly edition of *Rousseau, Judge of Jean-Jacques: Dialogues* will no doubt serve for a long time as the standard reference available in English. It includes a superior introduction by Kelly and Masters, a chronology of Rousseau's life, excellent notes, and a useful index. The notes are not intended to be as detailed as those found in the critical apparatus of the Pléiade edition, yet they are ample in number, extremely helpful, especially on connections with Rousseau's other writings, and often philosophically suggestive. This authoritative English edition appears as the first of seven volumes, a planned series of translations of the *Collected Writings of Rousseau* that promises to be highly influential.

I would like to thank my students Anne M. Lee and Alexander S. Brough III for helping me to consider the meaning of Rousseau's *Dialogues*. The Providence College Committee to Aid Faculty Research has provided financial assistance.

The *Dialogues* (as the work is usually called) has been undeservedly neglected and widely misunderstood virtually since the Genevan wrote it. As Kelly and Masters point out, “this book has surely been the least read of Rousseau’s important works” (p. xiii). The new accessibility of the *Dialogues* to English-speaking readers should prompt an outpouring of lively commentaries. The *Dialogues* is, after all, a remarkably provocative book, and our age is well situated politically and philosophically to interpret it.

Masters and Kelly’s edition of the *Dialogues* invites us to rethink a number of important aspects of Rousseau’s philosophy, including his complex use of autobiography. In considering the *Dialogues* and Rousseau’s last work, *The Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, the question arises, Why did Rousseau write not one, but three major autobiographies? These three works were composed over a twelve-year period: the *Confessions* was written between 1766 and 1770, the *Dialogues* between 1772 and 1776, and the *Reveries* during the last two years of Rousseau’s life, between 1776 and 1778. The status of these writings as autobiographies is problematic: Each is much more than an autobiography, and each is in some ways deliberately fictive. As Kelly and Masters suggest, the distinction that is often drawn between Rousseau’s autobiographical writings and his obviously theoretical writings is in some ways questionable.<sup>3</sup> Why did Rousseau persist beyond the *Confessions* in his project of creating a self? Are the *Dialogues*, as Michel Foucault claims, “anti-Confessions”? (Foucault is exceptional in that he treats the *Dialogues* as a serious work of philosophy; some thirty years ago he prepared a French edition of the *Dialogues* and wrote a substantial essay on it.)<sup>4</sup> Surely, Rousseau’s three autobiographies are not simply restatements. On the contrary, as I will try to show, there is a transformation in Rousseau’s thought, not only from the *Confessions* to the *Dialogues*, but also from the *Dialogues* to the *Reveries*.

Let me state the central theme of my argument at the outset: In the *Dialogues* Rousseau adopts the extraordinary device of disassociating or dividing himself into several characters or voices in order to resist disempowerment as an object “under surveillance,” and at the same time to teach his readers about such objectification. While wary of an anachronistic interpretation, I will claim throughout this essay that there is an affinity between Rousseau’s *Dialogues* and some aspects of the late writings of Foucault.<sup>5</sup> My thoughts on a possible connection or resemblance between some of the ideas of Rousseau and Foucault are not final conclusions, but offered instead as a set of questions for future readers of the *Dialogues*. The *Dialogues* can be usefully read, first of all, as a grand refusal to comply with what Foucault later names disciplinary power. Rousseau reconstitutes his selfhood and presents himself as both subject and object in the *Dialogues* in order to confront and resist being transformed into versions of himself produced by his enemies. Secondly, rather than the useless ravings of a madman—a paranoiac, according to the standard interpretation of the *Dialogues* (see Kelly and Masters, p. xiii), this little-known

book contains some of Rousseau's most valuable teachings for late modernity. In sum, the *Dialogues* focuses on the twin issues of self-explanation and misunderstanding, and on the relationship between the self as subject, the self as object, and the workings of modern technologies of power.

The three major autobiographies of Rousseau form a theoretical triptych, and each part may be understood more clearly if viewed in relation to the whole. Rousseau claims that the *Confessions* is addressed to everyone: he explicitly defines his audience as "the numberless legion of my fellow men."<sup>6</sup> His self-proclaimed method in the *Confessions* is complete openness, total disclosure. He defines and reveals the self through words. This discursive subject established in the *Confessions* is carefully and deliberately presented before the external gaze of the other. The *Confessions* and the *Dialogues* resemble each other in a fundamental way: in each case division is the primary move Rousseau uses in constituting himself. As Huck Gutman explains in an essay on Rousseau's *Confessions*,

The first, and essential, move in the constitution of the self is division. And it is division, above all, that we discover in Rousseau. Division is the primary move in the countless analyses he provides as the explanation of the course of his existence. . . . In dividing himself from the world, he creates a self, he constitutes himself as a subject of knowledge and examination. He will explore, in the *Confessions*, the particular experiences he has had and, out of those experiences, he will trace the development and boundaries of his own, particular, consciousness. The modern secular confessional, as invented by Rousseau, involves not merely the recital of sins but the enumeration of each and every experience that has made one what and who one is.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, division is essential to the project of self-presentation and the goal of transparency of the soul which characterize the *Confessions*.

In the *Dialogues* Rousseau addresses the problem of having his subjective agency—including control over the meaning of his character and his texts—appropriated by his adversaries.<sup>8</sup> This appropriation is set in motion by the circulation of earlier texts and accelerated by his construction and private readings of the *Confessions*. Rousseau gives several readings—at M. du Pezay's, at Dorat's, in front of the Royal Prince of Sweden, and at the Egmonts'. According to Foucault, Rousseau hopes that:

a space will then open for the spoken word, light, faithful, indefinitely transmissible, where belief and truth communicate without obstacle, the space of the immediate voice, probably, where the Savoyard vicar, listening, had in the past placed his profession of faith. (P. vii)

But the readings do not produce the effects that Rousseau wants: his voice falls amid *silence*, and silence then becomes a major theme of the *Dialogues*.

Rousseau writes the *Dialogues* in recognition that the *Confessions* is a failure. A failure in what sense? Kelly and Masters correctly note that because some readers of the *Confessions* misunderstood that work, the *Dialogues* is intended as a training manual for future readers of Rousseau's writings. They comment further that, "By confessing to his readers, Rousseau made them his judges as well as his confessors" (p. xvii). I want to place more emphasis on this point. It is not simply a matter of misunderstanding the *Confessions*. Confession as such has increased Rousseau's vulnerability. Embedded in the *Dialogues*, in inchoate form, is a claim fully articulated two centuries later by Foucault: The confessional mode disempowers the subject and empowers privileged "listeners," who claim to be able to extract the "truth" of confessions through their possession of the keys to interpretation.<sup>9</sup> Rousseau's first autobiography has prompted countless others to produce their own secular confessions; moreover, it has contributed to widespread acceptance of the belief that confession produces "truth." Ironically, since Rousseau's *Confessions* has proved enormously influential and the *Dialogues*—in which Rousseau recognizes how confession effects a loss of power for the one who confesses—has been ignored, the sum effect of these two autobiographies has been to advance modern disciplinary power.

As the discursive self of the spoken *Confessions* threatens Rousseau's philosophical opponents, they produce hostile interpretations of him, and they attempt to silence him. Their efforts are so effective that Rousseau begins work on the *Dialogues* with a very different usage of voice than that of the *Confessions*, a voice now *choked* and locked in "a terrifying and terrible silence" (*Dialogues*, p. 4). The strategic focus of the *Dialogues* is to discredit his enemies' appropriation of his discursive self, while addressing the larger problem of any such appropriation. After this task is accomplished, Rousseau will turn to a different project: Near the end of the "History of the Preceding Writing," which forms a postscript to the *Dialogues*, and throughout *The Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, Rousseau assigns a peaceful meaning to his existence, as he considers the positive side, the privileges, as it were, of his solitary life on the fringes of society (see, e.g., *Dialogues*, p. 253).

In the *Dialogues* Rousseau re-presents himself in multiple forms, including his own versions of his subjectivity and those produced by his enemies. Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his unity is present only in the preliminary section—a commentary on the work as a whole, called "On the Subject and Form of this Writing"—and the concluding materials, not in the dialogues themselves. The most important division in the *Dialogues* is between the two personae named "Rousseau" and "Jean-Jacques." This extraordinary disassociation, conveyed by the splitting of Rousseau's own name, is at the center of the work's structure and narrative.<sup>10</sup> With this move, the *Dialogues'* strangeness, and its uniqueness among Rousseau's writings, is immediately established. The reader is startled and in some cases driven away. Rousseau claims explicitly in the *Dialogues*

that too many readers enjoyed his *Confessions* simply for pleasure. In “On the Subject and Form of this Writing,” Rousseau explains that he deliberately made this second autobiography difficult in order to repel superficial readers who lack “good minds”:

After all, I have said just about everything I had to say. It is drowned in a chaos of disorder and repetitions, but it is there. Good minds will be able to find it. As for those who want only some agreeable rapid reading, who sought and found only that in my *Confessions*, and who cannot tolerate a little fatigue or maintain their attention in the interest of justice and truth, they will do well to spare themselves the boredom of reading this. It is not to them I wished to speak. (*Dialogues*, pp. 6–7)

Thus, in part because he seeks a more thoughtful audience, Rousseau radically changes the style and structure of his writing: He replaces the linear form and chronological ordering of the *Confessions* with the more challenging dialogue form centering on contestation over subjectivity and the objectified self.<sup>11</sup>

“Rousseau” of the *Dialogues* is Rousseau as he would be if he had read but not written his books and had only recently arrived in France. He is a thoughtful and unprejudiced reader, a foreigner who is unfamiliar with Rousseau’s reputation and who has read all of Rousseau’s writings several times. This “Rousseau”-as-reader avers that he has benefitted from the reading: “the total effect on my soul has always been to make me more humane, more just, better than I was before. I have never turned to these books without profit for virtue” (p. 29). “Jean-Jacques,” on the other hand, is defined as the Author of Rousseau’s writings. “Jean-Jacques”-as-Author has no direct voice; he is absent from the discussion and made an *object* in the *Dialogues*. In “On the Subject and Form of this Writing,” Rousseau remarks, “I refer to myself as a third party, using my Christian name to which the public chose to reduce me” (p. 5). This “Jean-Jacques”-as-Author is further split between the “Author of the crimes” and “the Author of the books.” Finally, there is an important character named simply the “Frenchman,” a man who knows Rousseau’s monstrous public reputation, and who, as a result, has never read Rousseau’s writings.

The two interlocutors, the rather philosophic “Rousseau”-as-reader and the “Frenchman,” who is at first completely dependent on public opinion, engage in a series of three dialogues about the Author, the Author’s writings, and the readers of those writings. The first dialogue states the questions to be addressed; the second investigates the character of the Author; and the third dialogue concerns the contents of the writings and correct ways to read them. “Rousseau” and the “Frenchman” attempt to resolve the enormous discrepancy between the low public reputation of the Author and the favorable character of the Author which “Rousseau” claims is implied by the *Emile* and *Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse*. The charges circulating in public opinion are articulated one by one: Is this Author a plagiarizer? hypocritical? duplicitous? evil? an enemy

of the human race? dissolute? vile? decadent? debauched? depraved? rotted with syphilis?<sup>12</sup>

As “Rousseau” and the “Frenchman” consider the relationship between the Author’s reputation, his character, the conspiracy against him, and the substance of his writings, they attempt to judge “Jean-Jacques.” As Foucault notes, “the *Dialogues* are aimed at finding the author of books and consequently destroying the author of numerous crimes” (“Introduction,” p. xiii). At the end of the first dialogue, the interlocutors resolve that “Rousseau” will visit “Jean-Jacques,” and the “Frenchman” will read “Jean-Jacques”’s writings. The character “Rousseau”’s ignorance of the Author’s reputation is a necessary condition of his understanding of the texts. For the majority of readers, including the “Frenchman,” hostile views of the Author need to be corrected before the meaning of the texts can be understood. “Rousseau” counsels the “Frenchman” and, in effect, the reader of the *Dialogues*: “Don’t even think of the Author as you read, and without any bias either in favor or against, let your soul experience the impressions it will receive” (p. 31). Thus, the “Frenchman” and the reader of the *Dialogues* are to be transformed into *reliable* readers.<sup>13</sup>

How is their interpretation to be grounded? Ultimately, not by reference to the Author’s personality, but by the texts themselves. The *Dialogues*, in making problematic the relationship between text and author, speaks to the recent theoretical phenomenon known as “the death of the author.” Foucault in his essay “What Is an Author?” (1969) has asked, “What difference does it make who is speaking?”<sup>14</sup> Critics like Foucault, Roland Barthes, and Jacques Derrida have challenged textual interpretations which understand the individualized author as a creator whose subjectivity offers a set of principles for discovering the underlying unity of a great text.<sup>15</sup> Foucault suggests that the authorial presence—the particular individuality of the writing subject—will disappear in the late modern period; in other words, the writing subject’s individual characteristics will be effaced by what she or he writes. On the other hand, the extraordinary biographical context supplied by Rousseau’s *Confessions* (and the *Dialogues*, too, especially to the extent that it has been read as evidence of the Author’s mental illness) has encouraged valorization of the individualized author as “the meaning of text, a personal autobiographical personage who has a “true self” that can be embodied relatively transparently in language” (Walker, p. 562). Moreover, once Rousseau’s writings were adopted as part of the canon he became a privileged writer guaranteed “authorship.” The roots of the problem of “authenticity,” our culture’s favored term for what it presumes to be a desirable match between the Author’s character—construed recently to include gender, race, ethnicity, and class—and the substance of his or her writings, may be traced back to Rousseau. What is typically forgotten in the modern valorization of authenticity is the way in which Rousseau understands his “true” self to be a discursive self. Indeed, his suggestions about the problems of interpretation and reputation bear some kinship to what Foucault calls “the author

function.” Foucault states that the author’s name is a particular type of proper name with “a paradoxical singularity”:

the author’s name serves to characterize a certain mode of being of discourse. . . . The author’s name manifests the appearance of a certain discursive set and indicates the status of this discourse within a society and a culture. . . . The author function is therefore characteristic of the mode of existence, circulation, and functioning of certain discourses within a society. (“What Is an Author,” pp. 106–7)

Foucault wants to draw attention to “the modes of circulation, valorization, attribution, and appropriation of discourses,” that is, to the reception of texts based on the modes of distribution established by power relations (“What Is an Author, p. 117, and Walker, p. 552). Rousseau’s concern about the reception of his own texts leads him to call attention to these same themes. In the *Dialogues* he focuses on personality because it has become an extraordinary obstacle to communication; the effacement of the Author’s character would be welcome, but it is not to be expected or relied on in the foreseeable future. The “Frenchman” can be open to the meaning of the writings only after the question of the character of the Author has been resolved in the second dialogue.

Rousseau demonstrates the dangers of objectification by others as he considers how he has been placed under *surveillance*. The “Frenchman” explains to “Rousseau” how surveillance is instituted and judgment is withheld as the public deals with “Jean-Jacques”:

I see that the basis of the system they follow with regard to him is the duty they assumed to unmask him thoroughly, to make him well known to all and yet never make any explanation to him, to deprive him of any knowledge of his accusers, and of any clear enlightenment about the things of which he is accused. This double necessity is based on the nature of the crimes, whose public declaration would be too scandalous, and which does not allow that he be convicted without being punished. . . . All that can therefore be done for public safety is first to keep him under such good surveillance that he can undertake nothing without their knowing it, that he carry out nothing of importance unless they wish it, and for the rest to alert everyone to the danger of listening to and frequenting such a scoundrel. (P. 50)

Rousseau uses the term ‘surveillance’ several times in the *Dialogues*. He argues that surveillance *maintains prejudice* because “one sees what one believes and not what one sees. . . . One strives to find hateful what one hates, and if it is true that the biased man sees what he believes, it is even more true that the passionate man sees what he desires” (p. 64). The gaze of the surveillant is never impartial or disinterested. Moreover, this partiality of the surveillant extends more or less to the reader.

Rousseau’s analysis of surveillance is charged with an incipient notion of “panoptic power.”<sup>16</sup> Rousseau becomes paradigmatic of the prisoner in the Pan-

opticon, when, according to his own account, his surveillance becomes “constant, unending, and total,” and the new power over him is “continuous, disciplinary, and anonymous” (Dreyfus and Rabinow, p. 189). The “Frenchman” reports on how Rousseau is under surveillance in Paris,

I don't need to tell you that all his letters are opened. . . . No one approaches him who has not already learned his lesson about what he must say and the tone he must use in talking to him. A record is kept of all those who ask to see him. . . . If he enters a public place, he is viewed and treated like someone with the plague: everyone surrounds him and stares, but keeping a distance and not talking to him. . . . In the public garden, great care is taken to point him out to those around him, and always to place by his side a guard or a sergeant who speaks loudly about him without saying anything. He has been pointed out, described, recommended everywhere to deliverymen, Clerks, guards, spies, Chimney-sweeps, at all the Theaters, in all the cafes, to the barbers, the merchants, the peddlers, the booksellers. . . . By multiplying small attentions, they have successfully kept him in this immense city under the eyes of the rabble, who view him with horror. (Pp. 41–42)

Foucault is particularly interested in this part of Rousseau's text, and it is worth quoting his commentary, too, at some length:

A whole world is established, the silent world of Surveillance and Sign. From everywhere, J.-J. is being watched. . . . The walls, the floors have eyes that follow him. But this speechless surveillance is never directly transformed into accusing language. Only signs, but none of these are words: he is walking, one spits when he goes by; he enters the theatre, one keeps away from him or, on the contrary, one surrounds him with outstretched fists, threatening canes; one speaks of him, but in a silent, icy language, not directed at him but obliquely from one to the other around his worried ears, so that he feels himself brought into question, but not questioned. One throws stones at him in Môtiers, and in Paris, under his windows, one burns a straw mannequin that looks like him: double sign—that one would like to burn him, but one will only burn him derisively, because he would have the right to speak if one decided to condemn him. But he is condemned to this world of signs that do not let him speak. (“Introduction,” pp. xviii–xix)

Silence is the fundamental experience of the *Dialogues*: it makes the writing of the *Dialogues* necessary; it serves as proof of the plot against Rousseau; and it underlies the organization and inner dialectic of the book (Foucault, “Introduction,” p. xv).

Rousseau demonstrates resistance to this concerted web of power in the *Dialogues* and *Reveries*. First, he recognizes that confession encourages surveillance as it places one at any moment under the disciplinary gaze of the other. Next, Rousseau begins to suggest another point that Foucault later makes emphatically: If the person under surveillance is not vigilantly self-conscious, he

or she is likely to *internalize* the disciplinary power of the external gaze. Rousseau avoids such internalization in part by the activity of writing the *Dialogues* and the *Reveries*. The latter work recalls his ultimate and perhaps unique method for resisting panopticism, namely, his rare capacity to withdraw into himself and experience reverie. (He partially transforms an older discourse by naming his exceptional characteristics “natural.” Cf. Masters and Kelly, pp. xxiv–xxv.) Rousseau, then, does not compliantly succumb to the controlling tactics of his adversaries. They appropriate his discourses, they spy on him, they create new versions of him, but his psyche and intellect remain intact, resistant to their disciplinary regime. He never becomes his own panoptic “guard.”

In his essay on the *Dialogues*, Foucault observes that Rousseau *forces closure* on surveillance by forcing *judgment* (“Introduction,” p. xix). Surveillance ends because the “Frenchmen” and “Rousseau” are led to judge and exonerate the objectified “Jean-Jacques.” Rousseau, in his concrete unity, may now constitute another version of the self in the third panel of his autobiographical triptych, *The Reveries of the Solitary Walker*. In the final autobiography Rousseau presents a discursive self who can enjoy solitude precisely because the twin problems of surveillance and objectification have been resolved in the *Dialogues*. In the *Reveries* Rousseau inverts the meaning of his solitariness: Isolation becomes wholeness, separation is redefined as completeness.

Of course, Rousseau does not entirely reject surveillance and the disciplinary gaze as politically useful methods. Power in itself is neutral. In a move alarming to liberals, Rousseau radically devalues privacy in the virtuous political community; instead, what matters is public and communal. Even in the *Dialogues* Rousseau remarks that “our sweetest existence is relative and collective, and our true *self* is not entirely within us” (p. 118). Rousseau continually returns in his writings to the theme of unmediated seeing and the controlling eye. Thus, for example, in *Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse* the servants at Clarens spy on their masters not with open hearts and transparent souls, but with the secret gazes of surveillants.<sup>17</sup> In the innovative and influential *Confessions*, Rousseau volunteers the most intimate details about himself. Liberalism has traditionally failed to recognize how private life may be threatened by such voluntary self-exposure, that is, how confession often contributes to the successful operation of disciplinary power. Within modern liberal society surveillance and the ubiquitous confessional mode function together to undermine or destabilize the powerful myth of the political sanctity, the cherished inviolability, of privacy. Rousseau’s understanding of the meaning of the public and private is profoundly different from the liberal view: He recognizes that modernity brings not only new constructions of the meaning of private life, but also new threats to it. To reveal oneself before the public gaze produces surveillance and policing of the self, unfortunate for Rousseau among his enemies, but a desirable turn of events within the Rousseauian virtuous community of

“true” citizens, where love of fellow citizens is based on “the sweet habit of seeing and knowing one another.”<sup>18</sup>

Rousseau opens the *Dialogues* with the same epigraph from Ovid that he placed at the beginning of his *First Discourse*: “*Barbarus hic ego sum, quia non intelligor illis*” (Here I am the barbarian because no one understands me). Why does he repeat this epigraph to begin the work written immediately after his *Confessions*? As suggested above, it signals the sense in which the *Confessions* is a failure (in the hands of unphilosophic or untrained readers) and Rousseau’s interest in addressing this problem in the *Dialogues*. Since the discursive self of the *Confessions* has been appropriated by his enemies, Rousseau—in the choked voice of the *Dialogues*—creates his own internal audience in the form of the “Frenchman,” an exemplary audience that he converts from prejudiced nonreader to sympathetic reader. While Foucault’s characterization of the *Dialogues* as “anti-confessions” is in a sense accurate, it does not convey the extent to which the two works are complementary and how, together with *The Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, they form a whole.

## NOTES

1. Jean- Jacques Rousseau, *Rousseau, Judge of Jean-Jacques: Dialogues*, ed. Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly, trans. Judith R. Bush, Christopher Kelly, and Roger D. Masters (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1990). All editions of this book are hereafter referred to as the *Dialogues*; quotations not otherwise identified are from this edition.

2. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Oeuvres Complètes* (Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1958–) 1: 657–992.

3. I strongly agree with Kelly and Masters that Rousseau’s autobiographical writings have philosophical significance. See “Introduction,” in *Dialogues*, p. xiii.

4. Michel Foucault, “Introduction,” in *Rousseau, Juge de Jean Jaques: Dialogues*, ed. Michel Foucault (Paris: Armand Colin, 1962), pp. vii–xxiv. This spelling of Jaques without the letter c is by Rousseau. All translations from this essay given here are by Jacqueline Grenez Brovender. Kelly and Masters cite the Foucault edition of the *Dialogues* in their introductory essay, p. xvii and n. 6.

5. Kelly and Masters do not make this claim in their edition of the *Dialogues*.

6. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Confessions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, trans. J. M. Cohen (Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin Books, 1953), p. 17. The *Confessions* was first published in 1781.

7. Huck Gutman, “Rousseau’s *Confessions*: A Technology of the Self,” in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, ed. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), p. 107.

8. Early in the second dialogue, Rousseau considers how his physical or embodied self has been visually appropriated and misrepresented in several famous portraits, including paintings by Maurice Quentin de la Tour and Allan Ramsay. See my forthcoming book *Visions of Power*, on power and visual art in eighteenth-century France, for commentary on Rousseau’s understanding of visual representation and unmediated seeing.

9. See Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*: vol. 1, *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1980) and Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), especially chap. 8, pp. 173–78.

10. Rousseau went by the pseudonym Jean-Joseph Renou from 1767 to 1770. By the time he wrote the *Dialogues*, he resumed use of his own name. Foucault, “Introduction,” p. xii.

11. Foucault calls the writing of the *Dialogues* “vertical” as opposed to the linear form of the *Confessions*. See Foucault, “Introduction,” pp. xi ff.

12. *Dialogues*, pp. 22–23. Rousseau’s treatment of the problem of audience and reputation in the *Dialogues* is in some ways like that of Socrates in the *Apology*. Both philosophers directly face the problem of the dangerous prejudices against them accepted by many of their contemporaries. Condemnation by the majority of their fellow citizens leads Rousseau and Socrates, respectively, to separate the small number of “true judges” among contemporaries (in Socrates’ case, those at his trial who vote for his acquittal), from those who are unremittently prejudiced, and to reserve certain teachings for the former group, the true judges. Kelly and Masters state that “the *Dialogues* is concerned with the effective communication of a philosophic teaching and its dependence on the author’s name or reputation.” See, too, their remarks on Rousseau’s *Dialogues* in relation to the trilogy of Platonic dialogues *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, and *Statesman*, pp. xix, xiv.

13. The “Frenchman” later reads “Jean-Jacques”’s books numerous times with special care. Although he grasps the basic principles of the writings, the third dialogue suggests that a perfect reading is a practical impossibility. See Kelly and Masters, p. xxiii.

14. Michel Foucault, “What Is an Author?,” trans. Josué V. Harari, in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), p. 120. For a summary of this debate and recent feminist criticism of it, see, e.g., Cheryl Walker, “Feminist Literary Criticism and the Author,” *Critical Inquiry* 16, No. 3 (Spring 1990): 551–71.

15. See Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author,” *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), pp. 142–48; Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1976); Jacques Derrida, “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences,” trans. Alan Bass, in *Critical Theory Since 1965*, ed. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1986), pp. 83–94; and Jacques Derrida, *Limited, Inc* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1988).

16. Panoptic power, a concept gaining currency among some postmodern and feminist political theorists, is associated with Foucault’s analysis of Bentham’s Panopticon. Foucault, who extensively theorized about panopticism, and his followers have made explicit the implications for modern technologies of power of this punitive system inaugurated in the eighteenth century. See especially Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1979).

17. See Marshall Berman’s unsympathetic commentary in *The Politics of Authenticity* (New York: Atheneum, 1970), p. 248.

18. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men,” in *The First and Second Discourses*, ed. Roger D. Masters, trans. Roger D. and Judith R. Masters (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1964), p. 79. Italics added.