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### Summary Article: **Rousseau, Jean-Jacques (1712-1778)**

From *Encyclopedia of Political Theory*

Jean-Jacques Rousseau was the author of several major works in political philosophy, including the *Discourse on the Sciences and Arts*; *The Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality*; *On the Social Contract*, and *Émile, or On Education*. His gifts, however, were many, and his achievements were not limited to philosophy: Rousseau's opera, *The Village Soothsayer*, delighted the royal court and the public; his romantic novel, *Julie, or the New Héloïse*, became an instant and enduring bestseller; and his autobiographical works, particularly the *Confessions and Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, pioneered an entirely new approach to self-revelatory writing. Rousseau's contemporaries regarded him as a man of paradoxes, as he was: a son of the Enlightenment who denied the possibility of moral progress and celebrated the republican heroes of classical antiquity, a playwright and composer who

denounced the theater, a lover of virtue who could not live up to the severe moral principles he professed, and a citizen estranged from his city. Nevertheless, he insisted that there was an underlying unity to all his works, and though this claim has been doubted, the preponderance of recent scholarship accepts Rousseau's contention and seeks to demonstrate the intellectual coherence of his social thought.

### **Early Life and Education**

Jean-Jacques Rousseau was born on June 28, 1712, in the city of Geneva, which was then an independent, self-governing republic and the bastion of John Calvin's austere Protestantism. Both of his parents were citizens, a status held by roughly one fifth of the population. Though Rousseau spent most of his life away from Geneva, he took pride in his citizenship and affixed the epithet, "Citizen of Geneva" to the title pages of his major publications. His father, Isaac, was a watchmaker, while his mother, Suzanne Bernard, came from a wealthier family with a fine house in the upper town. Rousseau never knew her, however, because she died from complications related to childbirth.

In his earliest years, Rousseau lived with his father. They read voraciously and indiscriminately, delighting in novels and taking inspiration from Plutarch's lives of noble Greeks and Romans. When Rousseau was 10, his father fled Geneva to avoid punishment in the wake of an altercation with a French captain. Rousseau was entrusted to the care of his uncle, who apprenticed him first with a notary, who dismissed him, and then to an engraver, from whom he ran away. Leaving Geneva at the age of 15, Rousseau made his way to Annecy in what was then the duchy of Savoy. There he met a Catholic convert named François-Marie de la Tour, baronne de Warens, who induced him to convert to Roman Catholicism and with whom he lived, with interruptions, until 1742.

Although she and Rousseau subsequently became lovers, Madame (Mme) de Warens was much more than a mistress to Rousseau: he called her "*Maman*," and she called him, "*petit*." In the *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, Rousseau claims that his soul was formless until she gave it shape; to her influence he attributes the romantic sensibility, love of solitude, the country, and of contemplation that feature so prominently in his writings. During this period, Rousseau also cultivated his mind, reading widely in

history and philosophy, dabbling in experimental chemistry, making some not very successful efforts to learn Latin, and beginning to write poetry and music.

When he was not living in Mme de Warens's household, the youthful Rousseau tried to support himself in a variety of employments, working at times as a valet, music teacher, and household tutor. Even when he found employers who recognized his genius and showed eagerness to advance his career, Rousseau's pride, his extreme love of independence, and a romantic sense of adventure made it impossible for him to serve for any period of time as a responsible employee. His experiences at the bottom of the social order, however, reinforced his democratic sympathies for the poor and humble and sharpened his bitterness against wickedness and incompetence in the powerful.

### **Rousseau Among the Philosophes in Paris**

Displaced in the affections of Mme de Warens and determined to make his fortune, Rousseau moved to Paris in August of 1742. He hoped to win acclaim with a new method of musical notation. The scheme received a respectful hearing, and Rousseau succeeded in getting it published, but it was not adopted. Rousseau devoted himself principally to music and literature, composing an opera, *The Gallant Muses*, and a play, *Narcissus*. During this period, too, he first became intimate with Therese Levasseur, an illiterate washing woman, to whom he remained attached for the rest of his life, though did not marry her until 1768.

At this stage, he shared the belief in science and progress of the philosophes, and he established friendships with such leading lights of the French Enlightenment as Denis Diderot, the abbé Condillac, and Jean Le Rond d'Alembert. When Diderot conceived the project of publishing a comprehensive work to make knowledge of the sciences broadly accessible, Rousseau found himself sufficiently sympathetic to this great Enlightenment project that he contributed several articles to the *Encyclopédie*, primarily on musical subjects.

On a late summer's day in 1749, however, Rousseau experienced a moral and intellectual revolution. Walking from Paris to visit Diderot, then imprisoned at Vincennes, Rousseau read that the Dijon Academy had offered a prize for the best essay in answer to the question: *Has the restoration of the sciences and arts contributed to the purification of morals?* In a flash, the answer came to him: *No!* The insights he attained at that moment stand at the core of all of Rousseau's major works. Stated simply, he perceived that civilization and enlightenment do not necessarily make us happier or morally better; on the contrary, man is naturally good but has been made evil and unhappy by the contradictory influences of society's ill-ordered institutions. In his two *Discourses*, Rousseau deploys these ideas to formulate an incisive critique of the bourgeois social order then emerging within the bosom of the decaying *ancien régime*. In his three great constructive works: *Julie*, *Émile*, and *The Social Contract*, Rousseau explores alternative ways of remedying or avoiding the ills he had diagnosed in the two *Discourses*.

### **The Two Discourses: Rousseau's Critique of the Bourgeois Social Order**

In the *Discourse on the Sciences and Arts*, his first submission for the Dijon Academy's prize, Rousseau maintains that the cultivation of the sciences and arts corrupts morals, subverts republican governments, and paves the way for the emergence of despotism. He concedes that the refined manners of his contemporaries present a pleasing spectacle but argues that they only hide the reality of pervasive depravity. Because it only masks vice, conventional politeness is no substitute for virtue, which, to Rousseau, means the steadfast determination always to do what one knows, in conscience,

to be right. His contemporaries take no heed of their inner moral compass, but are instead slaves of opinion. Publicly, they do what is expected of them by the canons of propriety, but secretly they are willing to do whatever might be necessary to gain wealth, fame, or power, and so triumph in society. Thus, their souls are divided between the morality they profess and the secret ambitions they dare not avow but that truly motivate them.

The highly civilized French are not alone in their corruption, Rousseau argues. On the contrary, all people in their infancy enjoyed a state of rustic simplicity, virtue, and freedom, and all people, in becoming more civilized, have become artificial, corrupt, and servile. Consider the Romans: Under the republic, their virtue conquered the world, but they built no fine buildings and produced no great art or literature. Under the empire, their capital became a city of marble; they could read Ovid and Virgil, but there was no longer public freedom, and the lamentable state of their politics and morals can be read in the histories of Tacitus.

Rousseau's *Discourse* won the Dijon Academy's prize for 1750, and it made an immediate sensation in Paris when it was published during the winter of 1750 to 1751. Rousseau became famous, and his ideas were extensively discussed in the press and in the fashionable salons. Rousseau embraced his rediscovered republican and became to his contemporaries, "the Citizen"; he abjured his youthful ambition to win wealth and fame, vowing instead to dedicate himself only to truth and virtue. Although Rousseau never fully lived up to these lofty ideals, they inspired him to make some real sacrifices. When *The Village Soothsayer* was performed for the royal court in October of 1752, the king was so delighted with Rousseau's opera that he decided to reward him with a pension. Rousseau refused the pension, lest his financial dependence compromise his independence of thought.

Rousseau's next submission to the Dijon Academy's competition did not win the prize, but he did not expect it to. Instead, the *Discourse on Inequality* became a landmark in the history of political philosophy, the first great critical analysis of the bourgeois culture of commercial society. Rousseau began by reframing the Academy's question: *What is the origin of inequality among men, and is it authorized by the law of nature?* The law of nature he dismisses as an oxymoron: A law must be a dictate of reason, directed to the will, but nature speaks to us only in our passions and instincts. What troubles Rousseau is not the *authorization*, but the *foundation* of such forms of social inequality as wealth and poverty, power and powerlessness, nobility and vulgarity. He takes it to be obvious that the distribution of wealth and power in his world are unjustifiable according to any reasonable criterion of morality. The mystery is why people accept it, when the rich, mighty, and titled are always a small minority.

Rousseau's answer begins with a demonstration that nature makes men free and equal. To show this, Rousseau presents the portrait of a man according to nature, whom he envisions as a creature biologically like us, but deprived of all learning or education. Such men are but animals, moved only by the innate passions of self-love and pity. The first inclines them to seek their own well-being; the second is a modest disinclination to witness suffering in others of one's kind. Moved by these passions and having only the simple needs of food, rest, and the occasional mate, Rousseau's solitary and mindless natural men would have had few occasions for conflict and no motive to intend harm to another of their own kind. Hence, Rousseau concludes that man is good by nature and that social inequality is artificial.

Unlike the other animals, however, human beings have a faculty Rousseau calls "perfectibility," the capacity to develop our intellectual powers, and it is to the development of mind that Rousseau

attributes the origin and foundations of inequality. To make his case, Rousseau offers a schematic, six-part history of human civilization to identify the key steps in man's mental development and moral decay. The first age of animal ignorance ended when, confronted by obstacles to their survival, our most distant ancestors invented languages, tools, and came to establish settled homes and enduring family relationships. These developments mark the dawn of the second period of Rousseau's history, the state of the "savages" encountered by European explorers.

This second age also marked the birth of a new form of self-love, which Rousseau calls *amour-propre* and which is the desire to be esteemed by others for what we value in ourselves. The introduction of *amour-propre* into his understanding of human nature is one of Rousseau's great innovations, and it distinguishes him both from the philosophes, who viewed men as basically self-interested and rational, and the ancient philosophers, whose understanding of human nature added to reason and self-interest a third passion, *thumos*, or spiritedness, which, in their view, gives rise to pride and anger. As Rousseau conceives it, *amour-propre* is malleable, and thus accounts for the very different sorts of dominant character produced in different political and social milieus. In societies of marked inequalities of wealth and power, such as eighteenth-century Paris, *amour-propre* appears as the desire for power and status, which corrupts Rousseau's bourgeois contemporaries. However, in conditions of rough equality and self-sufficiency, such as the savages know, *amour-propre* manifests itself as the demand for respect as an equal and the desire for the affection of one's beloved, and in the homogeneous, honor-loving ancient city-state such as Rome and Sparta, *amour-propre* appeared as civic virtue.

In Rousseau's view, the savage stage represents the happiest and best era of human history, because the savages know life's greatest pleasure, love, but do not suffer from the worst evils of civilization: tyranny, exploitation, and war. Rousseau never calls his savages noble, because they have not attained knowledge, wisdom, or virtue. Nevertheless, he expects his readers to see the savage state as superior to their own because the savages are not divided against themselves as modern bourgeois souls are. They may occasionally be violent, but they are not vicious, because they do not find their interests systematically at odds with the interests of others.

With the introduction of the division of labor ends the rough self-sufficiency that characterized the savage state. Exchange and commerce become necessary, and while the clever and fortunate grow rich, others become destitute. But because they are no longer able to provide for their own needs, the poor have no real alternative but to acquire resources in whatever way they can. The rich claim ownership of what they have, the strong claim ownership of what they can seize, and the poor claim ownership of what they need. All desiring power and property, the third era is a war of all against all. Unlike Hobbes, however, Rousseau sees this war not as the natural state of man, but as the product of antecedent intellectual and social developments.

The first political societies emerged, and the fourth age dawned, when men reciprocally agreed to regard ownership as rightful possession. In these first political societies, laws are only the general will of the community that the rights of each person be protected, and there are no specialized magistrates responsible for enforcement. Thus, Rousseau sees the legislative power as both temporally and conceptually prior to the executive; the existence of fundamental laws, grounded in the general will of the members, defines the civil state. The appointment of officials to enforce the laws marks the emergence of government and the beginning of the fifth epoch in Rousseau's history. In his entry "Political Economy" in Diderot's *Encyclopédie*, Rousseau makes clear that legitimate government can endure only so long as the people exhibit civic virtue, which is the determination to follow the

general will and respect the rights of others, rather than to follow one's own interest, which typically opposes the interests of others.

Inevitably, however, social inequalities undermine civic virtue, and the people's leaders become its oppressors. The conclusion to the *Discourse on Inequality* is grim: Rousseau teaches that his readers, the “bourgeois” subjects of unequal and oppressive social arrangements, are enchained by a combination of artificial needs and reason-dependent passions, permanently divided against themselves and locked tightly into inequalitarian social and political systems inimical to freedom and destructive of happiness and virtue. Nor does he see any hope for the future. Modern men can no more revive the civic virtue that once animated the Roman Republic than they can return to live among the savages. Even Geneva no longer truly embodied Rousseau's political ideals, if it ever truly had. He dedicated the work to his native town, but to an idealized Geneva that scarcely resembled the oligarchic, bourgeois city it had become. In the summer of 1754, after the completion of the *Discourse* but before its publication, Rousseau traveled to Geneva, where he reaffirmed his Protestant faith and reclaimed his citizenship.

### **Rousseau's “Solutions”: Julie, Émile, and the Social Contract**

Rousseau returned to France, but left Paris in the spring of 1756 to live in the countryside near the forest of Montmorency. The following years were a time of emotional turmoil in Rousseau's life, leading ultimately to the rupture of his friendship with Diderot and most of the philosophes, but they were also his most productive, culminating in the publication of his three great, constructive works: *Julie, Émile*, and *On the Social Contract*, each of which explores a possible alternative to the corrupt, bourgeois social order condemned in the two *Discourses*.

#### *Julie, or the New Héloïse*

Rousseau's romantic novel, *Julie, or the New Héloïse*, was first. Its publication was eagerly anticipated, particularly as it appeared not long after Rousseau had published his *Letter to d'Alembert on the Theater*, denouncing the project of opening a theater in Geneva. He objected that a theater would undermine the traces of civic virtue that still remained among his fellow citizens by importing the manners and values of Paris's glittering upper class. Defending himself against the charge of inconsistency, Rousseau argued that novels, read in the privacy of one's home, do not inflame amour-propre as attendance at the theater does. Besides, Paris is already so corrupt that a novel cannot do any harm, and it might, by inspiring its readers with the love of virtue and the desire to imitate the simple, rustic, and domestic life its protagonists lead, even do some good. Certainly the novel explores the possibility that happiness and wholeness may be found by withdrawing from the whirl of urban life into a private domain of love and friendship, sustained by an optimistic faith in a tolerant and loving God. Its tragic conclusion, however, suggests that so long as human society continues to confront us with duties opposed to our desires, earthly happiness cannot be easily attained or long sustained.

#### *Émile, or On Education*

*Émile* appeared in Paris in May of 1762. It is the work Rousseau himself judged to have been his best and most important, and it presents his most complete and systematic effort to find a cure for, or at least a sort of inoculation against, the corrupting effects of ill-constituted social institutions. In the form of a novel, it is the story of an ordinary boy's extraordinary education. It details its eponymous hero's development from infancy to adulthood, under the care of his governor, Rousseau, who is an idealized version of Rousseau himself.



Rousseau starts from the premise that man is naturally good but corrupted by society. Accordingly, he proposes to tailor Émile's education to match the course of the natural development of his body and soul, making use of the child's innate desire to learn. For the infant, he recommends breast feeding and forbids swaddling clothes, which impede the infant's natural urge to move his limbs. The young child must learn the careful use of his senses and develop his growing body; hence, Rousseau advises games and outdoor activity. In the later years of childhood, from the ages of roughly 12 to 15 (Rousseau supposes adolescence to begin around 16), Émile learns a trade and the rudiments of science. Only at this stage does he read his first book, *Robinson Crusoe*. Imagining himself as Robinson on his island, Émile's favorite game is to discover how he can use his strength and wits to survive.

Émile's early moral education is negative; Rousseau aims only to prevent his charge from contracting any vices. He issues no commands, lest he teach the child to disobey and to lie. Nor does he reason with Émile, because children cannot perceive the human bonds that underpin moral obligation. Because Rousseau maintains that no one rebels against necessity but only against what one views as the intentional actions of another, Émile is confronted only by limitations he perceives as natural rather than willfully imposed. To this end, the tutor totally, but imperceptibly, controls Émile's environment, so that it presents no opportunities for him to do anything wicked. If Émile should do anything wrong, he will not experience punishment as the willful infliction of harm for harm, which would only provoke rebellion; he must, rather, feel any punishment as the natural consequence of his behavior. Such training preserves Émile's natural goodness from the corruption of society.

The onset of adolescence marks a decisive turning point, because it is when amour-propre begins to be felt. If Émile is to be saved from the corruption of bourgeois society, he must be preserved from learning to ground his self-esteem on wealth, fame, or status. To that end, his tutor guides him to spend his days among the unfortunate, which will make him compassionate. Doing good works for those in need, Émile learns to take pleasure in beneficence. Learning about society by seeking to right wrongs suffered by the oppressed, Émile acquires a sense of justice. In Rousseau's judgment, Émile at this stage is good, because he has no inclination to wrong anyone, but he is not yet virtuous because he has not yet acquired the strength of soul required to resist temptation.

When the potentially disruptive force of sexual desire can no longer be denied, Rousseau reveals to Émile the nature of sexuality, describing for him the joys of marriage and the dangers of libertinage. At the same time, he disclaims all authority, insisting that Émile is old enough to be his own master. Émile responds by begging Rousseau to guide him and promises obedience to his commands; Rousseau accepts. Rather than forbid Émile from tasting the pleasures of sex, he makes Émile want to remain chaste by making him fall in love with the image of an ideal woman, whom he names Sophie. In the fifth and final book of *Émile*, the young man and his tutor seek this Sophie, whose own education Rousseau describes as the preparation for a life of dependence as a wife and mother.

When Émile finds Sophie, he falls immediately in love with her, but she remains wary until he demonstrates to her his wholehearted dedication to the rights of humanity. Once she has agreed to marry, however, the tutor intervenes; he commands Émile to leave Sophie for a time, to travel and learn about politics. Now, for the first time in his life, confronted by a disjunction between his desires and his duty, Émile demonstrates his virtue and proves that he is truly worthy of Sophie's love. Subordinating his immediate pleasure to the just demand that he keep his word, he complies willingly with this first demand ever placed on him. On his travels, he learns to judge governments according to the principles of *The Social Contract* and finds that all fall short. Believing that a man of virtue can live happily

wherever he resides, Émile opts to live on a small farm in the countryside of the land where he was born, far from the corrupting influence of Paris. Émile's love of his ideal Sophie takes the place in his soul that philosophy would occupy in that of a wise man, and, as the novel concludes, it appears that Rousseau has succeeded in showing that it is possible for any man, of ordinary intellectual and moral gifts, to lead a life of virtue, happiness, and wholeness.

Scarcely a week after it had been permitted to be sold in Paris, Émile was confiscated by the police, condemned, and burned. The authorities in Geneva quickly followed suit. Orders for Rousseau's arrest were issued, and Rousseau fled into exile. What particularly provoked the authorities was the heterodox religious teaching of Émile, which Rousseau presents as the profession of faith of a Catholic priest from Savoy. The priest articulates a religion according to nature, and he seeks to demonstrate the basic elements of his faith—the existence of God, freedom of the will, the immortality of the soul, and the happiness of the just—by appealing to sentiment and the inner light of his own soul. The priest dismisses as irrelevant metaphysical and theological speculations, such as those about the nature of the communion sacrament, over which Protestants and Catholics had bitterly quarreled. He holds instead that God loves equally all religions that teach men to love their neighbors and to do justice. Nor do external forms and ritual matter: God heeds only the inner worship of the loving heart.

### *The Social Contract*

Published contemporaneously with Émile, *On the Social Contract*, subtitled *Principles of Political Right*, offers Rousseau's account of a legitimate state, in which the subjects are morally obliged to obey the law and are motivated to comply with its demands. *The Social Contract* begins from the premise that man is born free, that all political communities are, therefore, artificial and grounded in consent. As he had argued earlier, Rousseau teaches in *The Social Contract* that the state comes into being when an aggregation of individuals becomes citizens by agreeing to be directed, not by their individual desires, but by the general will of the community, which aims at the common good of all. In the general will, Rousseau finds a means of reconciling obedience and freedom, which had remained opposed in the teaching of Hobbes and Locke. They had argued that the establishment of political authority requires the subjects to alienate a portion of their freedom to the commonwealth. By contrast, Rousseau conceives the establishment of a legitimate state as effecting the transformation of man's natural freedom to do whatever pleases him into civil freedom. As subjects, the people of Rousseau's legitimate state are free because they obey only the laws they have, as citizens, prescribed for themselves.

The natural freedom and equality of men implies that no individual can have any right to tell the citizens what they should will for themselves as their law, but, though the people can judge whether or not they are happy, Rousseau believes they lack the wisdom to frame the laws that would make them so. To bring the legitimate state into being, an extraordinary legislator is required to draft the laws, which he must induce the people to embrace without their really understanding why. The legislator will have succeeded in his task only if the people, after living for a time under the laws, willingly and wholeheartedly embrace them. This will only happen, Rousseau supposes, if the laws and customs established by the legislator fundamentally transform the character of the people, so that instead of regarding themselves primarily as independent actors with private and conflicting aims, they see themselves first as citizens, dedicated above all to the common project of their collective welfare. In the republics of antiquity, religion served the state, endowing political obligations with an additional, supernatural sanction. To the displeasure of the orthodox, Rousseau complained that pure Christianity

weakens the political bond by teaching that one's true home lies not on this earth but in heaven; to the displeasure of the philosophes, he suggested that a modified Christianity could be made into a civil religion that would serve civic ends.

In the legitimate state, the people are sovereign: Their general will is the law. Rousseau advises that the people must assemble in person at least annually to give or withhold their assent to laws and to elect their own magistrates. The magistrates and the government they constitute are not sovereign but are only its agent, tasked with the responsibility of applying the general will to particular cases. The best form of government, Rousseau argues, is elective aristocracy, where those most capable of faithfully carrying out the general will are entrusted with office. Although he recognizes its oligarchic features, Rousseau nevertheless asserts that the Roman Republic substantially met the conditions specified in his theory: Every citizen was a member of the sovereign assembly, having the right to vote in the *comitia centuriata*; this sovereign body assembled at least annually, and it had the right to enact the laws and the right to select its own magistrates.

### **Persecution and Exile, Introspection and Self-Justification**

Warned of his impending arrest, Rousseau fled and sought refuge in Môtiers, under the sovereignty of Prussia's King Frederick the Great. For a time, Rousseau hoped that his name and his works would be vindicated in Geneva, where a number of citizens supported his cause. The controversy grew heated and threatened to spill over into civil violence. At the height of the conflict, Rousseau's adversaries struck and anonymously published a pamphlet written by Voltaire that made public the details of Rousseau's illicit sexual relationship with Levasseur and accused him of having abandoned the five children he had fathered with her. Though Rousseau's actions were not especially uncommon in eighteenth-century Paris, the revelations were acutely damaging because the reality of Rousseau's conduct contrasted so sharply with the idealizations of romantic love, domestic happiness, and wise paternal guidance depicted in his novels. By February of 1765, it had become clear that Rousseau's cause in Geneva was lost, and he turned his back on his native city, renouncing all further interest in its affairs.

The attacks on his personal character prompted Rousseau to begin composing his *Confessions*, in which he proposes to show himself to the world, faults and all, in the expectation that his readers would recognize the essential goodness of his nature, despite his obvious failure to live with anything like the virtue exhibited by his exemplary characters, Julie and Émile. Driven from his refuge in Môtiers by the stoning of his house, Rousseau stopped for a time on the Isle de Saint Pierre, in the territory of Berne. While there, he amused himself by making botanical observations—a pastime to which he would devote ever more of his time as he grew older—and sometimes allowing himself simply to fall into sweet daydreams. The Bernese, however, expelled him, and in January of 1766, Rousseau made his way to England, accepting David Hume's offer to help him find refuge there. Rousseau's relationship with Hume deteriorated rapidly, as Rousseau came to suspect Hume of plotting against him.

Returning to France the following year, Rousseau was compelled to live away from the capital and under a pseudonym, Renou. In 1770, he moved back to Paris, where he was permitted to live under his own name, and where he made a meager living as a music copyist. His last years were principally devoted to the composition of autobiographical works, the forensic and self-justificatory *Rousseau Judges Jean-Jacques* and the elegiac *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*, both of which were published posthumously, as was the *Confessions*.



In May of 1778, he accepted the hospitality of marquis Rene de Girardin, and came to live on his beautiful estate in Ermenonville, where the marquis had laid out a garden in the English style, such as Rousseau had celebrated in *Julie*. But Rousseau did not have long to enjoy this retreat; he died on July 2 and on July 4 was buried on the Isle of Poplars at Ermenonville. Rousseau's tomb became a sort of shrine for his admiring readers, and such luminaries as the ill-fated Marie Antoinette paid their respects to him there.

Rousseau's influence was far reaching and as diverse as his range of intellectual interests. In philosophy, Immanuel Kant proclaimed him “the Newton of the moral world” and confessed that Rousseau had decisively transformed his intellectual outlook, teaching him the unconditional value of humanity and so inspiring him to develop a practical philosophy justifying the rights of man. The central element of Kant's practical philosophy, the idea that autonomy is found in compliance with the categorical imperative, in effect translated into the moral sphere of Rousseau's political idea that citizens can realize freedom through obedience to the general will. In literature, Rousseau's *Julie* and his autobiographical writings contributed to the emergence of Romanticism, with its celebration of feeling and enthusiasm for nature. Rousseau's educational philosophy subsequently inspired the pedagogical reforms of Maria Montessori. In religion, the “Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar” articulates the doctrines of a mild and tolerant Christianity that have come to define mainline Protestantism today. And, in politics, such leading figures of the French Revolution as Louis de Saint-Just and Maximilien Robespierre claimed to be acting in his name, though because they mistook their own will for the general will of the French people, their actions did not accord well with the actual content of Rousseau's thought. Nevertheless, the French revolutionary government had his remains transferred, in a theatrically staged procession, to the Pantheon, in Paris.

### See also

Autonomy, Civil Religion, Democracy, General Will, Hobbes, Thomas, Hume, David, Kant, Immanuel, Legitimacy, Liberty, Philosophes, Robespierre, Maximilien, Romanticism, Social Contract Theory, Sovereignty, Voltaire

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Reisert, Joseph

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