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THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

The Ohio State University

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THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Edward Reed Turnbull, A.B., M.A.

*******

The Ohio State University
1982

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this dissertation is to develop an interpretation of Rousseau's political theory as presented in the Social Contract. The interpretation provided will offer new solutions to key issues current in the literature on the Social Contract.

I shall develop my interpretation through an examination of Rousseau's Second Discourse (The Discourse on the Origin of Inequality) which provides the foundation for the political theory of the Social Contract. This is a standard approach to Rousseau's political theory. In the last 75 years intellectual historians have conclusively established the close relationship and consistency of these two works. In light of this research it has become common practice to seek explanations of the puzzling and controversial aspects of the Social Contract in what Rousseau said about these matters in the earlier Second Discourse. To date such efforts have been only partially successful, for there remain many points of disagreement among interpreters of the Social Contract.

One reason for the continuing disagreements among those who adopt this approach is that the investigation of the Second Discourse has remained incomplete. There is at least one aspect of the Second
Discourse which has received insufficient attention. This is the question of the background assumptions from which Rousseau develops the arguments which are to produce knowledge of the primitive origins of man.

Rousseau proceeds to his conclusions concerning primitive man via a method of reasoning similar to Descartes' deductive system of science. That is, Rousseau performs deductions based upon well established and 'known' principles. The initial deductions of Rousseau's reasoning establish a history of man's development from his primitive origins to his Modern (eighteenth century) existence. On the basis of the history thus established he deduces truths concerning man's true or essential nature. And on the basis of this new knowledge Rousseau deduces further truths concerning the nature of morality, the origin and development of moral and political inequality, and the 'natural goodness' of man.

All this has been noted by others. However, to my knowledge no one has adequately identified the initial premises from which Rousseau's arguments proceed. To make this point clear, consider that the first steps in Rousseau's chain of reasoning deal with the first men in the long history of mankind (hereafter 'original man'). His arguments concerning what mental and physical characteristics original man would display and what activities he would engage in, all take the following form. He argues that an ability or activity or mental characteristic would be present if necessary to original man's survival and not be present if it were not. Most commentators explicitly or implicitly identify Rousseau's initial premise here as something like "Original man
would have just those characteristics necessary and sufficient for his survival". I believe that such a formulation of Rousseau's initial premise is too vague to capture all that Rousseau has in mind. I shall replace this formulation of Rousseau's initial premises and I shall argue that my formulation provides a more accurate account of Rousseau's reasoning.

I shall then retrace Rousseau's arguments from my formulation of his initial premises. The immediate result of this effort will be to gain certain insights into his thought, such as what he means by the term 'natural'. The long-range effects of starting with my formulation of Rousseau's initial premises will be a somewhat different explanation of the development of man, in particular a somewhat different view of Rousseau's diagnosis of the problems facing modern man. This, in turn, will result in a new approach to the Social Contract, for the Social Contract is to provide the solutions to the problems confronting modern man. I shall then show that my approach solves certain problems of interpretation of the Social Contract which have heretofore remained unresolved.
Preliminary Remarks

The Second Discourse presents a history of man. As noted above, Rousseau makes claims concerning man's essential nature on the basis of his findings in developing this history. It should be noted that this approach to a knowledge of man's nature was not uncommon in eighteenth century Europe. Prior to that time Locke and Hobbes had used a similar, though not identical, approach, and it is to these two philosophers that, according to many commentators, the Second Discourse is addressed. However, the intellectual history of this approach goes back at least to Lucretius in De Rerum Natura and to Plato in Laws, book 3.

In the intellectual community of which Rousseau was a member, this approach took on a decidedly empirical character. Man was believed to be a part of the physical universe which Bacon, Descartes, and Newton had shown was governed by mechanical, non-teleological causal principles. The proper study of man was therefore to be in terms of efficient rather than final causes. The study of man and his nature was to be consistent with the tenets of the Scientific Revolution (1570-1720),
rather than in terms of the system it replaced, the Aristotelian teleological science.

The standard form of this new scientific approach to man was to establish his history in terms of his origin and subsequent development. In this way the scientist could separate what was original to man from what was the result of his subsequent development. The scientist could then discover what was essential to man's nature, because present even in his most primitive state, and what was artificial or non-essential, because present only as a result of his subsequent social and political development. The philosophers who most influenced Rousseau's thinking at the time of the writing of the Second Discourse—Condillac, Buffon, and Diderot—provide models of this approach to man's nature in their own works. When Rousseau addresses the Second Discourse to those philosophers who "have felt the necessity of going back to a state of nature" he is addressing his contemporaries as well as Hobbes and Locke. Thus the historical approach of the Second Discourse should be viewed as part of an ongoing tradition in political philosophy.

The Background Assumptions in the Second Discourse

In the Second Discourse Rousseau states the importance of the study of man for the construction of political theory.

The very study of the original man, of his real wants, and the fundamental principles of his duty, is besides the only proper method we can adopt to obviate all the difficulties which the original of moral inequality presents, on the true foundations of the body politic, on the reciprocal rights of its members, and on many other similar topics equally important and obscure.

The first step in this study of man is to acquire knowledge of the primitive origins of man.
How shall man hope to see himself as nature made him, across all the changes which the succession of place and time must have produced in his original constitution?¹¹

Rousseau's first task, then, is to gain knowledge of the original man who existed prior to any subsequent development. The ideal way to attain this knowledge, given the intellectual framework underlying Rousseau's study of man, would be direct empirical evidence. If we could find, in some remote area, original man still in existence, we could attain this knowledge through direct observation. Failing this, if we could construct an experiment that could somehow produce an original man we would be able to attain knowledge of original man through direct observation.

Rousseau rejects both sources of direct observation of original man as impractical. We cannot expect to find original man at this late date, for that would require us to find him currently in a state which "no longer exists, perhaps never did exist, and probably never will exist".¹² Nor can we hope for the construction of experiments to produce an original man.

But besides the fact that a single generation would not suffice for this experiment, it must pass as impracticable, because it would be necessary that what is only a supposition were shown to be true before the test that ought to verify the fact could be tried innocently.¹³

In order to present the results of such an experiment as an 'original man', we must assume that our experiment will, in fact, produce an original man. But we cannot justify this hypothesis unless we already know what original man is like. Thus in order to devise an experiment which is to reveal the nature of original man, we must already know that nature.
However, Rousseau does leave both these possibilities open as theoretically feasible, even if impractical. Rousseau is presenting a 'scientific' investigation of man, and so wishes to be consistent with any possible empirical findings in this area, so that if either of these possibilities became a reality it would merely provide confirmation of his own conclusions. Rousseau does not state this explicitly, but it seems the only explanation for his encouragement of the development of further scientific evidence.

Since direct empirical evidence is not forthcoming, some other means of attaining knowledge of original man must be found. If we cannot have direct access to original man, we must deduce what he must have been. This is what Rousseau takes himself to have done in the Second Discourse. At the end of Part I of the Second Discourse Rousseau claims to have proved his conclusions concerning original man and to have established his account as fact.

These conclusions must be based upon previously established premises. If these premises do not constitute scientifically established knowledge, then the inferences based upon them cannot be considered as sound scientific deductions.

One possibility is to study man as he is today and seek in this study some principles concerning human nature which can then be used as a basis for inferring original man. Rousseau explicitly rejects this possibility on the grounds that present man has changed so much and so drastically in the long development from original man that it is impossible to see clearly in modern man any of the character of original man.
Like the statue of Glaucus, which was so disfigured by time, seas, and tempests, that it looked more like a wild beast than a god, the human soul, altered in society by a thousand causes perpetually recurring, by the acquisition of a multitude of truths and errors, by the changes happening to the constitution of the body, and by continual jarring of the passions, has, so to speak, changed in appearance, so as to be hardly recognizable. 17

We will not find the initial assumptions for the deduction of original man in any study of man which is based solely on his present characteristics. Thus we must reject all such studies of modern man, all those "scientific books which teach us only to see man such as they have made themselves". 18

Rousseau is thus explicit concerning what is unacceptable for use as the initial assumptions for the deduction of the nature of original man. Unfortunately he is not so explicit in stating what is acceptable. He nowhere clearly states his initial premises and background assumptions. Since Rousseau does not state his initial premises we must discover them in use; it is necessary to seek them in his arguments as implicit assumptions. In what follows I shall state what I believe to be Rousseau's initial premises. Some textual evidence will be offered in support of my view, but since Rousseau is never explicit in these matters, my primary justification for formulating these premises as I do will consist in showing that they are implicit in the crucial arguments of the Second Discourse.

The principles which I see as supporting Rousseau's arguments are the following:

The Principle of Natural Order

Nature provides her creatures with only such desires as are necessary for preservation, and only such abilities (mental
and physical) as are sufficient for the satisfaction of those desires.

The Principle of Natural Balance

There exists in the individuals of every species a natural balance between the resources (abilities and desires) of the individual and the environment such that the individual is well adapted for survival.

These principles are meant to capture Rousseau's view of the operations of the laws governing animal life in a mechanical universe. 19

The principle of natural order finds perhaps its clearest statement in Rousseau's Emile. In the following passage Rousseau is addressing himself to original man and not, at least directly, to animals in general; however, this can be taken as his view of the organization of animal life in general.

In this condition nature, who does everything for the best, has placed him from the first. To begin with, she gives him only such desires as are necessary for self-preservation and such powers as are sufficient for their satisfaction. 20

This statement in the Emile provides the basis for my formulation of the principle of natural order. I have amended it to include the phrase "and the preservation of the species". The reason for doing so is that what is necessary and sufficient for the preservation of the individual is not sufficient for the preservation of the species. Obviously individuals can survive without sex. Yet without sex the species would become extinct. Rousseau was aware of this point, and added an inherent, if occasional, desire for sex to the desires of original man which would be necessary and sufficient for his preservation:

Among these was one which urged him to propagate his species, a blind propensity that, having nothing to do with the heart, produced a merely animal act. 21
Thus Rousseau includes a concern for the survival of the species in his view of the natural order of things. The role that the survival of the species plays in Rousseau's thought will be important in the attempt to understand the inherent sentiment of compassion which Rousseau attributes to original man. At a more appropriate time I shall argue that the only basis for including compassion as a characteristic of original man is that compassion, like the desire for sex, is necessary for the preservation of the species.

The principle of natural order is a thesis concerning the general laws governing animal life which are discoverable through observation and study of life in general. It was the thesis of Buffon, whose *Natural History* was well-known and often quoted by Rousseau.

It should be noted that the principle of natural order cannot be held to apply to every individual. Obviously some individuals are born with deficiencies, and lack the necessary mental or physical resources which comprise the typical survival mechanisms of its species. Moreover, some individuals, even though equipped with the normal survival mechanisms of its species, will fall to predators or to accidents. Rousseau was conscious of these facts concerning the operation of the general laws governing animal life. He acknowledges these qualifications of the principle of natural order in his various discussions of what is observable in animal life.

Nature in this case treats them exactly as Sparta treated the children of her citizens: those who come well formed into the world she renders strong and robust, all the rest she destroys.
The principle of natural balance is meant to capture these qualifications. An important feature of my formulation of the principle of natural balance is that it refers to a balance of resources and environment which produces an individual who is well adapted to survival. This is a weaker claim than that which supposes that nature produces a balance between resources and environment such that the individual has all that would be required for survival. The stronger claim is, as noted, just false. It does not reflect what is observed in nature. That Rousseau adopts the weaker claim is seen in his discussion of the mechanical nature of animals.

I see nothing in any animal but an ingenious machine, to which nature hath given senses to wind itself up, and to guard itself to a certain degree, against anything that might tend to disorder or destroy it.23

In this passage Rousseau acknowledged that the gifts of nature are sufficient "to a certain degree" in preserving the individual. Thus he cannot be taken to assume the stronger claim. Rousseau viewed the characteristics of each species as necessary and sufficient for the majority of individuals, and therefore sufficient for the preservation of the species. He thought of Nature as providing all that was required for an ecological balance in the animal kingdom.

Another important feature of this principle is that it refers to a balance of individual resources and environment. Rousseau believed that observation of the natural order in animals revealed that the various mental and physical resources of each species could be understood in terms of their role in adapting that kind of animal to its environment. The same holds true for original man, who is considered by Rousseau to
be no more than another species of the animal kingdom. Rousseau was concerned to use his view of the ecological balance of nature to infer the nature of original man, 'just as he came from the hands of Nature'. In discussing what he has discovered about original man Rousseau characterizes him as maintaining this balance of resources and environment:

Let us conclude that, being self-sufficient and subject to so few passions, he could have no feelings or knowledge but such as befitted his situation; that he felt only his actual necessities, and disregarded everything he did not think himself immediately concerned to notice.\(^2^4\)

Before reconstructing the crucial arguments of the Second Discourse, I should emphasize the importance of the principle of natural balance in my presentation. If, as I believe, Rousseau does assume this principle in his arguments, then we gain a new insight into Rousseau's discussion of what is natural to man. When Rousseau discusses natural man, he is not talking about specific mental or physical resources, but rather what activities are necessary to produce the balance of resources and environment which is the mark of the natural order in the animal kingdom. To anticipate what I shall argue later, if there is a change in man's environment and a change in his resources, then there is a change in what is necessary to produce the natural balance of resources and environment. Thus modern man, who has an environment and resources different from those of original man, requires different activities in order to be natural, i.e., to produce the necessary balance of resources and environment. As Rousseau himself suggests,

There is all the difference in the world between a natural man living in a state of nature, and a natural man living in society.\(^2^5\)

On my view, Rousseau believed that modern man, though corrupted through
time and changes, could become natural by reestablishing the balance of resources and environment which he lost, though this would require him to engage in activities which would be unnatural to original man, such as cooperation with other men. My thesis, in other terms, is that what is natural is relative to the being and the environment. Man, as opposed to other animals, is adaptable, so that a change in environment can produce a change in exhibited behavior. This thesis is controversial. Many commentators take the view that what is natural for Rousseau is just what activities and abilities would be observed in the original situation, and that any activity (such as cooperation with others) which would not be observed is ipso facto unnatural.26 The controversial nature of my view is in a large part the reason for my going to such lengths to establish the principle of natural balance as a fundamental assumption of Rousseau's construction of the original situation.

The Original Situation

Rousseau's strategy is to deduce original man from present knowledge of natural creatures (no other species has been corrupted by development as man has). Considering original man as he "must have come from the hands of nature", Rousseau believes that original man would display the balance of resources and environment that is observed in all other animal life. To reconstruct the original situation will therefore be a matter of deducing what must be the environment of original man, and then deducing what must be necessary and sufficient, with respect to man's resources, to produce this balance.
Obviously this environment would not include cities, cultivated fields, or artificial boundaries, which are products of modern man and therefore post-date original man. In the primitive days of original man the earth would be covered by immense forests which would produce ample food and shelter for all species. Given this environment we can deduce certain features of original man's resources. Living without artificial shelter and predating the creature comforts of modern man, the original man must have been more hardy and robust than modern man. Rousseau argues that original man would need to exercise his physical capacities constantly in this environment, and hence would be keener of sight and hearing, and faster, stronger, and more agile than modern man.

Original man has one feature which distinguishes him from most other animals, and that is his versatility. Man can sustain himself on a variety of foods whereas most animals are limited to a comparatively few kinds of foods. This versatility is also evident in the kinds of behavior which would be available to original man. He would have the ability to fight, to run, to climb trees, to swim, and in general would not be limited to a few types of activity as are most species. This versatility in activity is an extrapolation from the physical characteristics of modern man and Rousseau takes it as obvious that original man would share the same versatility.

The needs of original man would be just those of all other animals—food, water, a safe place to sleep, and occasionally sex. Some sex life is necessary to the propagation of the species, if not to the preservation of the individual. According to Rousseau, the act of sex
would be purely a physical act, as it is in other animals. There would be none of the modern attendants of sex, such as love and jealousy. Rousseau's argument that the sex life of the original man would be purely physical rests on two assumptions. First, he assumes that attendant characteristics such as love would be unnecessary to the savage. The occasional, instinctive and physical act of sex would be all that is required for an individual whose needs of survival are so few and so ready at hand. Original man would be quite well adapted to survival without the superfluous desire for love attending the sex act.

The second assumption is that the desire for love is not possible in the original situation. Without this assumption original man could love his sex partner even though this sentiment is not required by some need of survival. The full argument that love is not possible in the original situation rests upon Rousseau's argument that reason and imagination are absent from the original situation. This argument will be discussed below. Rousseau's strategy in arguing that love would not be possible in the original situation seems to be as follows.

First we note that Rousseau's argument is set in the framework of a mechanistic universe, and that he is seeking efficient causes for all mental and physical activity, including love. Rousseau argues that the characteristics of love all depend upon ideas that would be unavailable to original man. According to Rousseau, love requires the making of judgments such as comparisons of beauty, and original man would not be able to make such judgments. With no language and very little reason, he would not have the concepts for such comparisons, and would be promiscuous in the same way that animals are promiscuous. There could
be no efficient cause of love, and hence no love attending the act of sex in the original situation.

It is easy to see that the moral part of love is a factitious feeling, born of social usage, and enhanced by the women with much care and cleverness, to establish their empire, and put in power the sex that ought to obey. This feeling, being founded on certain ideas of beauty and merit which a savage is not in a position to acquire, and on comparisons which he is incapable of making, must be for him almost non-existent.

As we shall see, the mental abilities are so limited in original man that he would hardly be able to distinguish one woman from another, and would not consider one desirable and another not.

He follows solely the character nature has implanted in him, and not tastes which he could never have acquired: so that every woman equally answers his purpose.

Rousseau's strategy is to argue that love is neither necessary nor possible in the original situation. As noted above, his reasoning depends upon the absence of reason and imagination in original man. As we shall see, Rousseau adopts the same strategy with regard to reason and imagination; they are neither necessary nor possible in the original situation. This is the general strategy of all his arguments concerning what is present or absent in the original situation. Notice that this argument is plausible only on the assumption of the principles I have introduced, and that Rousseau must be taken as arguing for what is necessary and possible relative to the production of an individual who is minimally well adapted to survival in the original situation.

Knowing original man's environment, his physical resources, and his needs, we are now in a position to deduce how he would behave and what characteristics and abilities he would display. Obviously original man, as man, has at least the potential for complex rational thought
and behavior (such as forming societies and developing language). The central question of this first part of the Second Discourse is whether original man would engage in such activities.

Rousseau answers in the negative. He thinks such activities, which other philosophers take to be the distinguishing marks of the species man, would be absent in original man. Rousseau's various arguments that such activities would not be present in the original situation all rest on the same premise—that they would not be necessary to original man. I shall here consider only the argument concerning cooperation in general, though the same argument can be given with respect to the lack of language and the lack of family structure.

The original man, according to Rousseau, is self-sufficient. He had few needs, which are easily satisfied. He would wander the forests as a wild creature, eating whatever is at hand when he is hungry, and sleeping in the safety afforded by his environment.

I see him satisfying his hunger at the first oak, and slaking his thirst at the first brook; finding his bed at the foot of the tree which afforded him a repast; and, with that, all his wants supplied. Given this characterization of his life, the original man would have no need for cooperation. In fact, he would rarely encounter his fellow man, and even then have no need to cooperate or even to communicate with him.

Be the origins of language and society what they may, it may be at least inferred, from the little care which nature has taken to unite mankind by mutual wants, and to facilitate the use of speech, that she has contributed little to make them sociable, and has put little of her own into all they have done to create such bonds of union. In this argument Rousseau is once again assuming the principles I have
formulated earlier. The principle of natural balance is assumed, for otherwise the argument does not go through. Rousseau has already admitted that some individuals would be born deficient in mental or physical capacities, and that some individuals will be subject to misfortune. For these individuals cooperation might well be necessary for survival. Thus if the assumption in operation here is that original man would engage in just those activities which are necessary for survival, cooperation cannot be eliminated totally from the original situation. However, if the assumption is that the individual will engage in those activities which would, in general, make that kind of individual well-adapted to survival, then cooperation can be eliminated as unnecessary.

This argument assumes the background of a mechanical universe. Without this assumption it could be argued that original man might have a desire to cooperate, and hence engage in cooperative ventures even though such a desire is without cause in the original situation. For Rousseau to argue that cooperation would not be a feature of the original situation he must show that it is not necessary by the principle of natural balance, and not possible by the principle of causation.

Since there would be no extended contact with others, any activity which presupposes such contact would not be present. There would be no family unit, no language, no abstract reasoning. There would be no language because language presupposes continued contact, and no abstract reasoning, because abstract reasoning presupposes language. Because these activities are not features of the original situation, they cannot be essential and unchangeable characteristics of what it is to be a member of the human species, as others had supposed.
Rousseau's argument that original man would live by instinct and not by reason takes the same form as his arguments concerning the other characteristics of original man; reason is neither necessary nor possible in the original situation.

According to Rousseau the mental life of the original man would be predominantly instinctive. Given his few needs and the ease with which they are satisfied, all that is required for him to be well-adapted to his environment are the few simple instincts such as hunger, thirst, and sex. There would be no cause for man to engage in any sophisticated reasoning to maintain himself in the original situation.

In instinct alone, he had all he required for living in the state of nature.

This is not to say that original man would be incapable of any level of reasoning. All animals do reason, on Rousseau's account, but in a very limited sense. All animals make decisions concerning where to attain food and shelter, when to fight and when to run, and similar judgments. This reasoning, however, is extremely limited compared to that abstract and sophisticated reasoning required for the development of languages, the arts and sciences, and society. The reasoning of original man would only need be on the level of animal reasoning and of a much lower grade than that normally attributed to 'man the rational animal'. In discussing the absence of reason Rousseau must be understood as discussing the higher level reasoning attributed by most philosophers to the nature of man, rather than the simple combination of ideas that is common to all animals.
The above argument that reasoning is unnecessary to original man assumes the principle of natural balance. There would be occasions, even if very rare, in which instincts would not be sufficient to secure some individual's survival. Suppose that some individual had accidentally broken a leg. This individual's survival in a wild environment would be seriously threatened. If original man could reason he would stand a much better chance of overcoming his difficulty than if his mental resources were limited to instinctual behavior. He might think to construct crutches, or to build a fence to ward off predators, or some other artificial aid to help him survive. Rousseau is aware of this kind of accident, but thinks that original man is in the same position as animals—namely, that accident victims are to be considered unfortunate and lost.

In order to argue that sophisticated reason is not necessary to original man, Rousseau must be relativizing 'necessary' to what is required in general to produce a well-adapted being, rather than to what is necessary to the survival of an individual. Thus we see further evidence for my contention that Rousseau is assuming the principle of natural balance in the *Second Discourse*.

Rousseau also argues that sophisticated reason is not possible in the original situation.

The passions, again, originate in our wants, and their progress depends on that of our knowledge; for we cannot desire or fear anything, except from the idea we have of it, or from the simple impulse of nature. Now savage man, being destitute of every species of intelligence, can have no passions save those of the latter kind; his desires never go beyond his physical wants. The only goods he recognizes in the universe are food, a female, and sleep; the only evils he fears are pain and hunger.
The original man is trapped in a vicious circle. His few wants are adequately satisfied through the operation of his 'simple impulses of nature'. He cannot attain new knowledge (and therefore reason) without some desire over and above these simple instincts. Yet he cannot acquire such new desires without previously acquiring knowledge over and above that related to his physical wants. Thus reason is impossible for original man. By the principle of causation, this situation is stable, unless some new causal factor is introduced into the environment which will somehow induce new knowledge in original man. Then and only then can original man break out of this circle and begin the development to modern man.

Having shown that human perfectibility, the social virtues, and the other faculties which natural man potentially possessed, could never develop of themselves, but must require the fortuitous concurrence of many foreign causes that might never arise and without which he would have remained for ever in his primitive conditions, I must now collect and consider the different accidents which may have improved the human understanding.41

Reason, then, would not be occurred in the original situation. It follows that reason is not an essential feature of man, for there is at least one situation in which men can live without reason. This is an important conclusion, for it sets Rousseau's view against those of Hobbes and Locke, and against the views of Rousseau's contemporaries. Reason, on Rousseau's view, becomes possible only with the development of man. Reason takes on a much less important role than is given it in most theories. This reduced importance will be reflected in Rousseau's analysis of the proper basis of the principles of political theory.
Egoism and Compassion in the Original Situation

In describing the original situation Rousseau is especially concerned to deny that original man would be motivated by competitive self-interest. Rousseau believes that Hobbes is mistaken in assuming that man is by nature a selfish creature and that the state of nature would involve constant conflict.

In reasoning on the principles he [Hobbes] lays down, he ought to have said that the state of nature, being that in which the care of our own preservation is the least prejudicial to that of others, was consequently the best calculated to promote peace, and the most suitable for mankind.42

Rousseau argues that egoism is not an inherent feature of man by showing that it would not be present in the original situation. If Rousseau can establish this, it will prove that in constructing political society it is not necessary to assume that man's motivations in society are unchangeably egoistic. Rousseau's argument rests upon his distinction between love of self (amour de soi) and self-love (amour propre).

According to Rousseau the fundamental drive of all creatures is a drive for self-preservation. In this he agrees with Hobbes. However, the conclusions he draws from this view differ from those of Hobbes. The instincts and desires of individuals, such as hunger and thirst, which are observed in all animals are particular instances of the general drive for self-preservation. These particular desires can be characterized in another way. They all arise from some particular need of the individual and they all are geared to the satisfaction of those needs. Animals get hungry only when they require food, and when that need is satisfied the hunger disappears. This also applies to man as
he comes from the hands of nature. These simple desires, Rousseau argues, are addressed solely to the individual's own needs. In desiring food the animal (original man) takes no notice of others. His desire is for the satisfaction of his own hunger and has no reference to the needs of or wants of others. The only case in which the needs or desires of others is at all relevant is the possible case in which two individuals vie for the same food. Even then the only importance of the competitor's presence is that the individual must judge whether to compete for the food. (Given the plentifulness of food in the original situation there would be no serious combat.) Whether or not his competitor satisfies his needs is not of concern to the individual. Moreover, the individual, concerned simply with satisfying his need, has no desire to acquire 'better' food than others. Original man does not compare his situation to the situation of others, and is content merely with the satisfaction of the requirement of self-preservation. This is the attitude of amour de soi. It is characterized by a lack of comparison with others. The desires of original man do not extend beyond the indifference to others portrayed in amour de soi, because, given his rich environment and easily satisfied needs, there is neither need nor reason for his desires to be so extended.

Rousseau contrasts this attitude of amour de soi with the attitude of amour propre, which is self-love or egoism. Amour propre is more complicated than amour de soi, of which it is an outgrowth. From the original attitude of indifference to others, man's desire for self-preservation develops into a desire not for self-preservation alone but for this to be achieved in a manner that results in the individual's
being comparatively better off than his fellow man. In his original state, man's needs are few, for he is only concerned with his own preservation. The change began with an increase in population. As the number of men increased, there was more frequent contact between individuals, and the available food supply per individual decreased. Short-term cooperation for the procurement of food developed, on the level of occasional hunting groups. Gradually man came to see the advantages of association, and formed more permanent communities. With the coming of association, several factors arose that combined to change his situation. Man acquired knowledge of others and of his new relationships. His interest and concern grew wider than merely himself and his immediate environment. Most importantly, man began to compare himself with others and to make distinctions he did not make in the original situation.  

This change in man's knowledge of self and others marks the emergence of **amour propre**. It is a development not possible for other animals, for no creature other than man is given the potential for such an alteration in mental processes. I think the following illustration would be acceptable to Rousseau. Consider the occasional case of a young child who is lost in the woods and yet manages to survive over a period of years. The child has the genetic potential of a human, but lives the life of an animal. Years later he is captured and returned to civilization. Upon exposure to human society his human potential is awakened and he develops as he never could in his former circumstances. Rousseau's picture of original man seems to parallel this case, with all men being trapped by their circumstances in the manner of the young
child. The increasingly longer periods of association required some means of communication, at first posturing and rudimentary vocal signals. However, the capacity for reasoning now had possibility for development lacking in his earlier circumstances. From that point reason was no longer limited to the necessities of life. The ability to universalize, to see new possibilities and to accumulate knowledge took man gradually beyond the 'pre-human' stage into the realm of language and eventually civilization.

Rousseau's characterization of original man's psychological life as *amour propre* is troublesome. It seems to require that original man was not self-conscious, that he had no more awareness of himself than any other animal. It was common during Rousseau's era to think of animals as complex biological machines, and one difference taken to mark the separation of man from animal was self-consciousness. Rousseau needed the thesis that original man lacked self-consciousness in order to argue that original man 'just as he came from the hands of Nature' would be little different from any other animal with respect to his exhibited mental abilities, for all other animals lack self-consciousness. Rousseau seems to have believed that self-consciousness comes into being only with the arising of reasoning beyond the animal stage, for it requires thought not about matters directly related to food, sex and shelter, but rather about the relationship of oneself to others, and especially awareness of dominance and hierarchy relationships.

The central mechanism of *amour propre* is comparison of self with others and the desire to be in some sense better off or dominant over others. Thus when self-consciousness first develops man first has the
potential for *amour propre*. *Amour propre* emerges as men begin to live in communities, and begin to vie for status as the best provider or best defender of the community. Man learns that prestige of a sort and attention go to the dominant members of the group, and thus competition, envy, jealousy, and ambition have their birth in man's history.

As the complexity of society increases so do the number and variety of the comparisons he makes. The result is that the few simple desires of original man, characterized as *amour de soi*, develop into the numerous passions of modern man, most of which are characterized as *amour propre*. To the extent that the desires of modern man can be characterized as *amour propre* they are superfluous and harmful. They are harmful because they motivate man to seek what he does not need for the simple maintenance of life. The desire for comparative status and wealth places him in unnecessary competition with others. Ultimately the harm men do to one another and most of the problems which confront modern man are, according to Rousseau, the result of this transition to *amour propre*.

Rousseau does not describe the psychological mechanism by which the first comparisons came about. His argument seems to be that increased contact with others would produce this first awakening of man's reason, but that such comparisons could not have been made while the contact was infrequent. Just why this is so I have not been able to decipher. The important point, for my thesis, is that Rousseau has argued that *amour propre* would be foreign to original man, and therefore not a necessary characteristic of what it is to be of the human species. Thus there is at least the possibility of a society which
does not consist of individuals whose predominant attitude is *amour propre*. And thus Hobbes' formulation of political society, which assumes that individuals are inherently egoists governed by *amour propre*, is at least theoretically mistaken.

In attacking Hobbes' egoism Rousseau presents another argument. Not only is *amour propre* absent in the initial situation, there is a positive concern for others which is present in the initial situation.

There is another principle which has escaped Hobbes; which, having been bestowed on mankind, to moderate, on certain occasions, the impetuosity of egoism, or, before its birth, the desire of self-preservation, tempers the ardour with which he pursues his own welfare, by an innate repugnance at seeing a fellow-creature suffer.1 This additional principle is that of compassion, which is a positive, if only occasionally felt, concern for the well-being of others.

Rousseau's introduction of the concept of compassion has engendered much discussion. The exact role it plays in Rousseau's view of mankind has remained controversial. In this discussion I shall try to present Rousseau's thoughts on this topic without pretending that I have been able to provide an adequate solution to the problem.

The instincts of all animals, including original man, are primarily instincts of self-preservation (characterized by *amour de soi*). An exception is the sex drive, which is present in all animals but not necessary to the self-preservation of the individual. It is, however, necessary for the survival of the species. The question we will be considering here is whether compassion is necessary either for individual self-preservation or, like the sex drive, for the preservation of the species.
Rousseau presents his definition of compassion in the preface to the Second Discourse.

Contemplating the first and most simple operations of the human soul, I think I can perceive in it two principles prior to reason, one of them deeply interesting us in our own welfare and preservation, and the other exciting a natural repugnance at seeing any other sensible being, and particularly any of our own species, suffer pain or death. 52

Self-preservation always takes precedence over compassion. In any case in which original man's feeling of compassion might clash with the needs of self-preservation, compassion would be overridden.

So long as he does not resist the internal impulse of compassion, he will never hurt any other man, nor even any sentient being, except on those lawful occasions on which his own preservation is concerned and he is obliged to give himself the preference. 53

In these passages Rousseau is sharply distinguishing compassion from the drive for self-preservation. This alone justifies the conclusion that compassion must be assumed to be necessary for the preservation of the species rather than directly a factor in the individual's preservation.

There is another reason for supposing that compassion must be explained on the grounds of its value to the species rather than the individual. According to Rousseau, original man would be quite self-sufficient without feeling compassion. Given original man's almost total isolation, compassion would not have much of an opportunity to make itself felt. In the original situation it is only rarely that one individual would encounter another, and it would be even more rare to encounter another under circumstances in which compassion would be appropriate. In these circumstances compassion could have no positive
survival value for the individual.

In fact, Rousseau does not try to establish compassion in the original situation on the grounds of its value for individual self-preservation. Instead he argues that compassion would be necessary for the preservation of the species:

It is then certain that compassion is a natural feeling, which, by moderating the violence of love of self in each individual, contributes to the preservation of the whole species.54

This is not a very strong argument on Rousseau's part. Given that opportunities to express compassion would be rare in the original situation, it would seem to have as little survival value for the species as it does for the individual.

Given a situation of constant competition among individuals, such as Hobbes' war of all against all, compassion might well be effective in preventing the destruction of the human species. However, Rousseau has previously argued that the original situation is one of general peace and harmony. Thus compassion would not be necessary in the original situation on those grounds.55

There is another basis for denying that compassion would be a factor in the original situation. In certain places Rousseau argues that compassion develops and has effective force only to the extent that the original man identifies with others:

Compassion must, in fact, be the stronger, the more the animal beholding any kind of distress identifies himself with the animal that suffers.56

Yet Rousseau also argues that original man lacked reason and imagination:
His imagination paints no pictures; his heart makes no demands on him. His few wants are so readily supplied, and he is so far from having the knowledge which is needful to make him want more, that he can have neither foresight nor curiosity.57

Since original man lacked imagination and curiosity, it would seem that he could not identify with others, and if he could not identify with others he could feel little compassion. Thus it would seem that the preconditions for compassion would not be present in original man—or at least for compassion which could be of enough consequence in man's affairs to be considered to have positive survival value. If compassion is present in man, it could be present only as a potential. Yet this is just the situation with man's latent ability to reason. Rousseau's arguments so far are insufficient to show that man's capacity for compassion can be treated differently from his latent ability to reason--i.e., that compassion is present in original man but reason is not.

Rousseau does present another argument for the contention that compassion is an inherent characteristic of man which is manifested even in the original situation. This takes the form of presenting evidence that compassion is observed in animal behavior. Such evidence is supposed to establish that compassion is not an artificial product of society. Since compassion is an observable characteristic of animals, it would be an observable characteristic of original man. Compassion is, Rousseau writes, "at the same time so natural, that the very brutes themselves give evident proofs of it."58

Roger Masters, in a long discussion of Rousseau's evidence for compassion in animals, argues that Rousseau's evidence could as easily point to a desire for self-preservation as to a 'repugnance at seeing
For example, Rousseau cites the case of a horse which, coming upon a dead horse, becomes terrified. Masters asks whether the horse's terror might not as easily be explained in terms of the horse's own fear of death rather than in terms of a natural compassion. Investigating Rousseau's various pieces of evidence, Masters concludes that Rousseau has provided no proof of compassion in animals that has the effect of promoting the survival of the species. In fact, Masters argues that compassion would not be present in any form in the original situation:

Although Rousseau unquestionably considers pity "natural to the human heart," it appears that this sentiment is "obscure" and cannot be felt as long as man lives in isolation in the pure state of nature.  

Of course Rousseau might be guilty of no more than a poor selection of evidence. We could seek other cases of animal behavior with which to support Rousseau's claim against Masters' criticisms. However, I am more concerned with the shift in Rousseau's strategy of argument. Notice that Rousseau's arguments to this point have been based upon what is necessary for a well adapted being, or necessary for the continuance of the species. He has rejected reason, sociability, and the family unit from the original situation because they do not meet either of these criteria. If Rousseau believed that compassion could be established in the original situation on the basis of evidence of animal behavior, even though compassion does not meet these criteria, then he cannot reject reason and sociability just because they do not meet these criteria. It would be necessary to explore evidence of animal behavior and find that there is no evidence of reason or sociability. (Rousseau does not
himself specifically state that he believes that his evidence of animal behavior is meant to be taken as an independent argument for the existence of compassion in original man. Most likely he viewed this evidence as confirmation rather than as a self-sufficient argument.)

I doubt that the uncertainty concerning the exact status of compassion in Rousseau's thought can be resolved. I believe that Rousseau was himself confused on the matter, as is illustrated by the differing and inconsistent roles which he accords to compassion in his various works. In the Second Discourse he indicates at times that self-preservation is the "sole motive of human actions". Considering the matter again in the Emile, Rousseau presents this same claim in even stronger language:

The origin of our passions, the root and spring of all the rest, the only one which is born with man, which never leaves him as long as he lives, is self-love.62

However, in the preface to the Second Discourse Rousseau insists that compassion is independent of self-preservation and exists as such in original man. Here he has explicitly contrasted compassion with self-preservation and discusses the relationship between these two as separate principles.

Given the confused status of compassion, and the lack of grounds for its being necessary to original man, it might be suggested that compassion simply be dropped from Rousseau's analysis. I do not believe that Rousseau would accept this suggestion, for reasons that will be developed later. I shall, however, anticipate this reasoning briefly. Ultimately, I argue, Rousseau will be seen to hold the view that reason alone cannot motivate action, and that all actions presuppose some motivating desire. At the same time he will hold that man in modern
circumstances must come to love his fellow man and must act to promote the well-being of all men. To get men to act in this way will require not only that they see the reasons for doing so, but also that they have some basis in desire to motivate them. The drive for self-preservation, taken either as *amour propre* or *amour de soi*, will not be sufficient for this purpose. Compassion will be necessary to modern man to motivate him to the behavior Rousseau recommends in the *Social Contract*. Rousseau anticipates this position concerning the role of compassion in the *Social Contract* when he asks in the *Second Discourse*, "But what is generosity, clemency, or humanity but compassion applied to the weak, to the guilty, or to mankind in general?"  

The Transition from Original Man to Modern Man

The life of original man is a life of natural balance and harmony with his environment. This situation would last forever and original man would never have developed had not changes occurred in his environment which initiate a change in his mental life. But who does not see, without recurring to the uncertain testimony of history, that everything seems to remove from savage man both the temptation and the means of changing his condition?  

Of course, original man did develop into modern man, so such change did occur. Rousseau's reasoning in accounting for this change is different from the reasoning he used to establish the conditions of the original situation. The original situation was established via a system of deductions and purports to be a factual account. The account to be given of the transition to modern man must be a hypothetical account. The actual causes involved are forever hidden in history. To account for man's
transition will require suggestions of the most probable causes of the transition. However, this is sufficient for Rousseau's purposes. He is willing to admit the possibility of error in this account, for such error will not involve any important change in his view of human nature. For example, it would not be very important to discover that the first language developed in a somewhat different manner from that presented by Rousseau, for that would not establish that language was present in the original situation.

We begin the account of the transition with the knowledge gained concerning the original situation, which comes to us as a deduction from previously acquired knowledge. We also know that modern man is quite different from original man. Modern man is egoistic, competitive, and often acts in evil and corrupt ways. This we know from simple observation of modern man.

That men are actually wicked, a sad and continual experience of them proves beyond doubt. However, to understand the extent of change and give precise meaning to terms such as 'corrupt' and 'evil', we must provide an account of the causes which produced the transition. We must tie together the knowledge of original man and the knowledge of modern man in order to provide the complete history of man which is necessary to judging his present condition.

The first important change in the original situation was probably an increase in population. As the population grew original men would encounter one another more frequently. According to Rousseau, this resulted in new desires in man, desires not present in original man. Now
an increase in population and an increase in contact with others is not sufficient by itself to produce new desires. Man must have the potential for a change in desire. An increase in animal population would not produce new desires in other animals. Man, as opposed to other animals, must have a potential to alter the condition of living "solely to the direction of instinct". 70

Nature lays her commands on every animal, and the brute obeys her voice. Man receives the same impulsion, but at the same time knows herself at liberty to acquiesce or resist. 71

If man were not free to obey or disobey his original instincts, the fact of more frequent contact with others could not produce a change in his desires. In addition to the freedom from purely instinctive behavior, man must have the potential to develop his mental capacities. Though man is not rational in the original situation, he must obviously have the potential to become so (because he did).

This is the faculty of self-improvement, which, by the help of circumstances, gradually develops all the rest of our faculties, and is inherent in the species as in the individual. 72

The potential for perfectability refers to the possibility of developing the mental abilities beyond what would be displayed by original man. Developing these abilities presupposes freedom from purely instinctive behavior, but that freedom does not imply perfectability, and so the two potentials are distinct.

An increase in the frequency of contact, given liberty and perfectability, resulted in men realizing the advantages of cooperative ventures to obtain food, for food was becoming harder to come by due to the increase in population. At first these ventures were infrequent, and the cooperation was limited. Such associations were maintained only while
the need for cooperation was immediate. Gradually the associations became more complex and man began to maintain association even when the reason for association was past. This development, along with the requirements of coordinating their efforts to procure food, gave rise to a new need, the need to communicate.

To satisfy this need man developed language. This language was at first very crude and unsophisticated, because there was little man had to communicate. As the need to associate and communicate with others grew, language developed further. The requirements and convenience of association produced more than the development of language. Man's potential to reason, to make distinctions and to plan for the future also developed. According to Rousseau, man's capacities for language, reasoning, etc., came into play only as he found himself more and more frequently in situations in which his animal abilities and animal instincts were no longer sufficient for his self-preservation. The use of these new abilities allowed man to survive; indeed, to continue to increase in population.

However, the development of man's potential abilities carried with it some negative elements. In learning to reason man began to make distinctions he could not have made in his purely savage state. He was now able to compare himself with others. The results of these comparisons were not always good.

Men began now to take the difference between objects into account, and to make comparisons; they acquired imperceptibly the ideas of beauty and merit, which soon gave rise to feelings of preference. In consequence of seeing each other often, they could not do without seeing each other constantly. A tender and pleasing feeling insinuated itself into their souls, and the least opposition turned it into an impetuous fury;
with love arose jealousy; discord triumphed, and human blood was sacrificed to the gentlest of all passions.75

Not all these new feelings were bad. One result of the development of cooperation was the family unit. In the family unit new feelings arose which also were not available to original man. As men became accustomed to living together they developed "conjugal love" and "paternal affection", which Rousseau praises as the "finest feelings known to humanity".76 Here we have a change from original man, but a change that is applauded rather than deplored. Thus change from the original situation is not necessarily bad change, on Rousseau's view. In fact, this change may be called 'natural' because it is necessary in the changing circumstances in which man finds himself.

Man's existence gradually became more and more complex and he formed more complex associations. One result of this, according to Rousseau, is that he gradually increased the use of his latent abilities. He increased the number and kind of distinctions he made, and formed new preferences and desires. Many of these new desires were not positively related to his self-preservation, as are those which Rousseau praises in the family unit. For example, men began to desire to be regarded as stronger, braver, or more eloquent than others, and this resulted in feelings of "shame and envy" and "vanity and contempt".77 These new factors were not beneficial to man. The resulting competition and conflict were unnecessary for the purposes of the association and, in fact, were counterproductive to those purposes. Of course, the advantages outweighed the disadvantages, for cooperation continued and increased. However, men now no longer survived strictly through a balance of individual
resources and environment. This change is possible because on Rousseau's account the principle of natural balance, as it applies to man, is not an incontrovertible law. It applies to man in the original situation because there would be no efficient cause for it not to apply.

In joining in association man developed new desires, some of which were not directed solely towards his self-preservation. For Rousseau, this development is the first step in the transition from *amour de soi* to *amour propre*. Gradually the attitude of *amour propre* comes to dominate the life of man. At this point very few of man's desires can be characterized as *amour de soi*, and man is dominated by the desire to surpass others.

Insatiable ambition, the thirst of raising their respective fortunes, not so much from real want as from the desire to surpass others, inspired all men with a vile propensity to injure one another.  

By the time that this happens, man's mental faculties are almost fully developed, and in this respect he is quite close to modern man.

Behold then all human faculties developed, memory and imagination in full play, egoism interested, reason active, and the mind almost at the highest point of its perfection.  

This is the situation when man first conceives of the institution of private property.  

The major change that is to account for the notion of private property is that man begins to engage in agriculture. Agriculture involves the use and control of land over extended periods of time. This constant possession and the labor involved in agriculture bring about the notion of ownership of the land (and its produce). Men begin to make claims of property and begin to enforce these claims.
An important result of the development of agriculture is that the possibility of real wealth is introduced into man's situation. The efficient use of land produces an economic power not previously available. Men can produce a great deal more than they need, and by enforcing their claim that this surplus is their property, they become wealthy in comparison to those without land. Due to the obvious advantages of claiming land for one's own use, all the productive land will soon become 'property'. When this happens we see the second great step in the development towards the inequalities of modern times—the wealth in the hands of a relative few, relative poverty for the majority, and increased tension for all.

In a word, there arose rivalry and competition on the one hand, and conflicting interests on the other, together with a secret desire on both of profiting at the expense of others. All these evils were the first effects of property, and the inseparable attendant of growing inequality.

With their newfound wealth the property owners can consolidate their power. They can hire others to work and guard their property, and increase their wealth at the expense of others. They can and do form governments to further help them secure their claims. The formation of governments for this purpose constitutes the next major step towards modern moral and political inequality.

Such was, or may well have been, the origin of society and law, which bound new fetters on the poor, and gave new powers to the rich; which irretrievably destroyed natural liberty, eternally fixed the law of property and inequality, converted clever usurpation into unalterable right, and for the advantage of a few ambitious individuals, subjected mankind to perpetual labour, slavery, and wretchedness.

The last step is when the governments become the seat of real power, taking the wealth from the property owners. This happens when
governments turn despotic. According to Rousseau, this is an inevitable consequence when governments are founded on the two pillars of individual egoism and the illegitimate claims to property. In the first governments the property owners give a limited power to some individual or small group of individuals in order to enforce their claims of wealth against the poor, and in order to arbitrate fairly the disputes which arise among the property owners. As time goes on the individuals in the government, or their successors, develop this power to the point that they are stronger than the property owners. When this happens, Rousseau argues, the government will become despotic. It may even claim the right to do so, as in the case of those who claim the divine right of monarchy. Despotism is the final step in the development of inequality, for it produces the final condition of master and slave.

Thus magistrates, having become hereditary, contracted the habit of considering their offices as a family estate, and themselves as proprietors of the communities of which they were at first only the officers, or regarding their fellow-citizens as their slaves, and numbering them, like cattle, among their belongings, and of calling themselves the equals of the gods and kings of kings.

Rousseau is not claiming that all governments are in this final stage, just that this final stage is an inevitable result of all societies which have been illegitimately founded on egoism and property. The solution, the way to avoid this end, will be to reestablish society on firmer grounds than these. Just what these grounds will be is the subject of the Social Contract.
Rousseau does not develop a theory of morality in the Second Discourse. However, he does lay the foundations for the theory he will develop in the Social Contract. We can extract this foundation from Rousseau's various arguments that previous theories of morality are mistaken. One of the most interesting and revealing of these arguments is Rousseau's rejection of Locke's theory of property. Before discussing this part of the Second Discourse it will be helpful briefly to review Rousseau's arguments against the natural law tradition and against the thesis that property rights can be established by force.

The traditional doctrine of natural law held that there are universal and inalienable rights which apply to man qua man. In this tradition it was assumed that man was fully rational and a sociable being. Moral rules apply to man as a social animal, and are in principle discoverable by man the rational animal. The moral rules so discovered will apply universally to men in all circumstances, including those who existed prior to the formation of political society.  

In attacking this position Rousseau commends Hobbes for seeing "the defect of all modern definitions of natural right". Hobbes had argued that man is not naturally social. According to Hobbes all notions of right and duty must begin with the individual who is prior to all forms of society, rather than with social man. Moral rules for social man are, contra traditional teachings, to be derived from the rights of individuals considered as asocial. In addition, Hobbes had argued that if moral rules are to have any real effect they must be rooted in the passions rather than in reason. Reason may discover what is
right, but reason itself lacks the force of effective motivation. If they are not to be impotent, the rules of morality must be consistent with the most profound desires of individual man.

Rousseau agrees with both these points, as well as with Hobbes' identification of self-preservation as the most profound passion. As noted earlier Rousseau differs from Hobbes in viewing the drive for self-preservation as characterized by amour de soi, rather than amour propre. Rousseau adds to Hobbes' attack on traditional natural law by arguing that man is not inherently rational. Hobbes' position was that man was rational, but social only by convention. Rousseau's position is that man's rationality and his sociability are both conventional. Thus Rousseau's rejection of natural law doctrine is even more extreme than Hobbes'. With this rejection Rousseau has effectively argued that property rights (ownership) cannot be based upon natural law.

It is difficult to determine exactly what 'rights' are, on Rousseau's account, and what rights, if any, exist prior to civil society. He uses the concept 'right' in different senses, and this leads to confusion in following his argument. For example, he frequently argues that there are no rights prior to civil society, and yet just as often tells us that each individual has the right to self-preservation and all that is required for self-preservation. Such apparent inconsistencies can at least partially be resolved by using a distinction concerning 'rights' which Rousseau did not himself explicitly make.

One sense of 'right' takes rights as permissions. To say that someone has a right to use $x$ means that he is permitted to use $x$. There is no obligation on his part not to use $x$. Rights in this sense do not
imply that others must refrain from using that which another has a right to. More than one person may have the right to use the same things. For example, everyone may have a right to purchase the last ticket to the World Series, even though there is only one ticket to be had.

It is this sense of 'right' which Rousseau seems to be using in discussing the original situation, and the right to all that is required for self-preservation. Original man, like all other animals, is permitted to take whatever he desires. (Like all other animals, he desires only what he needs.) This does not imply that since one individual has a right to something in the original situation, other individuals have an obligation to let him obtain it. It merely means that no individual has an obligation to refrain from acting on any of his desires. In this original man is in the same situation as the rest of the animal kingdom. Each animal has a right to self-preservation and all that is required for self-preservation, but no animal has an obligation to allow any other animal to fulfill those rights. In short, the notion of 'obligation' does not apply to animals, and for Rousseau it does not apply to original man who is no more than another species of animal.

Another sense of 'right' is that to say "X has a right to Y" implies that others have an obligation to refrain from Y. For example, if I have a right, in this sense, to a particular land, then others are obligated not to use that land. The extent of obligation here is open to dispute. It might be argued that others may not use my land or its produce without my permission. Or it might be that others may use my land without my permission in certain circumstances, e.g., extreme necessity. The extent of obligation implied by such rights depends upon what
theories of property and obligation one holds. However one decides such issues, 'right' here implies obligation on others in some circumstances. In agreeing with Hobbes on the rejection of the Natural Law tradition, Rousseau is attacking rights of this kind. From this point I shall use the term 'right' to indicate this latter sense of right. Where I wish to discuss rights as mere permissions I will make this clear.

This distinction between the two senses of 'right' has helped to clarify Rousseau's position on the original situation. However, the original situation is at the very beginning of the history of man. Civil society is possible only very late in this history. There is a long and gradual transition from man's beginning to this later point. In that transition man has developed his powers of reasoning, has invented language, agriculture, social organization, he has acquired amour propre. The conditions of the original situation are quite unlike those in which civil society is possible. Thus it might be argued that while no obligations exist in the original situation, obligations do come into existence at some point after the original situation and prior to the formation of civil society. Rousseau explicitly rejected this view. He argued not only that there are no rights in the original situation, but that no rights exist at any time in man's history prior to the formation of legitimate society. His strategy was to argue that nothing has occurred in man's history after the original situation which could produce rights. Rousseau's concern in developing this argument was to attack the view that 'legitimate society' is one which is based upon rights individuals have prior to the formation of the society. Rousseau thought that rights only come into existence with the formation of a legitimate society.
Rousseau's primary antagonist here is Locke, who was the major spokesman for the former view or rights. The importance of this disagreement will be explored below in my discussion of Rousseau's theory of property rights.

Property

As we have seen, Rousseau rejected the view that rights derive from Natural Law. He also argues that force does not produce right. The fact that some achieve a position of dominance over others, whether through physical force, economic power, or control of political institutions, does not produce an obligation on the part of those dominated. It merely gives them prudential reasons to acquiesce to those in power, while they remain in power. This reasoning is most clearly evident in Rousseau's attack on prevailing views of property rights.

Most societies, according to Rousseau, accept the legitimacy of property rights. In Part II of the Second Discourse Rousseau is especially concerned to deny all current views of property. His arguments will establish the basis for his view of property which will be presented in full in the Social Contract.

In order to understand Rousseau's reasoning we must distinguish between the ownership and the possession of land. Possession is the appropriation of land and its produce for one's own use. Ownership is possession of land with the additional claim that no one else has a right to use the land or its produce. The claim to property with which Rousseau is concerned is the claim to ownership. Rousseau believes one has the right to appropriate land as a possession, but not the right to
appropriate land as property. (At least until the society of the Social Contract.)

It is helpful to contrast this view with the position taken by Locke. Locke held that individuals can have property rights in the state of nature, and that legitimate civil society must be based upon property rights. The state of nature which Locke discusses is, for Rousseau, a situation that occurs well along in the history of man. Locke defined the state of nature as a situation in which political society is absent. For Locke, men in the state of nature were fully rational and had social relations with others. In Rousseau's account this is a description of men who had developed far from original man.

Locke argued that when an individual in the state of nature works and develops land which has not previously been appropriated, his labor establishes ownership of the land. Locke's argument is based on his natural law teachings. Man, as a rational animal, is governed by the dictates of reason, and, according to Locke, reason dictates this view of property.

In the section preceding this discussion, I showed that Rousseau rejected the natural law doctrine. Rousseau would argue that Locke's view of property is mistaken because it is based upon an incorrect view of morality. In the Second Discourse Rousseau explicitly rejects the thesis that labor can produce property rights.

Even those who have been enriched by their own industry could hardly base their proprietorship on better claims. It was in vain to repeat: "I built this well, I gained this spot by my industry."
However, there is another way to view Locke's argument for property rights. Leo Strauss has argued that Locke derives property rights from the right of self-preservation. I shall use Strauss's interpretation as a contrast which will help explicate Rousseau's view of property rights.

According to Strauss Locke argues that, since each individual has the right of self-preservation, it follows that each has a right to all that is necessary for self-preservation. This implies that each may appropriate whatever land he may require for self-preservation. To this point Rousseau concurs. However, if Strauss is correct, Locke concludes on the basis of those rights that appropriation of unused land gives the individual exclusive rights to the land, and thus ownership of the land. This thesis Rousseau denies.

In the original situation, according to Rousseau, there are no moral obligations. Individuals may appropriate what is required for self-preservation, but this does not imply ownership because there is no obligation on others to respect those possessions. (Rousseau's original man is so intellectually limited he could not conceive of working and developing land, much less be able to form the concepts of obligation and property.)

The right to self-preservation implies the right to whatever is necessary for self-preservation. It follows that if two individuals need the same thing in order to survive, neither of them has a morally prior claim to the thing needed. Thus if one individual is starving he has an equal right to the produce of the land as that of the individual who possesses the land. The possessor of the land, no matter how long he has
held the land or how much labor he has put into the land, cannot legiti-
mately claim that he has a right to its produce which is not a right of
the individual to whom that produce is necessary to survival. The in-
dividual who worked the land has the right of possession, but not the
right of ownership, at least with respect to others for whom his posses-
sion comprises a necessity for survival.

There are other situations to consider. There could be a conflict
between two individuals over land which neither requires as means to
self-preservation. Suppose that Locke's position is that individuals in
the Lockean state of nature may legitimately appropriate as property
only what they need for their preservation, as Strauss's interpretation
suggests. In this case neither of the individuals in the above example
would meet the requirements for legitimate appropriation, so neither
would have the right to ownership. There could also be a conflict be-
tween two individuals, one of whom currently possesses the land, but does
not need it, and another who does need it. In this case, (on the above
supposition), Locke would argue that the possession does not meet the
criteria for legitimate appropriation, and thus the possessor does not
have ownership of the land. The individual who needs the land may appro-
priate it. In both of these cases Rousseau would argue that no one has
property rights.

Consider another case; one in which there is a conflict between an
individual who both possesses the land and needs it for his preservation
and another who does not need it for survival. Rousseau, in denying all
property rights prior to the civil society, denies any obligation on the
part of the contender to respect the possessor's claim of ownership.
This was true in the original situation (though no such controversy would arise since there was an absence of concepts such as ownership), and it was true in the Lockean state of nature, for nothing occurred in the gradual transition from the former to the latter which could produce the legitimacy of such claims. In this situation Locke seems to have the more plausible view. Assuming that the possessor has met Locke's criteria for legitimate appropriation, most of us would want to say that the possessor has rights which the contender ought to respect. It would be a hard moral stand to maintain that one can, without need, steal from those who are in need, or that individuals are not morally prohibited from claiming as much property as they desire without concern for the needs of others.

Rousseau's concern, however, is not to justify such counter-intuitive conclusions. Rather he is arguing that those actions cannot be condemned as immoral by arguing from the right of self-preservation to property rights and then concluding those actions violate property rights.

Rousseau has an additional argument that property rights cannot derive from the right of self-preservation. He argued that each individual has the right, in the sense of permission, to choose for himself the proper means of his self-preservation. Rousseau refers to this right as the freedom, or natural liberty, which attends man qua man. He argues that freedom is a right which is a feature of the original situation of man and is necessary for his survival. Since man is naturally free to make any decisions concerning his self-preservation, no rights can exist which obligate an individual not to make certain decisions. Property rights imply just such obligations, and so property rights do not exist.
So far we have been discussing property as means to one's self-preservation. Rousseau has more than property in mind when he refers to the means of self-preservation. He argues that the foremost means to survival (for modern man) are his freedom to make decisions relevant to his survival and to act on those decisions. It follows that no man is under obligation to give up his freedom to choose and to act on his choices. Strictly speaking, what follows from the right of self-preservation is the freedom to choose and act to promote survival. It does not follow that one has a right to freedom where this is taken to mean the freedom to make any decision whatever.

To illustrate this point consider the case of the man who has more than enough to insure his survival. Suppose this man decides to appropriate more land and produce a surplus for himself. Does the right of self-preservation imply his right to make this kind of decision? Rousseau explicitly condemns such decisions.

Besides, however speciously they [the rich] might disguise their usurpations, they knew that they were founded on precarious and false titles.

Of course, the individual can make this decision and carry it out if he is strong enough, but this does not make it legitimate. In fact, this is one of the major problems facing modern man. _Amour propre_ has become so predominant in man's life that such decisions are frequently made. _Amour propre_ is the major factor in the development of inequality of wealth, for without the desire for more than is necessary no one would, in fact, take more than he needs. At one point Rousseau admits that even without a legitimate moral basis the claim to ownership of land would not result in great evil, if ownership were not abused through the
desire for more than is necessary. 102

Rousseau assumes here, probably correctly, that modern techniques of agriculture would produce enough food to sustain everyone, and so no real conflicts over necessities would arise. 103 If this were in fact true, then the claim to property would not present a great problem for modern man, because such claims would not seriously hinder an individual's pursuit of his own preservation.

Rousseau clearly thinks that modern man performs unnecessarily harmful acts. One of these, as noted, is the illegitimate appropriation of land, which leads to poverty for the majority. At the same time he argues that individuals are not obligated to refrain from such acts where this obligation is taken as derivative from property rights. This is because property rights are non-existent. Claims to ownership, at least prior to the civil society, conflict with the right to freedom. Since each individual has an equal right to freedom, no one can legitimately claim that another ought to give up or limit his freedom. The claim to property rights is an assertion of the authority to limit the freedom of others. It would deny others the right to choose to use a certain area of land or its produce. Thus the claim to property is illegitimate because it is inconsistent with freedom.

According to Rousseau, most modern forms of government are established on the basis of property rights. A large part of the laws and morals of society are based upon a moral theory which includes property as a fundamental right. In this situation the condemnation of acts as immoral is unjustified because it is based upon an incorrect moral theory. What Rousseau holds to be the correct moral theory is developed in the Social
Contract. This does not show that harmful acts are legitimate before the civil society of the Social Contract, but it does show that these acts are not immoral in just the sense they are often taken to be immoral.

Even though the correct moral theory is not developed in the Second Discourse, there is one important feature of the correct moral theory that is revealed in the above argument. Moral obligation cannot be created without the consent of all parties involved, for otherwise the right of freedom would be violated. It follows that the establishment of property rights, which places obligations on others, requires consent by all others. Thus Locke's conditions for legitimate appropriation of land are not sufficient to create property rights.

However, on Rousseau's account, even if consent were added to Locke's conditions, property rights would not be created. Merely consenting to others' claims of ownership is insufficient to create true property rights, even if Locke's conditions are met. For Rousseau, there are restrictions on the kind of convention that can produce true moral obligation. One of these restrictions involves what it is appropriate for one to consent to.

For example, on Rousseau's view if an individual gives up what is necessary for his preservation he must be considered insane. Such behavior would be "an offense against both reason and nature". The freedom of each individual is his primary means of self-preservation. To give up freedom is to give up what is necessary for self-preservation. To consent to give up freedom is therefore a form of madness. Now the consent of a madman produces no obligation on his part, for madmen are
not moral agents. As non-responsible beings, they cannot be held accountable in the same way that free and rational moral agents are held accountable. It follows from this that to suppose a whole people can give up its freedom (e.g., agree to a slavery or to acknowledge the divine right of a monarch) is to suppose the whole people are mad. Neither individual consent nor universal convention is sufficient to produce obligation. In fact one of the major tasks of the Social Contract will be to devise a way in which individuals can create moral obligation without giving up their freedom.

In might be suggested at this point that freedom is not always necessary for self-preservation. We can imagine situations in which the loss of freedom does not entail the loss of the means of preserving one's life. For example, many individuals have survived quite well as slaves to others. Thus it might be argued that freedom is not a necessary means of self-preservation and that consent to its loss may not be the act of a madman. If this is so, then this last argument of Rousseau's is unsound.

Rousseau has a reply to this suggestion. He distinguishes between voluntary consent and prudence. If someone threatens your life if you do not accept him as master, and has the power to carry out this threat, then it is prudent to 'consent' to slavery. However, this consent is based solely on force. As such it is not unconditional. The consent ends when the force disappears. The 'obligation' on the part of the 'consenting' slave is merely the recognition of superior force. If the slave should become strong enough, he would be justified in rejecting the obligation on the same grounds which produced it in the first place.
Such obligation is no obligation at all, and the 'consent' is merely prudence.

Now individuals may give up some freedom in a conditional sense. They may form voluntary cooperative ventures which restrict their freedom. They may form such ventures as their choice of the path to self-preservation. However, such choices should not be unconditional. The individual should always retain the right to leave the cooperative if he believes it is no longer conducive to his self-preservation. Rousseau's view is that an individual who consents to this loss of freedom unconditionally is consenting to the loss of freedom in all circumstances, even the circumstances in which the advantages gained are no longer sufficient for his preservation. Unconditional consent is therefore a form of madness, and cannot be the basis for moral obligation.

To consent unconditionally to the institution of property is gratuitously to limit one's future choices of the proper means of survival. Suppose, for example, that an individual agrees to the institution of property, and even lays claim to some property of his own. Suppose further that due to some natural event--e.g., the local water supply dries up--or due to mismanagement his land becomes worthless, while at the same time the remaining habitable land has become the property of others. Now the individual is in very bad circumstances, for by his consent to unconditional property rights he has dangerously limited his alternatives. Such voluntary limitation of one's freedom of choice, for Rousseau, is a form of madness. We should note that Rousseau does not thereby eliminate the possibility of conditional property rights. In fact, conditional property rights will perform a vital function in creating the society of
the *Social Contract*.

Rousseau's discussions of morality in the *Second Discourse* are best viewed as providing negative criticisms of previous moral theories. In criticizing previous theories he has laid the groundwork for the moral theory to be developed in the *Social Contract*. This takes the form of providing criteria which the correct moral theory must meet. The major criteria which will concern us in discussing the *Social Contract* are that the correct moral theory must derive from the right of self-preservation and its corollary, the right of freedom; moral rules must be consistent with the fundamental drives of man (self-preservation and compassion); and this moral theory must be established via convention, where this convention does not violate the individual's rights of self-preservation and freedom.

**The Problems Confronting Modern Man**

With his history of man completed, Rousseau is now in a position to judge modern man, as he had promised in the beginning of this work. The history began with original man. Coming "straight from the hands of nature" original man would live a life of peace, harmony and contentment. His mental life would be primarily instinctive, and his desires characterized almost exclusively by *amour de soi*. Perhaps occasionally he would feel a "repugnance at seeing another human suffer".

The transition to modern man displays several trends. Man's physical abilities degenerate because he has less need to exercise them, and this leaves modern man a much weaker physical specimen than original man. For the most part, modern man is physically incapable of the
self-sufficiency of original man. Modern man's mental abilities expand tremendously. Accompanying this development in mental abilities is the shift in his general attitude from *amour de soi* to *amour propre*, for *amour propre* is the result of the many new comparisons which become possible only as the intellect is awakened. This increase in mental resources is more than sufficient to outweigh the decrease in physical resources. Man can not only survive, he can create excesses of wealth and luxuries.

The result of these developments is that modern man no longer exists through an individual balance of resources and environment. His survival needs are met through the advantages of cooperative ventures. However, modern man has mental abilities in excess of what is required in cooperative ventures the purpose of which is just the satisfaction of the needs of survival. He has desires in excess of those required to motivate such limited cooperation. In contrast with original man, whose desires are very limited and do not exceed his needs, modern man has desires which are far in excess of his needs. According to Rousseau, ambition, greed, and other features of his mental life motivate man to engage in unnecessary and harmful activities. Living in crowded cities, seeking to dominate his fellow man, and engaging in unhealthy trades such as mining are just a few examples of activities which are unnecessary to survival and harmful in producing conflict and an unhealthy way of life.108

Even though modern man does survive, his manner of living is much more hazardous than that of original man, and much less satisfactory. The life of original man was a life of peace, contentment, and a harmony with all nature. This was the result of his perfect balance of resources
and environment. The life of modern man is a life of conflict, discontentment, and disharmony and results from the imbalance of his resources (primarily his motivations) and his environment.

However, modern man has the potential, at least theoretically, to reconstruct his life in accordance with the principle of natural balance. This life would be much different from the life of original man. This life would, because of the loss of self-sufficiency, involve cooperation among men. It would also require the use of reason, language, the development of political and moral rules to govern their cooperation. On this interpretation of what Rousseau sees as the problems of modern man, the formation of society, the construction of science and art, in fact all the achievements of man's development, are not to be viewed as bad or unnatural per se. Society can be natural to man, if the society is so constructed as to produce the balance and harmony that described the life of original man. 109

However, present society does not produce this balance. Because of the triumph of amour propre over amour de soi, the historical development of society has, perhaps inevitably, produced bad consequences and an essential imbalance of resources and environment. Each man is threatened by the amour propre of others. The corrupted desires of others to dominate him are ever present, and are magnified by the ability of others to use the products of science against him. This threat is further magnified by their ability to manipulate the moral and political rules of society against him for their own ends.

The individual is also threatened by his own attitude of amour propre. Dissatisfied with merely meeting the requirements of
self-preservation, the individual desires luxuries, power and status beyond what he truly needs. Such desires will often lead to his taking risks which are unnecessary from the standpoint of his survival. These desires will also tend to lead him into quite unnecessary competition and confrontation with others.

All the evils of modern society are ultimately the result of *amour propre*. The solution, then, is for modern man to revert to *amour de soi*, and to recapture the natural balance between his (current) resources and his (current) environment. The ideal solution to modern man's problems will be to devise a society which will allow him to live according to the principle of natural balance, his actions guided by reason but governed by the natural motivations of *amour de soi* and compassion. Compassion, according to Rousseau, became ineffective in the life of modern man because it was overshadowed by the creation of many new and corrupt feelings, such as vanity, envy, and greed. Yet justice and humanity are, on Rousseau's account, merely compassion writ large. If the unnatural desires could be eliminated by a return to *amour de soi*, or at least subjugated to the extent that they no longer restrain man's natural compassion, then justice and humanity could become effective forces in the life of modern man. To what extent this is possible, and how society must be constructed to approach this goal, are questions which are addressed in the *Social Contract*.

**Critical Comments on Rousseau's Science of Man**

There is much of interest in the *Second Discourse*. The number and variety of issues Rousseau raises in this relatively short work are
quite large, and what Rousseau has to say about these issues is often controversial and puzzling. My primary interest in the Second Discourse has been to uncover the foundation of Rousseau's political theory, and I do not have the space to provide an adequate commentary on all that is of interest here. Before turning to the Social Contract, however, some critical remarks concerning those issues that directly affect my interpretation will be appropriate.

Rousseau adopted, probably from Buffon's Natural History, the thesis that there is a natural order of animal life which exists in a mechanical universe. I have argued that, on Rousseau's account, original man lived individually in accordance with the principle of natural balance. From the point of view of modern evolutionary theory, Rousseau's views are mistaken. The development of the different species of animals proceeds according to the principles of natural selection and the complex laws of genetics. The particular mental and physical resources of each species are products of complex genetic combination. Some of these resources have high survival value and result in the passing on of the total genetic makeup of the individual possessing those resources. According to the modern view, an individual is well-adapted when he is able to pass on his genetic makeup, and not well-adapted when he is unable to do so. On Rousseau's view an individual is well-adapted when he is a 'well-formed' specimen, i.e., when he has a full measure of the mental and physical resources of his species.

There are at least two important differences between these views. There are, contra Rousseau, many species which have become extinct. This
is important because Rousseau thought that the natural order was in some sense a necessary feature of the mechanical universe. He seems to have believed that all animals were somehow designed by nature such that the principle of natural balance obtains in every species. On current views it would be in only some species that this principle could plausibly be said to obtain; namely those which have not become extinct. There have been many combinations of mental and physical resources in the history of animal life, some more successful than others. Some species may have lasted for a long time before their inadequacies resulted in extinction. The point here is that it is a mistake to assume that every species which comes into existence is somehow governed by a balance of resources and environment. It follows that it is a mistake for Rousseau to assume that original man, merely because he appears on the scene, must be governed by such a balance.

The second important difference is that on the modern view the selection of species characteristics is much more complex than Rousseau realized. Individual characteristics are not always selected for on the basis of their survival value. Often two or more characteristics are genetically linked such that they are passed on together or not at all. It could be the case that a characteristic important for its high survival value is so linked to a characteristic which is not. In this case a species could well have characteristics which are irrelevant to its survival. If this is true, then Rousseau is not justified in eliminating from original man any characteristic merely on the basis that it is unnecessary for his survival.
It is even possible, on the modern view, for species to have characteristics which have negative survival value, yet for the species to survive. Such negative characteristics are permissible if there are other characteristics which have sufficient survival value to counterbalance the negative characteristics. All that is required on the modern view is that the total combination of characteristics is such that the gene pool continues. Some scientists think that the susceptibility to sickle cell anemia is such a characteristic. Thus Rousseau is unjustified, from the point of view of modern theory, in arguing that such characteristics as egoism would not be present in original man because they are unnecessary and harmful.

The above points to the errors Rousseau makes in arguing for and against characteristics in original man on the grounds that they are or are not necessary for his survival. Rousseau also argues that some characteristics, such as egoism, would not be possible in original man because there would be no efficient cause for their presence. The modern view assumes, with Rousseau, that the proper explanation of man is to be in terms of a mechanical universe, and that the study of man should proceed by seeking efficient causes for his development and behavior. However, on the modern view the causes are sought on the micro level of the molecular and genetic sciences. Rousseau oversimplifies the operation of the mechanical laws of the physical universe when he seeks efficient causes on the macro level of human affairs. It is consistent with the modern view that efficient mechanical causes for such characteristics as egoism could be found on the micro level, even though such causes would result in characteristics which have negative survival value for the
macro-organism. Thus it is possible to accept the mechanical view of animal organization without accepting Rousseau's strategy of arguing from this assumption to the exclusion of characteristics which do not have causes on the macro-level.

Setting aside the above problems, let us assume with Rousseau the principles of natural balance and causation in human affairs. Rousseau has argued from these assumptions that original man would be in harmony with his environment, at peace with his fellow man, and in general would be a well-adapted creature. Moreover this situation is internally stable, for without "accidental causes" original man would not have developed. As noted earlier the addition of accidental causes would be insufficient to initiate man's development. Man must have the potential of freedom to override his instincts and provide for intellectual development. Now the results of the changes in original man are the loss of his harmony with his environment, the introduction of evil and unnatural desires and actions, and new threats to both the individual and the species. This history of change in man is inconsistent with Rousseau's initial assumptions. Consider that on these assumptions the potentials for freedom from instinct and perfectibility should not be part of original man's makeup. If nature were to operate in the manner Rousseau supposes, then these potentials could not be present.

The problem is this. Original man is in harmony with his environment without liberty and the higher mental faculties, and they are superfluous and not present. Man is just another wild animal. Now on Rousseau's account the introduction of liberty and the development of the intellect inevitably leads to a loss of harmony. Nature prevents
this from happening to all other animals by denying them the potential for such change. Nature could maintain the harmony of original man simply by excluding the possibility of development, as she does with the other species. Thus allowing original man the potential for change is inconsistent with the assumption that nature produces only what is necessary and sufficient for natural harmony and balance.

Rousseau must find a justification for the inclusion of such potentials in original man which does not rest on his initial assumptions. Rousseau does provide this justification by reference to the Deity. God, says Rousseau, has a special plan for man that is not shared by the other, strictly mechanical species.114

Thus Rousseau ultimately appeals to a teleological principle, the hand of God. In doing so he gives up his scientific, strictly non-teleological study of man. This raises a problem for his argument concerning the nature of original man. If the hand of God does intrude into man's affairs, what basis is there for assuming that this intrusion occurs at just the time and in just the manner Rousseau assumes in this history of man? Perhaps God intervened in a different manner, producing an original man who was a reasoning, social being, perhaps even had egoist tendencies. To answer these questions would require that Rousseau enter the field of theology to support his view of original man, and this is just what Rousseau set out to avoid.

The intervention of God into man's makeup results in a being not governed solely by non-teleological scientific law. This calls into question Rousseau's deduction of original man solely in those terms. Rousseau does not appear to be aware of this problem, and presents no
defense of the shift from non-teleological explanation to teleological explanation. The unresolved tension between these two types of explanation in the Second Discourse, I believe, is the most serious shortcoming of Rousseau's reasoning.

There are, in addition to the issues I have raised, many issues worth discussing in the Second Discourse. For example, Masters has argued that according to the best anthropological evidence, the earliest men were, contra Rousseau, social beings dependent upon one another for survival. If this is true, then Rousseau's argument that original man was asocial is unsound, and his characterizations of original man's drive for self-preservation as amour de soi is unjustified.115

Unfortunately, the space I have available for the discussion of the Second Discourse is limited, so I must pass up the temptation to investigate the more interesting of Rousseau's claims concerning the psychology of man. It is time to turn to the Social Contract and begin the interpretation of Rousseau's political theory in light of what has been discovered in this chapter.
FOOTNOTES

1Rousseau, The Social Contract.

2Rousseau, A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality.


4Hesse, p. 36.


6Second Discourse, p. 214, "what would make language necessary and possible". As opposed to my approach, it is frequently argued that Rousseau's method was introspection. The usual starting point for this approach is Rousseau's two principles which are presented in the Preface to the Second Discourse. "I think I can perceive in it [human nature] two principles prior to reason, one of them deeply interesting us in our own welfare and preservation, and the other exciting a natural repugnance at seeing any other sensible being, and particularly any of our own species, suffer pain or death." Whether or not introspection provided the inspiration for these two principles, Rousseau did justify them through the use of empirical science, and it is this justification which is my concern here.


8Diderot, Sequel to the Apology of M. l'Abbe' de Prades, 1752; Buffon, Natural History, 1749; Condillac, Origin of Human Knowledge, 1746. cf. Butterfield's discussion of the influence of the new scientific world view, especially his discussion of the effect of Buffon's idea that man should be studied in his aspect as part of nature.

9In this section I follow the discussion presented by Leo Strauss, Natural Right and History, chapter VI.

10Second Discourse, p. 194.

11Ibid., p. 189.
Ibid., p. 190.

Ibid., part 1, note 10; cited in Masters, The Political Philosophy of Rousseau, p. 116.

cf. Plattner, Rousseau's State of Nature, chapter II, esp. Plattner's discussion of note J. I find Plattner's arguments that Rousseau meant his account to be factual are particularly convincing. I shall incorporate this view as an assumption in what follows.

cf. Plattner, Rousseau's State of Nature, chapter II.

Second Discourse, pp. 233-234.

Ibid., p. 189, Rousseau's view of the family in the state of nature is ambiguous; see Master's, pp. 125-132.

Ibid., p. 193. Rousseau is not here rejecting all scientific studies of man, but just those that falsely identify human nature with what is presently observed in man's behavior.


Rousseau, Emile, p. 44. See also Durkheim's discussion of such an assumption in Rousseau's thought in his Montesquieu and Rousseau, and Hendel's discussion of this same point in Jean Jacques Rousseau: Moralist, p. 75, part ii.

Second Discourse, p. 235.

Ibid., p. 201.

Ibid., p. 207.

This is not as clearly stated as the quotation from the Emile, my footnote 20. cf. see p. 407, Emile, and pp. 227, 210, 223, Second Discourse.

Emile, p. 167.

This view is perhaps best represented in Plattner's Rousseau's State of Nature. Masters also has a problem at this point, stating that he does not see how pre-moral man can provide a standard for the later, moral man.

Second Discourse, p. 200.

Ibid., p. 201.

Ibid., p. 200.
31 Ibid., p. 227 ff.
32 Ibid., p. 228.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid., p. 200.
36 Ibid., pp. 216-218 (on Rousseau's view there was no family in the original situation). The female would care for the young without aid from the father, who would have departed after the sex act.
38 Ibid., p. 221.
39 Ibid., p. 208.
40 Ibid., p. 210. Along with the new scientific view of the world, Rousseau adopted the thesis that nothing in this world happens without cause, e.g., language could not spring forth unless necessitated by circumstances.
41 Ibid., p. 233.
42 Ibid., p. 222.
43 Ibid., p. 229.
44 Ibid., p. 275.
46 Ibid., p. 241.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid., p. 223, footnote 2.
49 Ibid., p. 266.
50 Ibid., p. 223, footnote 2.
51 Ibid., p. 223.
52 Ibid., p. 193.
53 Ibid., p. 194.
54 Ibid., p. 226.

55 See also Masters, The Political Philosophy of Rousseau, p. 171, in which Masters argues that compassion would be "unreliable, if not non-existent", and Plattner's Rousseau's State of Nature, p. 87.

56 Second Discourse, p. 225; compare Emile, p. 184.
57 Ibid., p. 211.
58 Ibid., p. 224.
59 Masters, The Political Philosophy of Rousseau, p. 140.
60 Ibid.

64 Ibid., p. 225.
65 Ibid., p. 211.
66 Ibid., p. 233.
67 Ibid., p. 273.
68 Ibid., p. 234.
69 Ibid., p. 236.
70 Ibid., p. 209.
71 Ibid., p. 208.
72 Ibid.
73 Ibid., p. 237.
74 Ibid., p. 240.
75 Ibid., p. 241.
76 Ibid., p. 239.
In this discussion of the natural law tradition I am generally following Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, chapter VI.


I am here expanding upon Rousseau's discussion of liberty, p. 259, and consent as necessary for property claims, p. 250. I believe that these discussions anticipate Book I, chapter 10, *Social Contract*. 
Thus the formation Rousseau gives this problem in the Social Contract, p. 13: "The problem is to find a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before."

Also see Social Contract, Book I, chapter 3.

Contrast my position with that of Plattner who argues that political society is the best that can be done for man who is condemned to be unnatural. Also contrast Master's view: Masters "does not see" how the original situation can serve as a criterion for modern man. Both Plattner and Masters assume that by 'natural' Rousseau means just the characteristics observed in the original situation. Neither appears aware of the possibility that Rousseau was concerned with relationships in the original situation, rather than specific abilities or behaviors.

My discussion is based upon David Hull's, Philosophy of Biological Science, esp. p. 66, the section entitled "Natural Selection or Survival of the Fittest" (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1974).
Introduction

In Chapter One I extracted from the Second Discourse the fundamental assumptions of Rousseau's views on man, nature, and society. My purpose was to provide a foundation for an interpretation of the Social Contract. I argued that Rousseau's use of the term 'natural' with regard to man refers to a balance among man's abilities, desires, and needs. I showed that the advantages of the original situation arise from this balance. We saw that on Rousseau's account the major advantages are that the individual is well-adapted to survival, faces few, if any, threats from other individuals, is at peace with his fellow man and content with his life. Rousseau even believed that original man, though ignorant and 'prehuman' from our standpoint, is a happy creature. Moreover, original man is inherently good, if we understand by 'good', that he does no evil to his neighbors, has no desire to harm others, and has only the positive, if infrequent, feelings of compassion for others. In short the balance results in personal security and happiness, and the absence of injustice among men.
Modern man has lost this internal balance. The result has been the loss of personal peace, contentment, and the simple happiness of original man. Few men are truly happy in modern times, and even fewer are secure. Social injustice and inequality are the heritage of modern man. The problem for political theory is to eliminate these evils through the elimination of their cause. Men cannot return en masse to the original situation, but there is at least the possibility of returning en masse to a natural existence.

It is generally agreed that it is necessary to seek in other works some foundation for the interpretation of the Social Contract, not only because of Rousseau's admonition that all his works must be read together, but also because key terms such as 'justice' and 'utility' remain ambiguous if the Social Contract is treated in isolation from Rousseau's other works. As noted in Chapter One, most modern commentators look to the Second Discourse when discussing the Social Contract. The thesis which I have extracted from the Second Discourse differs somewhat from those of other commentators, and this will account for what is original in my interpretation.

It is perhaps appropriate to give a brief overview of Rousseau's political thought. During 1742-3, while employed as Secretary to the French Ambassador to Venice, Rousseau conceived a plan to write a great treatise on political theory, to be called the Political Institutions. This was to be an all-encompassing work, dealing with all facets of political theory, morality, human nature, and the nature of society. It was during this time that Rousseau had the insight that all human affairs are related to politics.
I had seen that all depended at bottom upon the political order, and that however one looks at it, no people would ever be anything else but what the nature of their government made them.

Actual work on this project did not begin until 1749, though Rousseau undoubtedly gave it serious thought before that time. 1749 is a crucial year for Rousseau. By this time he had returned to Paris and had become friends with the leaders of the intellectual circle there.

Under Diderot's sponsorship Rousseau published a few articles, primarily in the field of music and music criticism. Rousseau had not published his own political ideas, though he did discuss them at length with Diderot and perhaps others of the Encyclopedia movement. A dramatic change occurred in 1749—the so-called "revelation de Vincennes".

While visiting Diderot, then in prison for an imprudent publication, Rousseau noticed an advertisement for an essay contest sponsored by the Academy of Dijon. The question for the essay was to be "Has the Restoration of the Arts and Sciences Had a Purifying Effect Upon Morals?". Rousseau's reaction to this advertisement was the famous revelation of Vincennes.

I was going to see Diderot, then prisoner at Vincennes; I had in my pocket a Mercure de France that I leafed through on the way. I fell on the question of the Academy of Dijon, which gave rise to my first writing. If ever something was like a sudden inspiration, it is the movement which occurred in me at that reading; suddenly I felt my mind dazzled by a thousand lights.... Oh Monsieur, if I had ever been able to write a quarter of what I saw and felt under that tree, with what clarity would I have shown all the contradictions of the social system; with what force would I have exposed all the abuses of our institutions, with what simplicity would I have demonstrated that man is naturally good, and that it is by these institutions that men become wicked.

This revelation was just what Rousseau needed. His past concern with an
all-encompassing Political Institutions was before him, if only he could express this revelation in writing. Unfortunately this was not to be; Rousseau could not translate the revelation fully into words.

All I could retain of these crowds of great truths which, in a quarter of an hour, illuminated me under that tree, has been weakly distributed in my three principle writings, namely that first discourse, the one on inequality, and the treatise on education, which three works are inseparable and form a single whole.6

The immediate result of this all-embracing vision was the First Discourse, the Discourse on the Arts and Sciences. The First Discourse was followed in 1755 by the Second Discourse, which I discussed at length in Chapter One, and the Political Economy. In 1762, the Emile and the Social Contract were published, though Rousseau had worked on the Social Contract for approximately ten years.7

In the Confessions Rousseau tells us that by 1759 he had given up hope of producing the Political Institutions, which had been his ambition for 16 years. His various attempts to put together different aspects of what would be the Political Institutions had revealed that the job was "too ambitious" for his abilities, and that he could not adequately recapture the revelation of Vincennes. Even the most important of his political works, the Social Contract, is "but a fragment of what was to be the Political Institutions."9

But the impetus towards the Political Institutions was not discarded merely because it was not to be accomplished. The important works of this period were clearly written with the Political Institutions in mind. Each was to have its role in the Political Institutions, if not specifically in the form actually presented. They were written
from a common concern, the plight of modern man. But this plight has many facets which must each be addressed directly. If there is an unflagging theme in all of his works, it is Rousseau's attempt to find a way to overcome this plight.

This point is quite important when we turn to the *Social Contract*. It allows us to see why Rousseau's discussion of certain points in the *Social Contract* is so brief: because they have been discussed at length in other works. For example, Rousseau's discussion in the *Social Contract* of previous theories of political right, books I-IV, Chapter One, is clearly too brief and inadequate to stand alone. This discussion is rather a summary of what is discussed at length in the *Second Discourse* and is also contained in *Emile*. In other words, Rousseau felt no need to reargue these points because he meant the *Social Contract* to be read with those other works. In fact, the major themes of Rousseau's political thought extend from his earliest insights in 1743 through the writing of the *Social Contract*.

To gain a complete understanding of Rousseau's political thought we must also read the *Constitutional Project for Corsica* (hereafter *Corsica*), 1765, and *Considerations on the Government of Poland* (hereafter *Poland*), 1772. In these two works Rousseau attempted to apply the abstract principles of the *Social Contract* to existing societies. Too often these works are neglected by those who seek to clarify the concepts in the *Social Contract*. Yet by examining these two works we can obtain a much clearer notion of where Rousseau's thought was leading him, and what the principles of the *Social Contract* come to when instantiated in the world.
This knowledge will prove quite helpful in interpreting the Social Contract. If we know what is implied by the principles of the Social Contract we are halfway to understanding the principles themselves. The interpretation of the Social Contract will be guided by Rousseau's own description of how his political principles are meant to be instantiated. For this reason I shall first discuss the society he envisions as resulting from the application of the principles of the Social Contract in the countries of Corsica and Poland. I shall call this society the "rousseauian state".

The Rousseauian State

Life in Corsica and Poland

In the Social Contract Rousseau stated that of all the countries in Europe, only Corsica was fit for legitimate government. When Rousseau was invited to help construct a new constitution for Corsica, he accepted with high expectations. Here he had a chance to implement the political ideals he held so passionately.

Life in Corsica is to consist almost entirely in agricultural pursuits. Each individual is to have his own farm land. Actually the state is to hold title to all land, and the individual uses the land as his share of the common property. However, the state's title to the land is a formal title. It has practical effect only if some emergency or unusual situation were to arise. For all intents and purposes the individual can consider the land as his property. Rousseau believed that private property must be controlled and confined so that each man acknowledges that his claims to property are secondary to the good of
the society. In fact, on Rousseau's account, in a well-governed state no conflict will arise between the individual's use of his property and the state's ultimate ownership of it, because the state will never have occasion to exercise its claim.

Another feature of life in Corsica, and a reason for the above, is that the individual can claim only that land which he can productively use. This means, for Rousseau, only such land as can produce enough to satisfy his needs and the needs of his family. What this means is that no one can produce a surplus over his needs, and no one can claim land when he already has enough for his needs.

One of the conditions which makes Corsica fit for legitimate government is that there is an abundance of productive land. Every man can satisfy his needs because he has only to claim a portion of the unused land and work it. Indeed, this is just what each should do in the rousseauian state. The first principle of a prosperous nation, according to Rousseau, is that "Everyone should make a living, and no one should grow rich".

In Corsica almost everyone is to be a farmer. There are to be no large cities, no trades, and no merchant class. In addition, there is to be no commerce with other countries, no imports, and no exports. In the Corsican life surplus is useless, and cannot produce wealth. Surplus, to become profit, must be sold or traded. But if each citizen has all he needs from his own land, and if there is no foreign commerce, then there is no market for the surplus. Thus, while everyone can make a living, no one has the means to grow rich. In this society money serves no purpose, and currency of all kinds is to be eliminated.
The result of all this is that each individual is self-sufficient, working his own land and depending on no one else for his livelihood. The lives of individuals will be for all intents and purposes indistinguishable. There will be no great division of labor, few arts and crafts, and practically no science or technology. What little effort there is in these areas is to be geared directly to satisfying the necessities of life; food, clothing, and shelter. There is no real chance of "improving" one's life, but that is as it should be. In Corsica, Rousseau reiterates his constant theme that the desire to acquire more than one needs is a dangerous desire. The ideal in the rousseauian state is that the individual be self-sufficient and content with being so.

Throughout my work I have claimed a method to Rousseau's program. I have argued that Rousseau attempts to solve the problems of modern man by eliminating the means for corrupt desires to express themselves, and by eventually eliminating the corrupt desires themselves. In the view of Corsica so far revealed, we see the first of these themes. If the simple self-sufficient agrarian life is the life of each man, then there is no effective means for corrupt desires to express themselves. In the rousseauian state such desires themselves are to be eliminated. The end result, if this is accomplished, is the 'good' society.

Since needs and interests did not conflict, and no one depended on anyone else, their only relations with one another were those of benevolence and friendship; peace and concord reigned in their numerous families.

This would indeed solve the problems of modern man as posed in the Second Discourse. Let us turn to the subject of the desires and interests of individuals in the rousseauian state.
Not only is the physical existence in Corsica to be simple and tied to the necessities of life, but so is the mental life. There are to be few and simple customs, an uncomplicated morality, few desires, and these are to be shared by all. This is to be a society of people who live the same rural existence, think basically the same and have the same desires and interests. There is neither material nor intellectual conflict and competition.

One major feature that is to be a part of the mental life of Corsica, and a major contributor to this idyllic society, is the spirit of nationalism. Each citizen is to put the good of the country foremost in his attitude towards life. 'Love of country' is to become intertwined with the happiness of each. The nationalist spirit is to guide the public deliberations and the private thoughts of all. This does not mean nationalism in the sense of making one's country the biggest, most powerful, or most illustrious. Rather Rousseau has in mind a very conservative, isolationist theme. Corsicans are to love their country because of its nature—self-sufficient and independent of others, isolated from international affairs, and ruled by justice and harmony. 'Love of country', for Rousseau, means love of an ideal which the country instantiates. In teaching the spirit of nationalism we are to cause the citizens to

...love the way of life we want to give them, to make it the centre of their pleasures, desires and tastes, and in general to render it their only happiness in life, and the only goal of their ambitions.

Nationalism in the sense of pursuing conquests of other countries, or producing a 'great' society is foreign to Rousseau's ideals. As long as
nationalism involves the support and love of the rousseauian state, nationalism is unreserved. Living in these conditions makes the individual free, independent, and self-sufficient. It has freed him from 'tyranny without as well as tyranny within'. The individual owes these benefits to his country, and so will pay his debt with his total support, even his life, in maintaining the society as it is.  

We can sum up the rousseauian state as follows. There is no economic growth, no competition, no foreign trade. There is no sophisticated culture, no growth of science or technology, no progressive change of any kind. Life is the same for all individuals, and all generations. The only change, if all goes well, will be an increase in population. As children become adults they take their place in society. They spread across Corsica and farm previously unused land, but their life is no different from that of their parents. This is a specifically non-progressive society, for ideas of progress and change go far beyond the ideal of self-sufficient simplicity. The spirit of nationalism acts as a guard against any deviation from the ideal.

The only complication in this picture is the role of government. Even in the rousseauian state some government is necessary. Yet what government there is will be severely limited. In fact, most of the traditional functions of government are unnecessary. Since there will be little or no commerce, no foreign trade, no currency, and no cities, the government has very little to do with respect to regulating commerce and fiscal policy. The major role of government can be simply stated; to prevent the disruption of the harmonious life which the citizen enjoys.
There are two ways in which this state can be disrupted; through foreign influence and through internal corruption. Since the state is essentially isolationist, the threat from other countries must take the form of threat of invasion. This would lead one to think that the government would have an important role in maintaining and equipping a standing army, and all that implies. However, this is not the case on Rousseau's view. Rousseau believed that the major deterrent to invasion resides in the fortitude and patriotism of a people, not in the size of its military or the sophistication of its equipment. In virtually every work in which Rousseau discusses the threat of invasion, he takes this position. The following example is from Corsica.

When you consider the constant unity that prevailed among men who had no masters and practically no laws, and whom the neighboring princes tried to divide with all the stratagems known to politics; when you see the unshakable firmness, the constancy, the very fury with which these fearless men fought their battles, resolved to conquer or die, and not even conceiving of the idea of disjoining their life from their liberty, it is no longer difficult to understand the prodigies they performed in defense of their country and independence; it is no longer difficult to see the three greatest powers and the most warlike troops of Europe fail successively in their designs against this heroic nation, whose simplicity could no more be overcome by trickery than their courage by valour.36

This is a rather naive view of the world, but it is Rousseau's view. The importance of this view is that it removes from government what is traditionally considered one of its most vital functions - a national defense program.

I have no doubt Rousseau believed that this thesis was to some extent true. He often cites examples of a simple people successfully defending itself against a larger and more organized invader. Yet there is another motivation for this thesis. Rousseau feared a concentration
of power in any form, but especially a concentration of military strength. In the Second Discourse he attributes the transition from rule by the rich to rule by the strong to just such a concentration of power. What happens, on Rousseau's view, is that abuses of wealth become replaced by abuses of strength. Now Rousseau's constant program is to prevent the possibility of abuses by preventing the means of their success—in this case, by preventing a concentration of power. This is the same strategy Rousseau uses with regard to abuses of wealth; we prevent them by preventing a concentration of wealth. As we shall see below, the same strategy applies to political abuses, i.e., there is to be no concentration of political power.

The point here, however, is that Rousseau believes he has a way to deter foreign invasion without the need for a concentration of military strength. This allows him to limit greatly the role of government, again a constant theme to be found in all his major works.

The government has a more important role in preventing internal corruption. The role of government here can be viewed as preventing the means of effective corruption, and preventing as far as possible, the corrupt desires themselves. The government accomplishes the first task in several ways. In enforces the proscriptions against commerce, trade, and the accumulation of wealth. It prohibits an individual from acquiring more land than he needs. It prohibits the formation of cities, and encourages agricultural labor by prohibiting individuals from sharing in the rights and privileges of citizenship unless they are earned. Since practically the only way to earn these rights and privileges is through adopting the agrarian life Rousseau recommends, agriculture is
effectively promoted by the government.

It is also a task of government to prevent the development of corrupt desires. The way to do this, says Rousseau, is to cause the people to "love the way of life we want to give them". If all goes well, the people will love their agrarian life to the point that "it will leave men incapable even of imagining a better or more noble way of life". This is to be done primarily through fostering the spirit of nationalism described earlier. In Corsica the people are starting with a rather simple complex of habits, morals and customs. Rousseau intends to mold these into a love of country. Children will learn that their first duty is not to themselves but to the preservation of society. Adults will know that egoistic desires run counter to public opinion, and that an egoist will lose the esteem of his fellow man and face public ostracism. Since there is no real means of attaining great power or wealth, and since egoism will run counter to the predominant spirit of nationalism, there will be little temptation to pursue selfish desires.

The role of government, on Rousseau's account, is primarily a preventive role. The government promotes the physical conditions and psychological factors which tend to promote the rousseauian state, and prohibits those that would tend to disrupt it. Of course, government has some other roles, for example, the punishment of lawbreakers. If an individual disregards these influences and attempts to break the laws, the government has the right to punish him. Yet again the government has a rather limited function. The people are secure and tranquil in their simple existence, and there is little to gain by breaking the laws. Thus there will be few criminals for the government to contend with.
The remaining threat to the state is that the government itself may become corrupt. In the Second Discourse Rousseau discussed at length how easy it is for a government to be turned against the people. However, Rousseau believed that in Corsica this could be prevented. He details several mechanisms by which the people can be safeguarded from its government. The first is that all government employees, the magistrates, are to be elected by the people. In addition, the office of magistrate is to be a temporary position which is filled by farmers who take time off from their fields. There are to be neither professional politicians nor professional bureaucrats. In the society he is constructing, Rousseau believes there will be no need of either. The government, as we have seen, has very little to do, and there are few decisions for it to make. Thus there will be few magistrates in government to worry about, and no permanent government employees to threaten the citizens. As in the case of the average citizen, there will be little to tempt the magistrates to corruption.

Perhaps the major safeguard against the corruption of government is placing the ultimate power of legislation and election with the people. Periodically, the people vote on whether the government is operating properly and whether the magistrates are conducting themselves in the public interest. The people, remember, share a common set of beliefs and attitudes, the foremost of which is the spirit of nationalism. Given the government's function, which is primarily to preserve the efficient operation of society as it is, Rousseau believed the people could easily see when government is not fulfilling its function. Since the Corsican society is the best there is, there can be little justification
for change. Because of their "love of country", and because they cannot imagine a "better or more noble way of life" the people will not allow the government to institute changes. 49

The exception to this is if the people themselves become corrupt and desire change. But in that case the society has failed, and legitimate society is impossible. On Rousseau's account, the people of Corsica would no longer be fit for legitimate society, and his political recommendations are meant only for a people who are capable of legitimate government.

In presenting this description of Corsica, I have been arguing that this society is the ultimate aim of Rousseau's political thought, the rousseauian state. I shall reinforce this description by turning to Rousseau's recommendations in Poland. I have two aims here. First, to support with textual evidence my claim that Rousseau's legitimate society must be the simple agrarian community described in Corsica. My second aim is to forestall an objection which could be raised at this point.

It might be argued that I have been putting too much emphasis on the agrarian community of Corsica as the end result of Rousseau's thought. Instead, it might be suggested, the agrarian community is just one result of Rousseau's thought: that this agrarian community is the end result only if we start with the conditions existing in Corsica. If we start with other conditions and follow Rousseau's thought, we could well end with another type of society as legitimate. Perhaps this other type of society would, because of its differing conditions, differ from the Corsican society in having trade, money, or a more extensive government.
Consider that to pursue this line of argument it would be necessary to review what Rousseau has said about countries which do not share the unique conditions of Corsica. The objector would have to find in such texts evidence that Rousseau envisioned a legitimate society in which wealth, or money, or extensive government, non-agrarian life (or some feature different from life in Corsica) is allowed. The major source for such evidence would be Rousseau's *On the Constitution of Poland*.\(^{50}\) Poland was indeed in different circumstances from Corsica. Where Corsica was a backward and unorganized peasant society, already amenable to Rousseau's prescribed simple agrarian life, Poland was not. Poland had a well-developed class structure which included a monarch, several intermediate classes, and serfs. There was a long history of the pursuit of wealth, luxuries, and power. Poland spread across a large geographic area, and had several large cities. Where Corsica was isolated from other countries, Poland was immersed in the international community. In short, the conditions of Poland were quite unlike those of Corsica, and the people were not at all ready for the kind of life Rousseau recommended for Corsica.\(^{51}\)

Thus if there is textual evidence that Rousseau did not consider the Corsican life as necessary for legitimate society, it should be found in *Poland*. It is not. In fact, this work provides further support for my view of the rousseauian state.

Poland, as Rousseau found it, is not yet fit for legitimate society. Much has to be done in reforming the habits, customs, and morals of the Polish people, and in gradually changing their way of life.
At the present moment it would be neither prudent nor possible to change it all at once. But it may be prudent and possible to effect this change by degrees, and make the more numerous part of the nation, without any perceptible revolution, attach its affections to the fatherland and even to the government.\textsuperscript{52}

An illustrative instance of Rousseau's attitude to Poland is his recommendation regarding the serfs. Rousseau, the staunch advocate of freedom, who insisted that freedom is the 'most precious gift of man', tells us that the Polish serfs should not be freed. At least not at once. First the serfs must be worked on, they must be molded and changed until they can understand and appreciate freedom.

To free the common people of Poland would be a great and worthy enterprise, but bold, perilous, and not to be attempted lightly. Among the precautions to be taken, there is one which is indispensable and requires time; it is, before everything else, to make the serfs who are to be freed worthy of liberty and capable of enduring it.\textsuperscript{53}

In the above we see a constant theme of Rousseau's thought—that man must be made capable of what Rousseau is offering him. In Corsica the conditions were such that not much had to be done in this direction; we could directly apply his principles. In Poland a different approach must be adopted. The conditions in Poland must be gradually changed until Poland is also ready for his principles. If Rousseau's recommendations are followed, then at some point in the future, Poland can become a rousseauian society.

What concerns us here is the end result, the society Rousseau envisions after Poland has passed through the preparatory stage and could become legitimate. When we turn to the text for a view of this society, we see the themes of Corsica restated. For the sake of brevity, I shall concentrate on the major points.
Corsica was a relatively small country, ideally suited to the simple agrarian life. As noted, Poland was a much larger and more complex country. Rousseau tells us that one of the first tasks is to cut down the size and extent of Poland. Ultimately he would like to see Poland broken into 33 loosely associated states. The reason he recommends this is a restatement of the reasoning in Corsica: a lack of extensive size is vital to a well managed society.

In the end Rousseau wants Poland to be an agricultural country. The people must turn away from other pursuits and devote their life to farming. Again the reasoning is the same as that in Corsica; agriculture promotes self-sufficiency, strength, security, and virtue, while other pursuits promote dependence, weakness, and the vices.

As in Corsica, Rousseau requires that we capture the 'minds and hearts' of the people. We must mold and shape their thoughts to turn them away from the pursuit of wealth, luxury, and power, again for the same reasons. Such pursuits embody amour propre, teach false values, and lead to many injustices. The first and most important aspect of this enterprise is to turn men to nationalism. Loving their country and the ideal it embodies will lead men away from the comparative attitudes and ambitions which underlie the problems of modern man. Echoing the thoughts of Corsica Rousseau lays out the program:

I should wish that, by honours and public rewards, all the patriotic virtues should be glorified, that citizens should constantly be kept occupied with the fatherland, that it should be made their principal business, that it should be kept continuously before their eyes. In this, I confess, they would have less time and opportunity to grow rich; but they would also have less desire and need to do so. Their hearts would learn to know other pleasures than those of wealth. This is the art of ennobling souls and of turning
them into an instrument more powerful than gold. Money is one of the major contributors to competition, vice, and social injustice. The recommendation in Poland is as strong as that in Corsica—the elimination of money.

All the conditions in Poland in the end are to produce the same kind of citizen as in Corsica. He is to be a simple, patriotic farmer without need or desire for wealth, luxury, or power. The ultimate aim is the same, to produce an individual whose desires and wants do not exceed his needs.

When these conditions are met there will be no complex issues confronting Poland. Poland will be a static and non-progressive society in which commonsense suffices for good government. Threats from other countries are deterred by the strength and spirit of the people. The government will be limited in the same way as the government of Corsica. There will be a few magistrates, because the government has little to do. The magistrates can achieve success and advancement only through public esteem. Given the nature of the Polish citizen, the magistrates can gain public esteem only if they share the non-egoistic attitudes of the people and the spirit of nationalism.

In addition, all citizens are equal under law, including the magistrates. The ultimate legislative power resides in the people. Periodic assemblies, and special assemblies if needed, provide a control of the actions of the magistrates and insure that the government does not become corrupt.

In short, all the major features of the rousseauian state in Poland are the same as those in the rousseauian state in Corsica. The
following two quotes, the first from Corsica, the second from Poland, re-
veal that Rousseau has only one model of legitimate society.

May the Corsicans, once again restored to an industrious mode
of life, lose the habit of wandering over the island as ban-
dits; may their regular and simple occupations, by keeping
them in the bosom of their own families, leave them few is-
suies to settle between them! May their labour provide them
easily with the means of subsistence for themselves and their
families! May those who have all the necessaries of life be
not also obliged to have cash, either to pay taxes and other
assessments, or to satisfy the requirements of a capricious
luxury which, without contributing to the well-being of him
who flaunts it, serves merely to excite the envy and hatred
of others. 68

But if, by chance, you would prefer to create a free, wise
and peaceful nation, one which has no fear or need of anyone,
but is self-sufficient and happy, then you must adopt wholly
different methods; you must preserve and revive among your
people simple customs and wholesome tastes, and a warlike
spirit devoid of ambition; you must create courageous and
unselfish souls; devote your people to agriculture and to the
most necessary arts and crafts; you must make money contempti-
ble and, if possible, useless, seeking and finding more power-
ful and reliable motives for the accomplishment of great
deeds. 69

The Rousseauian State and the Second Discourse

If we keep before us Rousseau's analysis in the Second Discourse
of the causes of corruption and evil, we can understand why Rousseau was
so consistent in this particular description of legitimate society. As
my Chapter One reveals, the Second Discourse presents Rousseau's analysis
of the ultimate cause of man's problems; the corruption of man's nature. 70

The ultimate solution, as expressed in Corsica and Poland, is to uncor-
rupt his nature. Since the corruption of man's nature occurs through com-
petitive comparison with others, man can become uncorrupted by turning
him away from such comparisons.
Rousseau fully realized the magnitude of the problem of implement­ ing such a change. His analysis of human nature revealed that man emerged from the original state will always tend to compare himself with others. Modern man will always have a tendency towards corruption. However, this tendency does not always have disastrous consequences. Rousseau argued in the Second Discourse that as long as men were limited in their ability to dominate others, the desire to do so had little prac­ tical effect. It was only with the possibility of wealth, which arose with the invention of money and commerce, that the desire to become better off found effective means of expression. It was at this stage in man's history that abuses of wealth and power first became possible. Most importantly, Rousseau argues that given these means of implementing inequality through the domination of others, such inequality and abuses were inevitable.

The ultimate solution, then, is only possible through the elimina­ tion of effective means of domination. This is why Rousseau condemns wealth and luxury at every opportunity. It is why he argues in Corsica and Poland that commerce and money must ultimately be prohibited. Each man is to have enough to satisfy his needs, but not enough to make him wealthy. In this way the abuses of wealth are avoided. The ultimate solution also requires the prevention of abuse of power. This is why Rousseau insists on limited government with few magistrates. It is why the magistrates must be non-professionals who can serve in government for only a short period. It is why the ultimate legislative power must reside in the people, and why the people must be molded into citizens who will reject any attempts to concentrate power in government.
The day-to-day life of Rousseau's citizen is to have much in common with that of original man. He is content with his daily lot and at peace with the world. He has no great ambitions, and has neither reason nor motive to contend with others. The similarity between the two can be summed up in Rousseau's injunction that when each man has satisfied his needs he is 'well-off' and should desire nothing further.\(^7\)

The balance of needs, desires, and abilities in the new citizen may never be as complete as that in original man. And this balance may be much more precarious. But Rousseau was not constructing a pragmatic political theory for the masses of humanity. He had no great concern for comparing the relative merits of different versions of corrupt society. He intended to reveal the principles of legitimate civil association. He analyzed the problems attending corruption, and tried to solve them. His solution was radical, to say the least, but it was not arbitrary. He was led to the rousseauian state as the only possible solution.

The imperfect nature of this balance meant that the state was not flawless. The dangers to man can never be completely removed. In the long run the rousseauian state will end, for there is a 'natural law' of nations, a "natural and necessary development, from birth to destruction."\(^7\) Thus the conclusions of Rousseau's political thought was indeed pessimistic. Not only can few countries hope to achieve this ideal, but no rousseauian state can hope to last forever. These consequences may be unfortunate, but could not be avoided because of Rousseau's faithfulness to his empirical 'science of man' developed in the Second Discourse.

Many commentators have noted Rousseau's prescription of the simple communal life in a rural setting. However, most critics have viewed this
prescription as a personal preference and not, as I claim, the only type of society which can be legitimate on Rousseau's account. This is the view of Roger Masters and Marc Plattner, which I shall discuss below. Some commentators, such as Kennedy Roche, do see that for Rousseau legitimacy is tied to the uncomplicated pastoral society. What is lacking in Roche's account (which I shall discuss in Chapter Four), is the argument which I have provided by reconstructing Rousseau's science of man in detail, and by showing that in his discussions of political society Rousseau remains faithful to his theory of human nature. To my knowledge, this argument has not been previously developed.

The Political Philosophy in the Social Contract

In the Second Discourse and Emile, Rousseau had developed his political thought. In the Social Contract he presented his ideas as a treatise on the principles of political right. In Corsica and Poland he applied those principles to specific conditions.

However, if the Social Contract is treated in isolation, it is open to various interpretations. Much of Rousseau's terminology is specific to him; the meaning of his key terms and phrases was developed in his earlier work. Without reference to his other work, Rousseau's terminology must remain ambiguous.

There is another problem for the interpretation of the Social Contract. In trying to unpack the meaning of Rousseau's principles, it is natural to ask what they come to when applied in specific conditions. But the various interpretations of the Social Contract disagree on when and how the principles are properly applied. This is why it is important to
get a clear view of Rousseau's own application of his principles in Corsica and Poland.

These problems are apparent from the very beginning of the Social Contract. Rousseau opens the Social Contract with a declaration of intent.

It is my purpose to inquire whether it is possible for there to be any legitimate and certain rule of administration in civil society, taking men as they are and laws as they may be. In this inquiry I shall endeavor at all times to ally the obligations of law and right with the requirements of interest, in order that justice and utility may never be disjoined.

Two key phrases in this passage are "taking men as they are" and "that justice and utility may never be disjoined". Neither of these phrases receives adequate explanation in the Social Contract. The reason for this, I believe, is that Rousseau has already said enough about these matters in his other works. As he does in summarizing his criticism of previous theories of right, Rousseau is assuming that the reader is reading the Social Contract along with his other works.

In what follows I shall discuss these key passages. The reason for doing so is that understanding this paragraph is crucial to the interpretation of the Social Contract, for without fully understanding Rousseau's intent we cannot understand and evaluate the work that is to satisfy his intentions.

Taking Men as They Are

This problem is nowhere more apparent than when we investigate the meaning of the phrase "taking men as they are". The obvious source for unpacking this phrase is the Second Discourse, and most modern
commentators refer to that work. In the Second Discourse Rousseau is quite explicit concerning the present corruption of man. He believes that modern man is corrupt, unnatural, and the agent of evil and injustice against his fellow man. The corrupt and unnatural desires of man result in a society in which conflict and competition are common, and the moral and political rules of society effectively oppress the weak and poor. All of this is the product of man's history, and is perhaps inevitable once man begins to form civil associations.

What is not so clear is whether Rousseau viewed this situation as irreversible. If Rousseau did view man's corruption as irreversible, then the Social Contract cannot have been intended to rid man of his unnatural desires. Rather the interpretation of the Social Contract must take the approach that Rousseau was attempting to produce the most practical and viable solution to man's problems, given that man will continue to be corrupted. This is one of the more popular approaches to the Social Contract.

However, it is also possible that Rousseau viewed the situation of modern man as unfortunate, perhaps even inevitable, but not irreversible. If this is the case the interpretation of the Social Contract will take a different direction. In this case we would view the Social Contract as Rousseau's attempt to overturn man's corruption, rather than merely make the best of it. Simply stated, the difference between these two approaches is that the first approach interprets the Social Contract as Rousseau's attempt to produce the best possible society for rational egoists and the second approach that Rousseau was attempting to produce a society of non-egoists. My view is that the second approach is correct.
I believe that this approach best captures the arguments of the Second Discourse and Emile. This approach also reflects Rousseau's description of legitimate society, what I call the 'rousseauian state', in Corsica and Poland. Because of the prominence of these other approaches I shall examine them further.

An example of the first approach is found in Marc Plattner's *Rousseau's State of Nature*.

Full citizenship in a good political society is merely the best that can be done for the great mass of men to minimize the evils of the unnatural conditions to which they have been condemned by history. Plattner clearly views this history as irreversible. Now Rousseau himself explicitly stated that a return to the original situation is impossible, at least for most men. If one assumes that man is natural and uncorrupted only in the original situation, then it follows that this corruption is irreversible. This assumption is made when one identifies 'natural' with 'original situation' in the Second Discourse, as Plattner does.

The clear implication of this view is that man in his natural (i.e., original) condition is fundamentally a beast like any other.

In Chapter One I argued that this identification is a mistake. However, once one does make this mistake, then one is quite reasonably led to the conclusion that man's corruption is irreversible. Once one has reached this position, it is a short step to the conclusion that the Social Contract must be intended as a prudent society for necessarily egoist individuals.
We should note that equating 'natural' and 'original', in conjunction with the impossibility of returning to the original situation, makes the reversibility of man's corruption a theoretical impossibility. One could argue that overcoming man's unnaturalness and corruption is perhaps theoretically possible, but is, in fact, impossible in the present circumstances of man. It could be argued that there is just no practical means of overcoming the corruption. In other words, one need not make the mistake of identifying 'natural' and 'original' in order to argue that Rousseau believed that man's corruption is irreversible. One could argue that man's corruption is so deep and ingrained that there is no practical method of overturning it. This seems to be the view of Roger Masters.

Masters also takes the first approach to the interpretation of the Social Contract, viewing it as revealing a non-ideal society which is the best that can be formulated for rational egoists.

The most one can hope for is that prudent use of these means (political institutions and civil religion), illuminated by a knowledge of the historical tendency of all social life and the maxims of politics, will moderate or delay the effect of moral corruption and, once it has occurred, render possible the tranquil life of the few decent men who remain at the margins of a decadent or despotic civil society.81

Masters is led to this position by his belief that Rousseau himself viewed man's history as one of irreversible corruption.

As a result the possibility of creating a truly decent and virtuous human society seems to be subject to the dual limitation of the impotence of the individual's natural goodness and the irreversibility of an enlightened society's corruption.82
I have not been able to determine whether Masters makes the same mistake that Plattner makes. Masters nowhere makes the explicit identification of 'natural' and 'original'. In fact, in discussing Rousseau's *Emile* he seems to anticipate my view of Rousseau's use of the term 'natural'.

The natural man is not here primitive man, nor even merely the abstraction of what is common to all socialized men, but the man who is not in contradiction with himself and whose faculties are in "equilibrium".83

The footnote to this passage is also revealing.

Such equilibrium defines human happiness and true freedom, and was present in the state of nature but has been destroyed in society.84

These passages are quite consistent with my views. However, Masters does not develop this view and does not use it in discussing either the irreversibility of man's corruption or Rousseau's intentions in the Social Contract. Typical of Master's arguments is the following:

Although for Rousseau the conscience provides at least one natural obstacle "to man's almost unlimited degradation", this obstacle is politically impotent .... This escappable characteristic of human evolution, which serves as a strict limit on the effectiveness of conscience as a barrier to depravity, simultaneously serves as a kind of natural (or at least historical) obstacle to man's "power of liberating himself from evil".85

Master's argument is that there are historical considerations which prevent the reversibility of man's corruption. I shall, of course, argue that Masters is mistaken. However, this discussion will be more appropriate in the context of my own interpretation of the Social Contract. The reason for this is that part of Masters' reasoning for the practical irreversibility of corruption rests on his belief that Rousseau's requirements for the formation of political society are inconsistent with the 'natural'
sentiments of self-love and compassion. Masters makes this belief explicit when he makes such claims as "pity apparently contradicts the principles of a just regime" and "love of oneself, the other naturally good sentiment, is even more sharply opposed to the requirements of a perfect social order". My objections to Masters' argument will thus involve a discussion of the requirements for a just social order presented in the *Social Contract*. I shall return to Masters' argument when I begin the discussion of those requirements.

At this point it is enough to note that while Masters and Plattner argue from different directions, both reach the conclusion that man's corruption is irreversible. Consequently both are led to interpret the *Social Contract* as Rousseau's recommendation for "unnatural" man.

The second approach to interpreting the *Social Contract* suggests that Rousseau believed that man could become 'natural' once again, and so throw off the yoke of historical egoism. The noted biographer of Rousseau, Charles Hendel, shares this view.

To Rousseau the fundamental problem was now apparent. It was to set men free from their own tyranny, tyranny within as well as without. It was to correct that selfish will and release the natural sentiments from its thwarting control. Hendel sees, as Masters and Plattner do not, that for Rousseau the egoism produced in man's history is not an unalterable consequence of man's development. Hendel also notes the ultimately teleological basis for Rousseau's position.

By Nature man is intended for a life of perfect balance and harmony, integrity within and peace without. Hendel does not fully develop these insights. He does not build them into a mechanism by which to uncover the crucial assumptions of
Rousseau's reasoning in the Second Discourse, nor does he apply them faithfully to his discussion of the Social Contract. In fact, Hendel seems to arrive at these insights at the end of his work rather than using them as the basis of his discussion.91

I believe that my discussion in Chapter One provides the mechanism to adequately interpret the Social Contract using the second approach. On my view the history of man is to be understood as encompassing two interrelated but distinct trends: the development of man's latent abilities, and the transition from amour de soi to amour propre. I argue that when Rousseau states that man cannot return to the original situation, he is referring to the irreversibility of the development of man's latent abilities. However, it does not follow from this that the transitions from amour de soi to amour propre is also irreversible. I argued that, on Rousseau's account, the development of man's latent abilities does not itself produce bad consequences. It is the misuse of these abilities due to the attitude of amour propre which produces the evils which confront modern man. Since it is this transition which destroys man's natural balance, the irreversibility of man's intellectual development does not imply the irreversibility of his loss of natural balance.

In interpreting the Social Contract we should keep in mind Rousseau's dictum, "man is what we make him". If society has corrupted man, it can uncorrupt him. This is just what happens in the rousseauian state, for there man is independent of others, self-sufficient, and he is no longer dominated by amour propre.
That Justice and Utility May Never Be Disjoined

In Chapter One we saw that one of the praiseworthy features of the original situation was the lack of injustice. According to Rousseau men do not naturally lie, steal, murder, enslave, or otherwise harm their fellow man. Original man was naturally good, not by choice but through the limitations of his mental and psychological development. This is a somewhat 'lefthanded' commendation. Since original man lived by instinct, and in almost total isolation from his fellow man, original man had neither the desire nor the opportunity to be unjust. In fact, the problem of justice simply does not arise in the original situation. Justice is a problem only after man comes to live in close community with others, and only after his psychological development yields the desire to be unjust.

In discussing the Second Discourse we saw that there are two necessary conditions for the occurrence of injustice; that men have the desire to overthrow inequality, and that they have the opportunity to satisfy this desire. Until the natural desires of man are corrupted, there would be no injustice even if the opportunity arose. And until the opportunity arises, in the form of agricultural wealth, money, and political power, even if man desired to do harm to others, his power to satisfy his desires would be ineffectual.

In addition we saw that Rousseau has gone to great lengths to consider and criticize theories of right which might yield the legitimacy of moral and political inequality. He has rejected natural law doctrine, the theory that might makes right, the so-called 'right of the first occupier', and the theory that men can voluntarily give their freedom to another. In summarizing Rousseau's discussion of morality in the Second
Discourse we found several themes; moral and political inequality cannot be made legitimate, an individual's freedom to choose the means of his self-preservation cannot legitimately be taken from him or given up by him, and that the rules of society, to be legitimate, must in some sense agreed to by the individual; i.e., are conventional. We noted that this in itself is not a complete theory of justice. Rather what we have is criteria which a complete theory of justice must meet.\textsuperscript{94}

When we consider the uniting of justice and utility in the opening passage of the \textit{Social Contract} we are to have in mind by 'justice' the negative criteria just mentioned rather than a fullblown theory of justice. The fuller conception of justice will be a function of the convention Rousseau will produce in the \textit{Social Contract}.

However, Rousseau does not base his presentation of this convention on the notion of justice. He does not argue that the reason we are to join in his civil society is to insure a just society. Instead he argues from the basis of utility. We are to join in civil society because we can no longer be self-sufficient. The individual is to be motivated to join the civil society not from a sense of justice, but from a sense of self-interest. In other words Rousseau accepts Hobbes' premise that civil association can only be effected through self-interest and that considerations of justice are not efficacious in bringing men to cooperate. In order to get men to cooperate in a just society, which is of course Rousseau's ultimate aim, they must be brought to cooperate through considerations of utility.

The men to whom the \textit{Social Contract} is addressed are corrupt. To overcome corruption is a long and difficult process, and so, according
to Rousseau's own analysis, it would be unrealistic to expect them to overcome their corruption and act other than from self-interest merely by coming together in civil association. They must be given reason and motivation for acting in a just manner.

This problem of motivation had been the concern of philosophers at least as early as Plato. Rousseau was writing within a tradition and intellectual atmosphere which considered the question from a somewhat different perspective from that of the ancients. In Chapter One we saw the transition from the Aristotelian teleological view of man and nature to the empirically based modern investigation of man and nature. This transition carried over to political science, most notably in the work of Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes rejected the natural law doctrine with his rejection of the teleological view of man. Political theory was to be based upon a modern science of man. Hobbes believed that a mechanistic explanation of man would be forthcoming, and attempted such an explanation. He believed that man, qua man, was driven by the desire for self-preservation, which made man naturally egoistic and competitive. The question for Hobbes was not "should men be selfish or should they be moral?", but rather "Given that men are selfish, is there reason for them to act in accordance with the common canons of traditional morality?". Hobbes' answer to this question was yes.

Reason tells us, according to Hobbes, that our self-interest is best satisfied by living in a community in which traditional morality is observed. If we did not, if everyone were to fend for himself, there would be a war of every man against every man, and life would be solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. Reason tells us that in order to
avoid this situation we must have political association. The first law of the state of nature, i.e., the first law of reason, is that men must seek peace. Peace is impossible, on Hobbes' view, without political association in which men live according to the rules of society. Thus self-interest dictates joining in civil society. Moreover, self-interest dictates the form the civil society is to take. In joining the association we must establish a Sovereign, a man, or group of men, who have unlimited power to make and enforce the decisions necessary to arbitrate the conflicts of interest that will arise among men. The Sovereign is required, and giving him unlimited power is necessary, in order to prevent society from reverting to the state of nature. The problem is this. Even if we were to band together to form civil association and agree to abide by the rules of society in order to avoid the evils of the war of all against all, the situation is unstable. Each man would, because of his self-love, attempt to bend the rules of cooperation in his favor. When his interests were in conflict with others, he would try to force the outcome to his advantage. This would be evident in cases in which one man makes a bad agreement with another, one which resulted in disadvantage to him. In such cases an individual's natural desires would tempt him to break the agreement. It would seem that self-interest, which dictates that he should join civil association, would also dictate that the rules of the association are binding on him only as long as adherence to them is in his self-interest. In other words, individuals would act morally only in those cases in which they judged that doing so was to their advantage. Hobbes argued that in such circumstances society would soon degenerate to the state of nature. Reason thus tells us that
we must find a means of preventing the members of society from adopting the strategy of free-rider egoism. We must be forced to live up to the rules of society, even when it seems to be to our disadvantage. For Hobbes, this meant setting up an all-powerful Sovereign, for only in this way could the problem of free-rider egoism be overcome. Thus for Hobbes, justice is required by prudential reasoning, and we must construct a society in which justice is enforced in order to maximize personal utility.

Rousseau's reaction to Hobbes on this point was quite strong. He seemed especially concerned with what he took to be the moral pessimism of Hobbes, for Hobbes is telling us not only that man is not naturally good (Rousseau's constant thesis), but that justice can only be produced in society by coercion. Hobbes did say that man has a reason to be moral, but in grounding this reason in man's *amour propre*, Hobbes reduces morality to prudence. He thereby removes from justice the traditional basis for moral praise and blame.

Rousseau was not the only philosopher to react negatively to Hobbes' view of man. Locke, Montesquieu, and Diderot, among others, attempted to show that Hobbes was in error. Their approach was to deny Hobbes' premise that man acts only from self-love. To do this required that these philosophers find other motives natural to man. The common method of discovering man's true nature was to describe a 'state of nature', a situation which existed (or could be imagined to exist) prior to civil association. By arguing that man in the state of nature would not be motivated solely by selfishness, Locke, Montesquieu, and Diderot were able to reject Hobbes' premise. Thus they could argue that Hobbes' 'war
of all against all' would not be a consequence of the absence of political society. This allowed them to reject Hobbes' reasoning that the basis for political society is self-interest in the face of a short, brutish life. In rejecting Hobbes' reasoning, they could reject his conclusion that a Sovereign with unlimited power was required in civil association. Locke, Montesquieu, and Diderot, were able to reject Hobbes' theory because each found in man a natural desire for the well-being of his fellow man. In the Second Discourse Rousseau had rejected the notion of a natural desire for the well-being of others, and so, at least on this point, he put himself on the side of Hobbes. To refute Hobbes' views Rousseau must adopt another strategy than that employed by Locke, Montesquieu, and Diderot. As we have seen Rousseau's strategy is to argue for the artificiality of those features of man's love of self which allow Hobbes' reasoning to get off the ground. Rousseau's strategy is to argue that it is the malleability of man's self-love which causes the problems of man in the first place, and so it will be this malleability which will provide the solutions to his problems.

It is important to stress Rousseau's ultimate disagreement with Hobbes, for it sheds light on Rousseau's use of the term 'utility'. For Hobbes the notion of utility encompassed wealth, power, property—in short, those things which are useful to the satisfaction of man's selfishness. In modern terms Hobbes' man is a rational utility maximizer, and some commentators discuss Hobbes' views using this designation. Rousseau's citizen is not to seek utility in this sense. Of course he will need some material goods to maintain himself, but these
are only the minimal prerequisites for his good and the good of society. The notion of utility, for Rousseau, is primarily addressed to the establishment of correct laws, beliefs, and attitudes. The fundamental difference here is that utility in Hobbes' sense is counterproductive to utility in Rousseau's sense. Thus to read Rousseau as constructing a society for rational utility maximizers, where this is taken in the Hobbesian sense, is to misinterpret Rousseau.

Throughout his works Rousseau has condemned wealth, power, and property along with the artificial desires that produce them. This being the case, we must look to something other than the satisfaction of the artificial desires of man for Rousseau's criteria of utility. When Rousseau intends to conjoin justice and utility in the Social Contract he does not have in mind utility as Hobbes had viewed it.

In the original situation justice was maintained. Utility was also best served in the original situation. Though the original man did not have even the most rudimentary of modern conveniences, he was much better off than modern man. He faced many fewer threats from his environment, and posed fewer threats to himself. What is useful to original man consists in the condition that natural balance is maintained in all individuals, rather than in specific strengths or possessions held by the individual. Such conditions prevent all the dangers and evils of the modern situation. The highest utility, then, would be to recapture the advantages of the original situation by recapturing the condition of natural balance.

When Rousseau argued that justice and utility must be conjoined his concern was the age-old problem of the practical conflict between
what is morally right and what is the good for the individual. Rousseau's solution was to argue that there was no true conflict between the two.

Justice, as the demands on man from a moral viewpoint, and utility, as the true interest of the individual from a personal viewpoint, are two sides of the same coin. In fact, justice and utility become two names for essentially the same thesis, a return to natural balance. This is the ideal of the Social Contract. It is a utopian ideal to be sure, but as I shall show later Rousseau was aware of the utopian aspect in his thought and was in fact pessimistic about the possibility of achieving this ideal society. However, he did believe that the utopian ideal can provide the goal for society to approach, and believed that it could, under certain conditions, be approached effectively. This is why he held out hope for Corsica and Poland if they followed his recommendations.

The major task for conjoining justice and utility is to motivate the suppression of the corrupt desires. Justice and utility require such suppression, and that is certainly a reason for suppressing those desires. But suppose an individual could promote justice and utility in society through encouraging others to suppress their corrupt desires, while remaining free himself from this requirement, at least in some cases. If an individual can get others to act justly towards him, and can gain the utility of living in a society in which all others suppress their corrupt desires, then what reason is there for the individual to suppress his own? In other words, how does Rousseau solve the problem without appeal to Hobbes' absolute Sovereign?
It might be argued that utility is defined in terms of freedom from tyranny within as well as tyranny without, and that such an individual would be ignoring the threat to himself which results from tyranny within. But this suggestion is insufficient as it stands. The individual may well see the dangers to himself that arise from some of his corrupt desires, e.g., unbridled ambition. He might then reason that it is appropriate for him to suppress some of his desires, but that there is no reason for him to suppress all the desires which Rousseau classifies as corrupt. He might well reason that the ideal situation for himself would be to live among men who suppress all their corrupt desires, while he need only suppress some of his. And if one individual could reason this way, then all individuals could. Thus Rousseau's recommendation of suppressing all corrupt desires could not get off the ground, and we are back to Hobbes' argument that a society without a supreme authority would be unstable.

This problem can best be approached by considering Rousseau's views on personal happiness. In *Emile* Rousseau said that all men are motivated by the pursuit of happiness.

> We must be happy, dear Emile; it is the end of every feeling creature.  

This passage does not imply that Rousseau gave up his belief that man's primary drive is the drive for self-preservation. The desires of original man were few and simple, and easily categorized as desires for self-preservation. The desires of modern man are comparatively numerous and complex. Moreover, modern man is not often in situations in which food or shelter is a serious problem. After man satisfies his basic needs, he turns to other pursuits. These additional pursuits, though
they may vary greatly from individual to individual, may reasonably be given the title 'the pursuit of happiness'. The pursuit of happiness grew out of and developed from the original simplicity of the drive for self-preservation.

For Rousseau original man was a happy creature, though he did not actively pursue happiness. Original man lived his life primarily through instinct, and was happy and content in his ignorance. Modern man, on the other hand, actively seeks to be happy. In fact, sometimes modern man will even ignore or discount the likelihood of his own death in order to pursue happiness.

Civilized man, on the other hand, is always moving, sweating, toiling, racking his brains to find still more laborious occupations: he goes on in drudgery to his last moment, and even seeks death to put himself in a position to live, or renounces life to acquire immortality.

Thus for Rousseau the evolution and corruption of the drive for self-preservation can become so convoluted that a man acts against his own natural instincts. The ideal for modern man is for him to be able to pursue happiness in a manner which does not threaten his security. This was an important feature of the rousseauian state in Corsica and Poland, where Rousseau argued that man must be made to find happiness only through civic virtue.

Rousseau does have a view of what happiness is and recommendations for pursuing happiness. What Rousseau says in regards to these matters rests on a distinction he makes between satiable and insatiable desires. When Rousseau praises the few natural desires of original man, he does so by stressing their satiability.
I see him satisfying his hunger at the first oak, and slacking his thirst at the first brook; finding his bed at the foot of the tree which afforded him a repast; and with that, all his wants supplied. Rousseau makes this point more clearly in *Emile*.

Self-love, which concerns itself only with ourselves, is content to satisfy our needs, but selfishness, which is always comparing self to others is never satisfied and never can be.

Selfishness is the attitude whose attendant desires are insatiable. This produces the evils and the misery of modern man. The frustration of striving to satisfy insatiable desires prevents man from finding the happiness which is the original man's natural condition.

Insatiable desires arise when man begins to turn himself away from his own immediate needs and turns his attention to preferences that are not related to his self-preservation. Rousseau is telling us that we must look back again towards our self-preservation and suppress the desires that are counter-productive and insatiable. Only in this way can we hope to return to the natural needs-desires-abilities balance which characterized the original man's simple, good, and happy state. It is our ability to reason that can retrieve this balance for us, but reason must lead back to a natural existence.

True happiness consists in decreasing the difference between our desires and our powers, in establishing a perfect equilibrium between the power and the will.

On this view happiness requires the suppression of insatiable desires. When desires have the feature of being insatiable, the balance of needs-drives-abilities is impossible. Since this balance is a prerequisite for happiness, insatiable desires preclude happiness. In addition this view provides a mark with which to distinguish corrupt
desires and uncorrupt desires. By suppressing the insatiable desires, in our pursuit of happiness, we will be suppressing the corrupt desires which underlie the problems of modern man.

In this we see Rousseau's answer to the problem. He is suggesting that what modern man really wants is not to pursue corrupt desires, but to pursue happiness. Since the pursuit of happiness, properly understood, requires the suppression of insatiable desires, man does have reason to suppress all corrupt desires.

The criterion of happiness plays a crucial role in the Social Contract, though not in an explicit or obvious manner. The Social Contract is a political work aimed at constructing legitimate political society. Rousseau does not claim the impossible goal of producing a society which will guarantee the happiness of all individuals. The theory embodied in the Social Contract is intended to show men how they ought to live by conjoining justice and utility. Rousseau's view of personal happiness is to provide the motivation for men to live as they ought to live. I have tied the two together by noting the common factor which both prohibits happiness and promotes the present separation of justice and utility for modern man.

The ideal or utopian solution, as noted above, would be the elimination of this factor. However, Rousseau, though he may have a utopian model to guide him, was not totally impractical. He knew well the extent to which human desires are malleable and the great distance that will always remain between the ideal of what man can achieve and what most men will achieve. Even Emile, who received the best education possible, fell short of the ideal. And, as Rousseau himself points out,
the education of Emile is impossible for most men.115

Rousseau did believe that the most harmful effects of insatiable desires could be eliminated, even though men may never achieve the ideal. These effects can be eliminated by formulating a society in which the corrupt desires are neutralized. Recall that in the Second Discourse Rousseau had argued that the mere existence of insatiable desires did not pose an overwhelming threat. It was only when this corruption of the natural instincts were combined with the means to pursue these desires that the evils of moral and political corruption arose. For example, Rousseau had argued that in the original situation, even if one individual could have the corrupt desires observable in modern man, he would not have the means of effectively pursuing them. In the original situation, the only effective means of domination was physical force. Yet the inequality of physical force is of so little effect that the corruption of one man poses no real threat to others.

Later in the Second Discourse Rousseau argues that the worst effects of corrupted desires occurred only after the development of agriculture made material wealth possible, and only after the institutions of moral and political society originated. At this point, and for the first time, the means of moral and political inequality were available. Without a power base of wealth, and without moral and political laws to subvert, the possibility of great inequality does not exist.116 Thus a very realistic aim would be to eliminate the means by which corrupt desires have their most important effects.

In the Social Contract Rousseau is indeed constructing a society for men who are corrupt. But he does so with the belief that this
corruption can be made politically impotent. However, as I have suggested, this is only one aspect of his program for the reconstruction of man. Another aspect of this program is to attempt to eliminate the corruption itself. This aspect is to be accomplished through control and direction of the educational system, the state religion, and the habits and customs which exist in society.

We should note that when corruption is made impotent in society, men will be in different circumstances. Whereas before man existed with corrupt desires in circumstances in which these corrupt desires were socially and politically efficacious, now man will exist with corrupt desires in circumstances in which they are not. There is a great difference between these two situations. For a man to love his duty, to seek the welfare of his state before his own welfare, and to love his fellow man, could be a dangerous and naive thing in the first situation. Given that self-preservation is at bottom the fundamental drive, a man would be foolish to be an altruist in a society in which egoists rule.

This is not the case in the second situation. Here, if all goes well, egoists cannot rule society for their own benefit. A man is not foolish or naive to love his country and his fellow man when he knows that in doing so he will not be placing himself at a disadvantage with respect to those who seek only their own good. And, if I am correct, this is just what is discovered in the investigation of the society Rousseau envisioned if the principles of the Social Contract were applied in Corsica and Poland.
The Initial Compact and its Implications

To this point I have tried to establish Rousseau's intentions in the *Social Contract* by showing what he meant by 'taking men as they are' and by the phrase "in order that justice and utility may never be disjoined". I shall now turn to the body of the *Social Contract* to reveal how Rousseau fulfills his intentions.

In the first five chapters of the *Social Contract* Rousseau argues for the right of individual freedom to choose the means of self-preservation and against theories of right which would take this freedom from the individual, e.g., the right of the strongest. The following passage from Chapter IV, Book I, shows nicely the consistency of these chapters with what is found in the *Second Discourse*.

> Since no man has natural authority over his fellow man, and since might in no sense makes right, conventions remain as the basis of all legitimate authority among men. [118]

The first five chapters of Book I conclude with Rousseau's claim that in order to initiate legitimate society an initial compact must be formed with the unanimous consent of all who are to partake in the civil association. (Later, after civil society is legitimately established, tacit consent is sufficient to establish oneself as a citizen with the attending privileges and duties.) [119]

Chapter VI, Book I, begins the heart of the *Social Contract*. Rousseau has established that a unanimous first convention is a necessary condition for legitimate political association; he will now reveal what else is required to produce legitimate political association. The arguments Rousseau presents from Chapter VI, Book I, on are meant to follow from the major theses Rousseau has presented elsewhere (hence...
my Chapter One), and I shall interpret these arguments in that light.

Chapter VI, Book I, opens with a statement of Rousseau's starting point.

Let us assume that men have reached the point where the obstacles to their self-preservation in the state of nature are too great to be overcome by the forces each individual is capable of exerting to maintain himself in that state. This original state can then no longer continue; and the human race would perish if it did not change its mode of existence.120

This is a restatement of Rousseau's conclusion in the *Second Discourse* that man, or at least most men, no longer have the ability for individual self-sufficiency. Man must change to life via cooperative association if the human race as such is to survive.

One of the options open to us in changing our manner of existence is to become rational egoists. As rational egoists we could gain the cooperation of others, at least to some extent, and thus no longer need to rely on ourselves alone. However, we have seen how vehemently Rousseau has rejected this option. He has forcefully argued in the *Second Discourse* and *Emile* that this is a very unsatisfactory road to self-preservation (not to mention personal happiness).121 Although the human race has survived through a long history in which rational egoism was the rule, this line has in fact resulted in loss of individual security as well as great injustices.

Thus we are at a crossroads. The mode of existence of original man is no longer possible, and the mode of existence of rational egoism has proved unsatisfactory. We must develop a radically new mode of existence.
One thing to note in formulating this new mode of existence is that men 'cannot engender new forces'; they can only combine the ones they already have. The forces all men have, the only ones they have, are their accumulated possessions, their physical and psychological strength, their individual freedom to choose the means of their self-preservation, and we must therefore look to a combination of these individual forces for our new mode of existence. This means that my self-preservation depends partially on the use of the forces of others. It also means that the preservation of others will depend at least partially on my individual amount of force. But how can I get the use of the force of others, and how can I rely on the use of their forces? After all, if I need the force of another, but he needs it also, he will use it for himself, and I will then be back to only my own force (which Rousseau has said is insufficient). Moreover, if all I have is my force and liberty, how can I pledge it to another without thereby lessening my own force? I require an increase of force, not a decrease. What reason, then, do I or does anyone have to yield force and liberty to others? Would it not be wiser, relative to my self-preservation, to pledge my force and liberty only in those cases in which I can spare it? The problem, of course, is that if I do this I am an individual egoist, and Rousseau does not want a society of individual egoists.

Rousseau has a way out of this puzzle. Notice that the problem arises only when two or more individuals both need the same force (whoever possesses the force). They will both need this force only if they have a conflict of interest. The answer to the above questions is to create a mode of existence in which there are no conflicts of
interests. In this way, pledging my force and liberty will not face the problems suggested above. Thus a necessary condition of the new mode of existence is that there be no conflict of interest.

These (the individual forces) they have to bring into play by means of a single motive power, and cause to act in concert. If there is no conflict of interest, then I can call upon the forces of everyone else when threatened. But where would such a threat come from? For the most part it would have to come from outside my society. Since there is no conflict of interest, none of the individuals in my society will pose a serious threat. Thus by joining in the initial compact I would eliminate most of the threats posed by others.

To this point we see the goal, but not how the goal is to be achieved. The problem needs restatement in terms that will allow us to see how the solution can be achieved.

This problem, in relation to my subject, may be expressed in the following terms: 'To find a form of association which defends and protects the person and property of each member with the whole force of the community, and where each, while joining with all the rest, still obeys no one but himself, and remains as free as before.' This is the fundamental problem to which the social contract provides the answer.

The advantages of so combining forces is obvious, yet how can one do so and still 'obey no one but himself' and remain as 'free as before'? Taking the second problem first, let us recall what we have learned so far concerning freedom in Rousseau's thought. There are three distinct classes of individuals in Rousseau's works: the original man, the modern man, and the future man of his civil society. The original man was free of the corrupted desires that attend modern man. He was free of modern threats to survival, in that he was self-sufficient
and faced no serious threats posed by others wishing to do him harm. Yet the original man was motivated almost solely by instinct. Because of the circumstances of his existence, he had no more freedom of choice than other animals. It is thus somewhat of a misnomer to apply the term 'freedom' to the original man.

Modern man is free in another sense. He is free to override his instincts and make choices with respect to his self-preservation. The development of his potential to reason freed man from the compulsive animal-like existence of original man.

Though modern man is free in a sense that original man is not, he has lost the freedom enjoyed by original man. He is not free from the corrupt desires of others and not free from the effects of his own corruption. In fact the decisions modern man can make are greatly limited. To a large extent he is forced to adopt an egoistic attitude by the threat from others, a threat not present in the original situation. In addition, his own corruption leads him to unhealthy decisions, e.g., to compete unnecessarily with others and to risk his well-being for luxuries. The result is that modern man is not truly free, because his choices are unduly dominated by unnatural desires rather than springing from his true nature.

This is a crucial thesis in Rousseau's thought and requires further explanation. Rousseau frequently used the term "freedom" in different senses. Yet this does not mean that he had in mind different and independent concepts. Rather his view is that there is a full notion of freedom, whose several aspects must be addressed separately. For example, Rousseau wrote of the freedom to 'obey oneself alone', and
also of the freedom attending self-mastery. It is tempting to view these as isolated types of freedom; to want to classify the first as a kind of political freedom and the second as a personal freedom. One wants to say that an individual could have political freedom in Rousseau's sense, without having the freedom of self-mastery, and vice-versa. In fact, many philosophers would argue that the proper scope of political philosophy extends to political freedom, but not to personal freedom.

However, this would be unacceptable to Rousseau, for he argued that one cannot be free in the full sense of the word unless one has attained both freedoms. He did not think that one could be free to 'obey himself alone' while living in a society in which other individuals were not master of their passions. He argued repeatedly that even if the laws of society were to guarantee political freedom, without the spirit of those laws 'residing in the hearts of the citizens', men would come to dominate others, and thus there would be no real political freedom for all.

We must also keep in mind that Rousseau's notion of 'obedience to self-imposed laws' carries the connotation of 'moral laws', laws that one should give oneself. To formulate the laws one should give oneself, rather than laws that merely seem attractive at any given time, requires that one have control over the passions and desires. To cite an obvious example, one may, after having sufficient drink, believe he should be free to judge for himself when he is capable of driving his car. The rule he should adopt, both for his own safety and for the safety of others, is that he should not drive after consuming
a certain amount of alcohol, no matter how confident he feels at the time. "Obeying oneself alone" must here refer to obedience to good standards of behavior, and this can only be accomplished with a measure of self-control.

Rousseau wanted to make this same point with respect to other, less obvious areas. To cite an example Rousseau would approve, consider the case of the rich and successful who are to choose laws which are to govern their behavior. On Rousseau's analysis, such men, by habit and custom, would tend to find attractive laws which promote competition and laissez faire economics. Such laws, according to Rousseau, promote inequality and thus are not laws which should be adopted. Yet unless the rich and successful can overcome their acquired habits of thought and attitude, they will choose wrong standards of conduct. Here again, the existence of the freedom of self-mastery must be a feature of political society in order to produce a society with real political freedom.

The arguments above are based on practical considerations—namely the practical barriers to political freedom which result from an absence of self-mastery. Yet these arguments also rest on Rousseau's moral theory, since political freedom becomes in his hands the freedom to act in a morally correct manner. On Rousseau's view, without the fuller sense of freedom, the individual cannot develop into a true moral being.

This passage from the natural to the civil state produces a very remarkable change in man, substituting justice for instinct as the guide to his conduct, and giving his actions the morality they previously lacked.
Rousseau's moral theory is somewhat confusing. He argued that morality is conventional, that there are no 'rights' of the kind that imply obligations prior to the social compact, and that no one has authority over another. At the same time he damned the actions of man as immoral. Now if the actions of man prior to the social compact are so clearly immoral, then there must be morality prior to the social compact, and morality cannot, strictly speaking, be conventional.

Rousseau had a problem of terminology here. He found words such as 'right' and 'wrong', 'moral' and 'immoral' too restrictive for his purposes. He wished to use these terms in his own way, but could not provide a concise explanation of his use. I shall attempt to make his view, as I understand it, more clear.

Rousseau believed in God, though not in the authority of the Church in determining His word. He stated that morality emanates from God, and applies to all men after the original situation, when man became effectively free from the primarily instinctive life of animals, and thus free to make moral choices. Yet man does not have the moral code directly from God. If he did there would be little dispute over what should be done. There would be no, or very few, religious sects, and there would not be the conflicting moral codes which have led to so much evil done in the name of religion. A man of genius, such as a Socrates, might be able to see clearly what God commands, but there are few men capable of such independent clarity of vision. There are some clear cases of moral evil which do not require a genius to condemn, e.g., rape and murder. Beyond these paradigm cases there is much harm that men do to each other which they justify as morally permissible.
The various moral theories which men embrace allows them, sometimes even encourages them, to do harm to others, where this harm is, from Rousseau's viewpoint, unnecessary.

Rousseau's position seems to be that there are moral truths, but these remain for the most part in the abstract. They do not provide the standards by which men do, in fact, conduct themselves. Modern man lives under an accumulation of developed *amour propre*, social and political institutions, beliefs, habits, and customs which do not embody the moral truths. Knowledge of these truths allows us to criticize the actions of man as immoral. However, if we want to change their conduct, we must change their beliefs, habits, institutions, etc., which are the effective guide of human conduct. Once civil society is enjoined under Rousseau's guidance, the standard of conduct politically produced will be effectively the same as the eternal standard prescribed by God. Thus men become moral beings in having both the knowledge of right conduct, and in living in circumstances in which they can overcome the practical barriers to right conduct which have previously been a part of his environment.

Rousseau did not explicitly discuss moral theory, nor did he develop a clear theory of morality. One wonders why he believed that it takes a genius to discover moral truths, especially when he constantly pointed to examples of immoral behavior. In addition, Rousseau seems to confuse his arguments concerning the practical barriers to the implementation of an adequate moral code in society, and his theoretical thesis that there is no moral authority on earth prior to social compact. Now if murder is obviously immoral, then men know that murder is wrong,
and it would seem they would know that it should be prevented. Why is it not the case that, at least in such clear cases, someone has an obligation to prevent murder, and hence has moral authority to do so? Rousseau's reasoning, as best I can make it out, is that the conflicting judgments of men forestall the establishment of a uniform and effective method of preventing murder and the like. He seems to argue that attempts to implement a moral code have led to even more evil done to men. One is reminded of Locke's view of the inconveniences which result from everyone's executing the laws of morality for himself. For Locke, there is moral authority prior to a social compact, but without a political framework problems occasionally arise. Rousseau's view might be that these inconveniences are much greater than Locke supposed, and that Locke's state of nature would be no better than existing societies with respect to the amount of immoral behavior done in the name of 'moral law'. Yet if this is Rousseau's view, it is beside the point, for there is a difference between claiming that there is no practical and effective moral authority and claiming that no moral authority exists at all. Rousseau's thesis is that until the physical and psychological conditions are right, no de facto authority consistent with moral truth can exist. This reasoning does not imply that there is no de jure authority. It would not be fair to Rousseau to claim that he believed that such implication did exist. Yet he did not separate his reasoning concerning the impossibility of practical de jure authority (prior to the social compact) from his claim that no such authority exists (prior to the social compact). The best that can be said on Rousseau's behalf is that he was confused on this point.
Even though we are unable to provide an adequate clarification of Rousseau's moral theory, this overview can aid in the explanation of the terminology of the Social Contract, in which Rousseau discusses three forms of freedom: natural, civil and moral. Natural freedom is defined by Rousseau as "unlimited right to everything he wants and is capable of getting". Original man had freedom in this sense, for he had the right to use anything in his environment. Original man had no obligations toward his fellow man, but then there was no need for notions of obligation. The circumstances of the original situation prevented injustice and immoral behavior. In the Social Contract Rousseau is explicit in extending this thesis to man throughout all stages of history up to the social compact:

Since no man has authority over his fellow man, and since might in no sense makes right, conventions remain as the basis of all legitimate authority among men.

Prior to convention, there is no moral authority on earth. No individual or group has the right to dictate the behavior of others, because there is no infallible guide to God's will. In fact, men do dictate rules of conduct to others, but this is merely because they are strong enough to do so. Since 'might in no sense makes right', those who hold power over others do not thereby have de jure authority.

It is helpful to contrast Rousseau and Locke on this point. Locke argued that there are moral truths prior to civil association, and the 'universal reason' of man can know these truths. Moreover, each man has the right to enforce these moral laws. Thus any individual may prevent another from doing wrong, or punish him for some wrong. For Rousseau, man has the right to make all decisions, and no one can
legitimately force him to behave in a certain way, even to do what is in fact the morally correct thing to do. There was no such authority in the original situation and nothing in the long history of man has produced it.

This is reflected in Rousseau's presentation of natural freedom as "the unlimited right to everything he wants and is capable of getting". Natural freedom, on Rousseau's account, reflects the facts of life, that only force is operative in the affairs of man. Thus the "right to everything he wants and is capable of getting" is not a moral right.

This freedom to make one's own decisions extends into the civil association itself. We noted that one necessary condition of legitimate civil association is that the individual obeys himself alone. Thus modern man must choose to behave morally; such behavior cannot be forced upon him. In the Social Contract Rousseau stated that no man can be forced to join the civil association. Rousseau's position, then, can be summarized as follows. Morality replaces mere force as the determiner of human behavior only when a moral authority is legitimately established. This can happen only in legitimate society, and that means a society in which there is unanimous consent to the establishment of legitimate authority. In the Social Contract the moral authority is the will of the people, when that will reflects their adoption of moral truths as fundamental tenets.

Upon entering civil association man gains civil liberty, and "ownership of all he possesses". Rousseau does not give a complete definition of 'civil liberty'. However, I believe we can understand
civil liberty in the following way. Prior to civil liberty, the effective extent of one's claim to his possessions was the strength he had to defend it. With the creation of civil liberty, one's claim to his possessions was the strength he had to defend it. With the creation of civil liberty, one's claim to his possessions is not limited only by his own strength. Wrongdoers are prevented from (or punished for) immoral actions against his person or possessions by the 'whole force of the community', for the 'whole force of the community', in adopting moral laws as fundamental political principles, enforces his claims because they are just. Thus the weakest member of society can be assured that he will not be wronged, and that he no longer has to rely solely on his own force for the protection of his property.

Thus for Rousseau civil liberty means freedom from the conditions in which natural liberty obtained, most specifically the corrupted desires of his fellow citizens. For the first time man has 'rights' in a sense that does not reduce to the sum of his personal force.

In order to make no mistake as to the balance of profit and loss, we must clearly distinguish between natural liberty, which has no other limit than the might of the individual, and civil liberty, which is limited by the general will; and between possession, which results merely from force or from the right of the first occupier, and property, which can only be founded on a positive title. 136

There is another sense of freedom which Rousseau says is created along with the civil compact. For the first time in his history, man can be morally free, because he can be "truly master of himself". 137 True moral freedom means conquering the corrupt desires, the freeing of oneself from tyranny within.
Rousseau provides only a short paragraph concerning moral freedom in the *Social Contract*. As noted earlier the precise meaning of moral freedom is discussed elsewhere. I have argued that on Rousseau's account moral freedom is possible for most men only in a society of non-egoists because only in such a society can he safely and effectively overcome his own corrupt desires. To do this requires that the individual set up laws for his behavior, laws which do not promote his selfish desires but instead address his true interests. Laws of this type, if followed faithfully, will involve no transgressions on the rights of others. Morality is established as the standard of human conduct, not through the perception of God's will, but rather by constructing a society in which the harm man does to himself and others is eliminated, and that is surely in accordance with moral law.

The freedom of the new citizen of the civil society is to be as great as that of modern man. In fact, it will be much greater. The freedom of the individual is to be increased by circumventing the disabilitating influences of the egoistic desires of others, and the egoistic desires of self. This is to be accomplished by the rule of law. When an individual sets up laws to live by, and those laws address his true interests (and he obeys those laws), then he will circumvent his own counterproductive desires. In addition, if the individual can get others to obey the laws that address and promote his true interests, then he will no longer be faced with the threat of others. They will always, in obeying his law, act for his true interests.

The question is how the individual is to get everyone to obey his laws. And, since everyone is in the same position, how could even
two individuals join together in civil association? The only way this could be accomplished is by making the law that one individual proposes exactly the law that everyone else proposes. It follows from this that, if such a law is possible, it cannot be addressed specifically to any particular individual's welfare. Rather it must be addressed equally to the welfare of every individual. Otherwise it would not be a law that met the requirements of each individual. One necessary condition of the new mode of existence is that all men must be equal under the law, and another necessary condition is that the law must be addressed to the true interests of each individual.

We have already seen, from a previous discussion, the true interest of modern man. It is to live in a society in which each individual maintains as nearly as possible a natural, balanced existence. The true interest of each is to establish laws that protect and preserve such a society. The laws of the new mode of existence are thus to be aimed at the preservation and maintenance of a specific form of society, the rousseauian state. In formulating laws that do in fact promote his own true interests, the individual will propose laws that promote the true interest of every individual. Thus the laws proposed by one individual are exactly the laws proposed by every individual.138

Notice that if in the course of things the society changes and the threats deriving from corrupt desires are reintroduced into the society, then the society becomes something the individual has not agreed to in the first convention. The first convention is then broken and the individual is no longer obligated to the society or to its rulers.
The clauses of this contract are so completely determined by the nature of the act that the slightest modification would render them null and void.\textsuperscript{139}

This will happen, for example, when moral and political inequality are reintroduced. In this case the laws no longer are addressed to the individual's true interests, and hence are no longer his laws. The condition that he obey only his laws is broken, and with this the original convention is destroyed.

The second formulation of the problem has yielded a much clearer view of what is required in the new mode of existence. The next step for Rousseau is to see what follows from this second formulation of the problem in terms of practical measures.

These clauses, rightly understood, can be reduced to the following only: the total alienation of each member, with all his rights, to the community as a whole.\textsuperscript{140}

This is a dramatic shift. We start with the requirement that we must not yield any personal force or liberty, and from this derive the conclusion that we must yield everything. This is not as paradoxical as it sounds. The reason that the alienation must be total, that each must give up all his rights, follows from the initial agreement. The individual is agreeing to a society free of conflicts of interest. If the individual held any rights back, including the right to life, then all conflicts of interest could not be removed from society. If another individual held any rights back, then I could not count on his always obeying my laws. If he withheld any rights, then he would not have obligated himself to come to my aid in every case, only in those cases in which the withheld rights were not a factor. This is a source of potential conflict, and the original convention requires that we
eliminate the possibility of conflict of interest.

To make the same point another way, the clauses of the initial agreement say that the individual is to be protected and defended with the whole force of the community. If individuals were to withhold rights, then the whole force of the community would not be at the disposal of each individual. Thus the clauses of the initial agreement require total commitment.

This commitment is to include even the right to life. There may be some cases in which the individual is required to lose his life, e.g., in defense of the community. Yet this is justifiable if we accept certain aspects of Rousseau's view of the nature of man. According to Rousseau, no mode of existence is without danger. Individuals, however they live, must occasionally risk their life. However, for Rousseau the threats to life which might occur in his civil society are much fewer than the threats that are encountered in present societies. Thus in joining his civil society the individual accepts this risk as part of his choice of the best means of self-preservation. By accepting this risk he is minimizing the chances that he will lose his life.

We note again that the total alienation lasts only as long as the social compact. Earlier we noted that the social compact is dissolved when 'the whole force' of the association no longer 'protects and defends the person and property' of the individual, or when the individual is no longer 'as free as before'.

Rousseau argues that nothing is really lost in making the commitment of total alienation. He implies that the preservation of the
society will not require an immediate or equal distribution of personal goods. Given Rousseau's views in general, this must be qualified. If in fact there were a great inequality in wealth such that some individuals did not have sufficient means of self-preservation, then at least some redistribution would be required. Here Rousseau is assuming that those he is addressing are not in so bad circumstances. In later passages Rousseau argues that equality in material goods is not a requirement of the original convention. What Rousseau opposes is a degree of inequality which results in threats to some individual or individuals. He argues that it is not so much the task of society to redistribute wealth as it is to prevent inequality in wealth from growing dangerously large in the first place.

...so far as wealth is concerned, no citizen is rich enough to be able to buy another, and none so poor as to be forced to sell himself.

The reason Rousseau takes this position, I have argued, is that material wealth and luxury should not be important to the new man. The desire for wealth and luxury is a corrupted desire, and therefore to be suppressed in society. Such desires are to be formally denied by the first convention, and by the constraints on the laws under which the society is to operate.

According to Rousseau, the requirement of total alienation is derived from the clauses of the second formulation of the fundamental problem of civil association. (To find a form of association which...) Thus total alienation is meant to be consistent with 'obeying oneself alone' and 'remaining as free as before'. Now according to Rousseau, one suffers a loss of freedom when some other individual or group gains
a position of dominance in the form of moral or political superiority. Through the requirement that the individual gives everything to the common effort, under the condition that all others make the same commitment, the formal equality is assured. The individual no longer needs to fear that others can legitimately gain a position of dominance. Since this situation is just the 'good' for the individual on Rousseau's view, the individual is obeying his will for his own good, properly understood, when he makes the commitment. Total alienation is thus to be viewed as a formal requirement which expresses a necessary condition for the fulfillment of the clauses of the second formulation of the fundamental problem of political association.

Such a commitment made in the original compact does not yield a method of making the decisions which are necessary for the operation of a society. Rousseau was aware of Locke's formulation of the fundamental problem of political association. According to Locke, the purpose of political association is to perfect and protect the natural rights of individuals. In the absence of political society (Locke's state of nature) each individual retains the right to decide for himself when a violation of natural rights has occurred, and the right to punish the offender. Yet given the fallibility of individual judgment and the general lack of objectivity inherent in individual judgment there will be conflicting opinions concerning who has, in fact, violated natural rights, who should be punished, and what the punishment should consist in. With no means of arbitrating such disputes, the natural rights of individuals in the state of nature remain imperfect and insecure. The major problem for Locke was to devise in
political society a means of arbitrating such conflicts and thereby perfecting and protecting natural rights.

Though Rousseau rejected Locke's natural rights doctrine and Locke's formulation of the fundamental problem for political theory, he agreed with Locke that individual decision-making was unacceptable as a decision procedure for the governance of society. The answer Rousseau gives is to transfer the decision-making process from the individual to the community as a whole.

Each of us puts in common his person and all his powers under the supreme direction of the general will; and in our corporate capacity we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole. 149

According to Rousseau, this is a reformulation of his requirement of total alienation of all the rights of each individual to the community. 150 It is the first time Rousseau mentions the 'general will', and this passage incorporates the shift in Rousseau's terminology which has produced so much confusion and so many different interpretations of Rousseau's political thought.

In this chapter we have seen how Rousseau's theory of human nature provides the basis for legitimate society--the rousseauian state. We have shown that the rousseauian state achieves the goal, stated in the Social Contract, of conjoining justice and utility, while 'taking men as they are' and 'laws as they could be'. It has been shown that the principles of the Social Contract are meant to return man as nearly as possible to a natural balance and harmony, and that the 'common interest' which is the objective of those principles is the interest all men should have in returning to a natural balance, and therefore to the
construction and maintenance of the rousseauian state. We have tied these goals to the initial formulation in the Social Contract of the central problem of political theory— to form an association in which each may call upon the aid of all others, while remaining free to 'obey himself alone'. We have shown how this statement of the problem implies the 'total alienation' of the individual to the community. This has brought us to the next step in the Social Contract, which is to show that the directive to 'place ourselves under the supreme direction of the general will' follows from the requirement of total alienation. In Chapter Three we shall investigate how this comes about, what the 'general will' means, how it is to provide the necessary guidance to the community, and how it is to meet the goals of civil association.
FOOTNOTES

1Rousseau, Second Discourse, p. 221, of Rousseau's view that the more man approximates the original situation the more happiness he can obtain. cf., Emile, p. 45.

2Confessions, Book X, p. 377, 368.

3Ibid.

4The clergy was powerful in civic affairs in Europe during the life of Rousseau, and, as Diderot found out, it was dangerous to stray too far from church dogma. A good discussion of Rousseau's writing of the Discourse on Inequality is found in Hendel's Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Moralist, Chapter III, Vol. i.

5Confessions, Book VIII, p. 328.

6Ibid., p. 329.

7Roger Masters, The Political Philosophy of Rousseau, p. xii.

8Confessions, Book X, p. 478.


10This should be apparent from my Chapter One. Compare Social Contract, Books I-V, with Second Discourse, pp. 253-270.

11Rousseau, Constitutional Project for Corsica, in Watkins, Rousseau: Political Writings.


13Social Contract, p. 54.

Ibid., p. 317.

Ibid.

Ibid., p. 294.

Ibid., p. 295. Cf., Mario Einaudi, The Early Rousseau. Einaudi shows the underlying consistency of Rousseau's discussion of property in the Second Discourse and the Political Economy, arguing that Rousseau accepted Locke's theory of property rights while rejecting them as 'natural rights', p. 198 ff. For a contrast, see Plamenatz, Man and Society, p. 427 ff, in which Plamenatz argues that Rousseau's view of property is essentially socialist.

Ibid., p. 308.

Ibid., p. 279 ff.

Ibid., p. 308.

Ibid., p. 286.

Ibid., pp. 290, 286, 313.

Ibid., pp. 307-309.

Ibid., pp. 297, 298, 283, 302.

Ibid., p. 311.

Ibid., pp. 296-298.

Ibid., p. 295.

Ibid., pp. 300, 329.

Ibid., pp. 283, 300, 329.

Ibid., p. 300.

Ibid., pp. 304-305.

Ibid., p. 300. Rousseau's position here is succinctly put by Plamenatz in Man and Society, p. 432. "Rousseau takes it for granted that he who loves his fatherland and its laws is also a lover of freedom, but not of national glory."

Ibid., pp. 317, 301.
135


36Ibid., p. 296.

37See Chapter One of this dissertation, pp. 33-34.

38Corsica, pp. 290-291, 294, 287.

39Ibid., p. 300.

40Ibid., p. 310.

41Ibid., pp. 279-280.

42Ibid., pp. 323-326.

43Since there is to be no money, no luxury, and there is to be full employment, there will be few criminals.

44See Chapter One of this dissertation, pp. 33-34.

45Corsica, p. 291.

46Ibid., pp. 293, 319, 321.


48Ibid., p. 286.

49Ibid., p. 310.

50Although Corsica and Poland are the only countries to which Rousseau attempted to apply the principles of the Social Contract, virtually all his works reflect the same themes of simplicity of life, rejection of luxury, a taming of the passions.

51Poland, p. 159.

52Ibid., pp. 250, 251.

53Ibid., pp. 186, 251.

54Ibid., pp. 181, 182, 201, 233.

55Ibid., p. 233.
"only where society is simple and small can all its members take an active part in managing its affairs."

John Plamenatz in *Man and Society*, pp. 431-432, presents a nice discussion of the difference between Rousseau's understanding of the proper nationalist spirit, and the nineteenth century notion of nationalism with its specific connotations.

"It is therefore one of the most important functions of government to prevent extreme inequality of fortunes; not by taking away wealth from its possessors, but by depriving all men of means to accumulate it"; *Political Economy*, p. 306.

"With any movement of trade and commerce it is impossible to prevent destructive vices from creeping into a nation."
Confessions, Book IX, p. 379.

Marc Plattner, Rousseau's State of Nature, p. 120.

Ibid., p. 38.

See my Chapter One, pp. 7-8.

Roger Masters, The Political Philosophy of Rousseau, p. 409. Masters' view is shared by Einauldi, who argues that the recovery of natural man is impossible, p. 22.

Ibid., p. 297.

Ibid., p. 15.

Ibid.

Ibid., p. 297.

Ibid., p. 298.

Ibid. Masters' view is shared by John Charvet, who argues from a similar position to the conclusion that Rousseau's version of social society is impossible, The Social Problem in the Philosophy of Rousseau, pp. 145-146.

See below, p. 96.


Ibid.

When Hendel discusses Rousseau's reasoning in the Second Discourse, he begins with Rousseau's statement that he perceives "two principles prior to reason, one of them deeply interesting us in our own welfare and preservation, and the other exciting a natural repugnance at seeing any other sensible being suffer pain or death". Hendel does not seem to consider that Rousseau derived these two principles from his view of the natural order of the animal kingdom. The quotes used in my paper are taken from the section of Vol. ii of Hendel's work entitled Conclusion.

See my Chapter One, pp. 47-50.

Ibid., pp. 34-37.

In the Republic, Plato argued that the just man is happy, and the unjust man unhappy, thus tying morality and personal happiness. Rousseau ultimately makes a similar tie, though he argues for the conclusion that a happy man, being content and satisfied with his simple existence, will not desire to do injustice.

See my Chapter One, pp. 1-2.


Ibid., Part I, Chapter 13, p. 107.

Ibid., p. 110, Part I, Chapter 14.

Ibid., p. 143, Chapter 18.

Free rider egoism refers to the adoption of the strategy in which one encourages non-egoistic behavior and publicly pays lip-service to non-egoist ideals, while privately intending to pursue egoist goals.

Second Discourse, p. 222.


Rousseau believed that such a desire could develop from man's natural compassion, but that in the face of the enormous growth of amour propre it would be almost completely ineffectual.

cf. Hobbes on 'good' and 'evil', Chapter vi, p. 53, "But whatsoever is the object of any man's appetite or desire, that is it which he for his part calls good." See also Chapter 10, where Hobbes cites riches, eloquence, reputation as instruments of power.


At least the men to whom Rousseau is addressing the Social Contract.

Second Discourse, p. 270.

Note esp. Corsica, p. 310.

Second Discourse, p. 200.

Emile, p. 174.
To what extent Rousseau's work was utopian is an interesting question in itself. Lester Crocker has a nice discussion of this question in Rousseau's Social Contract, p. 115 ff, "Influence and Analogues".

Even at the end of his education, Emile is fallible, e.g., his attempted seduction of Sophy, p. 442. When the teacher's job is done he turns Emile over to Sophy for continuing guidance, for Emile can never attain complete mastery of himself, pp. 443-444.

Emile must be educated in extraordinary circumstances away from the city, and under the direction of one man who has no other task than to educate him, p. 19 ff.

Second Discourse, pp. 243-244.

Einaudi points to this same thesis, "the government has dual responsibility. The first is that of creating the conditions within which the desire to achieve the general will flourishes naturally", p. 185. Compare Social Contract, p. 44.


Rousseau held a view on tacit consent similar to that of John Locke. On this view if an individual accepts the benefits of a society, then he is considered to be tacitly consenting to the authority of that society. However, Rousseau qualifies the conditions under which tacit consent is given in a way in which Locke does not. According to Rousseau, the mere use of the facilities of a particular society is not sufficient for tacit consent, as it seems to be for Locke. "For elsewhere family, property, compulsion, violence and lack of asylum may always hold an inhabitant unwillingly in the country; and then his mere residence no longer presupposes his consent to the contract, or to the violation of the contract." Rousseau did not have more to say on this subject. Perhaps he thought that since each individual is to participate in determining the general will through the voting process, this would constitute express consent to the authority of society and its laws, and so there is no real problem in determining exactly when tacit consent is given. Social Contract, Book IV, Chapter II, p. 117, footnote 1.

Ibid., p. 14, Chapter II, Book I.

See my Chapter One, pp. 49-50. cf. Jules Steinberg, Locke, Rousseau and the Idea of Consent, p. 82 ff. Steinberg argues that Rousseau was antagonistic to the "politics of selfishness" of both Hobbes and Locke; esp. p. 86, "for Rousseau, egoism is inconsistent with realization of the common good".

Note Corsica, p. 295.


Ibid.

Note Poland, p. 186; Emile, p. 408. Cf. Ernst Cassirer, The Question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, p. 54 ff, for an argument that the key to Rousseau's notion of freedom is overcoming all arbitrariness, also see my discussion above, p. 37 ff, and Emile, p. 250. "If moral goodness is in accordance with our nature, man can only be healthy when he is good."


Ibid.

See my Chapter One, pp. 15-16.


John Locke, Two Treatises of Government, Book II, Chapter II, Section 6-13. For a general comparison of the view of Locke and Rousseau on morality, and Rousseau's attack on Locke's view of the basis of morality, see Jules Steinberg, Locke, Rousseau and the Idea of Consent, p. 81.

Social Contract, p. 20, Book I, Chapter VIII.

Ibid., p. 117, Book IV, Chapter II.

Ibid., p. 20.

Ibid.

Ibid. This is a central theme of Rousseau's and it set his views apart from those of his contemporaries. For a discussion of this, see Marquior, Rousseau and Weber, p. 52 ff. "While the enlightened philosophers revelled in the idea of increasing mastery of nature, and adopted a utilitarian, often hedonist view of man, best exemplified in Diderot, Rousseau advocated self-mastery instead of technological power and virtue instead of pleasure seeking."

Ibid., pp. 113-114; also p. 33, Book II, Chapter IV. This last is a good example of Rousseau's frequent tying together of his major theses. Here he ties the condition that "each individual necessarily submits himself to the conditions he imposes on others" and the
common interest, for that condition is the "admirable union of justice and interest."

139 Ibid., p. 15.
140 Ibid.
141 Ibid., p. 34.
142 Ibid., pp. 34-35.
143 Ibid., pp. 21, 34.
144 Ibid., pp. 53-54.
145 Ibid., p. 55. cf. Emile, p. 187. Rousseau argues that the rich make themselves unhappy. For additional argument that wealth yields moral evil, see Einauldi, pp. 251-254.
147 Ibid., Book II, Chapter II, Section 6-13.
148 Ibid.
149 Social Contract, Book I, Chapter VI, p. 16.
150 Ibid.
The two key questions concerning the general will are "What is it?", and "How is it to be found?". I shall address these questions separately. Before beginning the discussion of what the general will is, a preliminary remark is in order.

Long before Rousseau's time legal systems in Europe had considered the notion of corporate bodies and the idea that these bodies could be said to have a will. For example, companies, town councils and the Church were considered as corporate entities which could engage in actions as a persona ficta. For example, a town council might contract with a private company to perform work for the town, or the Church may issue edicts which express the will of the Church. Thus it was proper to speak of the will of this body as a corporate will.¹

This model can be expanded to the community as a whole, and we can talk of the will of the community as opposed to the will of any actual person. The corporate will of the community, where the community in question is Rousseau's civil society, is called by him the 'general will'. In discussing particular associations within the general community, Rousseau informs us that they each can have a will of
its own. Moreover, this will can be considered as a general will, at least with respect to members of that particular association.

But when cliques and partial associations are formed at the expense of the whole, the will of each of these associations becomes general with reference to its members and particular with reference to the state.\(^2\)

**The General Will--What is It?**

Rousseau says that the requirement that we 'place ourselves under the supreme direction of the general will' is derived from the conditions of the initial compact. The essential features of the initial compact have been discussed—conjoining justice and utility, protecting and preserving each individual with the whole force of society, that each individual remains as free as before, and obeys himself alone.

To understand how placing ourselves under the command of the general will is to fulfill these essential features, we must first distinguish between actual and ideal wills. An actual will is the existing, occurrent desire or wish of an individual or group of individuals. An ideal will is a normative standard, the desire or wish that an individual or group should have.

In the *Social Contract* Rousseau distinguishes three types of actual wills; that of an individual, which he calls a 'particular will', that of the majority of individuals, and that of all individuals when there is unanimity (the will of all). We might also discuss a minority will, which would be the will of a group of smaller size than the majority. For our purposes we can consider the three types of will as the will of one, the will of some (majority/minority) and the will of all.\(^3\) Viewed thus, Rousseau's three actual wills are exhaustive of the
types of actual wills.

Rousseau repeatedly stated that the general will is not to be identified with one of these three types, though one or all of them may at times be concurrent with the general will. Thus for Rousseau the general will cannot be identified as an actual will, and must be an ideal will.

That the general will is an ideal and not an actual will is not surprising. Rousseau constantly contrasts what men want and what they should want. What men want is often money, power, or glory; what they should want is the harmonious life embodied in the rousseauian state. In joining in the initial compact, each individual commits himself to constructing and maintaining legitimate society. He commits himself to an ideal, what society should be. This is an important point. When the initial compact is formed, it is formed by men who are decidedly not ideal. They commit themselves to what should be without fully understanding what that entails.

...only those who are forming an association have the right to determine the conditions of that society. But how will they determine them? How can a blind multitude, which often does not know what it wants, since it rarely knows what is good for it, by itself execute so great and difficult a project as a system of legislation?

The ideal which is the general will must be that the purposes of civil association be achieved. Rousseau had stated that 'he who wills the end, wills the means'. Thus the parties to the initial compact accept whatever follows as necessary to achieve those ends. The general will incorporates what is thus necessary. Let us see what follows from this.
The first requirement of legitimate society is that justice and utility never be disjoined. We have seen what this implies in an earlier section. The conclusion of that discussion was that society must be free of egoistic competition among individuals. I argued that, on Rousseau's account, justice and utility can only be conjoined in a society in which each man is self-sufficient, and greed and ambition have no possibility of achieving their objects, where each individual loves his country and desires no more than he needs; in short, in the rousseauian state. The general will, to meet this requirement, must guide society towards this goal. One test for when society is not following the general will is when the actions and goals of society are not consistent with the rousseauian state. This seems to be Rousseau's point in the following:

The same principle should be used to judge which centuries deserve to be called the most favourable to the prosperity of the human race. Too much admiration has been given to those in which the arts and letters were seen to flourish, without inquiring deeply into the hidden reasons for their cultivation, and without considering their fatal effects. 'Fools described as truly human that which was a part of their slavery.'

Notice that the general will is here described in terms of its preventive role. The same is true when we turn to the other essential features of civil association. The next essential feature is that the individual is protected with the whole force of society. The individual faces two threats; from others and from himself. The general will protects him in the following way.

If the general will guides society, that is, if everyone acts as he should, then everyone would join in defending an individual against threats from outside society. For example, if a foreigner
should enter the rousseauian state and attempt to rob or steal from one man, the general will directs everyone to come to his aid. This is essential, for if any individual failed to aid another he would break the initial compact, for in the initial compact he had made a reciprocal agreement with all others to do so. Recall that for Rousseau, such an arrangement is necessary for real security for anyone, and that if this reciprocal agreement is enforced, few if any such threats will materialize. In Corsica and Poland this was insured by promoting love of country, because an attack on any citizen will be considered an attack on one's country. This is why in the Social Contract Rousseau said that when the general will is in force, "an attack on any citizen is an attack on all". 8

This same reasoning applies to the defense of one citizen from another. As discussed earlier, the ideal can only be realized where each individual is secure in what he has, and faces no competition from his fellow citizens. To produce this situation, it is necessary to prevent one citizen from taking what another needs. If one citizen should attempt this he is breaking the initial compact, and thus disobeying the general will.

But according to Rousseau's analysis of human nature, citizens will wrong one another if given the opportunity. Thus the general will must deny such opportunities. The ideal of what society should be must outlaw the possibility of competition and dominance. We have seen that this means denying the means of ambition, prohibiting money, commerce, and political power. Only in this way can each individual be secure, self-sufficient, and free. Again we see the general will as an ideal
which guides society to the rousseauian state.

This brings us to the threat to the individual posed by his own corruption. In the initial compact the individual committed himself to the life he should lead. This means, though he may not realize it, the rather stoic life in the rousseauian state. The general will outlaws the means of promoting one's corrupt desires, and brings the whole force of society to bear against anyone who should try to pursue what he should not pursue. Thus by dictating the conditions of society, and promoting the punishment of anyone breaking those conditions, the general will commands the individual to be what he should be.\(^9\)

Another essential condition of the initial compact is that everyone remain "as free as before", and that everyone "obey only his own laws". The ideal has been discussed; as a citizen of the rousseauian state the individual trades natural freedom for civil and moral freedom, with the result that the citizen has more real freedom than before. Prior to the initial compact, the individual really had no more freedom than his personal strength. Now he is to have the combined strength of the society. And he is to be free to be what he should be, a freedom denied for the most part by the circumstances prior to civil society. The general will thus commands that the civil liberty cannot be attacked, and directs everyone to defend the civil liberty of every citizen.

Each individual is to obey only his own laws. As we have seen, this refers to laws which address his true interests, not his particular interests. His true interest is to live in a rousseauian state, and his own laws must be read as the laws which produce and maintain the rousseauian state. Since this is the ideal of each individual, and since
this is the general will, each individual does in fact obey his own laws only when he acts in accordance with the general will. True freedom for Rousseau is achieved only when one is what one should be. Thus if an individual is forced to act in accordance with the general will, he is forced to be what he should be, and therefore forced to be free.

Here we have an account of one of the more controversial passages in the Social Contract:

In order, therefore, that the social compact may not be a meaningless formality, it includes the tacit agreement, which alone can give force to the rest, that anyone who refuses to obey the general will shall be forced to do so by the whole body; which means nothing more or less than that he will be forced to be free.10

Thus far we have seen the general will as an ideal, and we have uncovered the abstract conditions it is to promote. In the Social Contract we do not get specific laws or specific actions. In fact, I have had to refer to other works to detail what the general will comes to in an actual society. This is because the Social Contract is not meant to address any one given society or people. Rather it reveals the general principles which any legitimate society must incorporate. This is why we do not get specific examples of the general will in the Social Contract.

However, we do have a test for when actual laws in a given society are or are not consistent with the general will. When a law guarantees the political equality of every citizen it is consistent with the general will. This is why Rousseau demands in Poland that even the king must be subject to the law.11
If a given law promotes inequality by disfranchising an individual or group, the law cannot be consistent with the general will, for it would not be consistent with what society should be. The general will is incompatible with laws which allow the possibility of great inequalities in wealth, for such inequalities soon institute political inequalities. In short, the general will is that set of laws and institutions which are required in a given circumstance to maintain the conditions agreed to in the initial compact. As an ideal the general will acts as a test for whether a society has the appropriate government, legal system, and in general whether the society is operating in an appropriate manner. This point will become crucial in determining whether the general will can be instantiated in an actual society. I shall take up that question in a later discussion as part of the question "How is the general will to be found?" Before turning to this discussion, it is appropriate to discuss a different view of the general will. Many interpreters have attempted to unpack the general will in terms of what is in the common interest of all individuals, where 'common interest' means something like 'what is common to the occurrent desires of everyone'. I believe my arguments to this point are sufficient to show that this approach is in error. However, because of the important place of this approach in the literature on Rousseau, I shall address it at further length.

This approach is suggested by passages such as the following, in which Rousseau discusses the general will in terms of the common interest.

The first and most important consequences of the principles thus far established is that the general will alone can
direct the forces of the state in accordance with the purpose for which it was created, namely, the common good. For if the opposition of private interests made the establishment of societies necessary, it is the agreement of those same interests that made it possible. 13

The strategy is to try to combine the various things Rousseau has to say about the operation of the general will with the areas of agreement among the various interests which the members of society might have. In this way we might hope to provide an interpretation of this key term. Quite often the conclusions of those discussions are that Rousseau's notion of the 'general will' is either hopelessly confused, or, if not confused, cannot serve in 'real life' as a guide to the common interest.

Obviously attempts to follow this strategy hinge to a great extent upon the meaning given to the 'common interest'. My own views on this are, I believe, sufficiently clear. The common interest is the construction and maintenance of a society in which individuals preserve a natural balance of desires-abilities-needs--the rousseauian state. On my interpretation, the 'common interest' is based upon the desires which individuals should have, given Rousseau's analysis of human nature, and thus we are to treat the 'common interest' as an ideal. In the following discussion I shall consider a different view of the 'common interest', one which is based on the existing desires of individuals.

The recent work of J.C. Hall provides one of the more clear and succinct expositions of this line of interpretation. The heart of Hall's view is set out in a section entitled "The General Will as Correlative with the Common Interest".

If you examine what any particular individual wants at any one time you will find that he wants a number of things
that it would be against some other people's interest that he should have. But there will be some things that he wants to happen as being in his own interest that coincide with what every other person (insofar as he is rational and well-informed) wants to happen as being in his interest. Now we are exercising the general will just insofar as we are wanting this latter class of things to happen. Otherwise, we are exercising what Rousseau calls our particular will.  

The difference between my view and that of Hall is pinpointed in the very first sentence; "if you examine what any particular individual wants at any one time". I argue that Rousseau rejects the validity of what an individual wants at any one time, and instead focuses on what the individual, qua human, should naturally want. However, let us return to Hall's view.

Hall provides a good discussion of the various ways one might seek something which is common to the interests of each individual so considered. He looks for a sense in which what one individual (who is rational and well-informed) wants to happen 'coincides' with what every other rational and well-informed individual wants to happen. Hall concludes that while we might find some such common interest in certain cases, there will be a number of cases in which there is nothing common to the interests of all.

The difficulty arises because, unfortunately for Rousseau and his would-be followers, the universe is not so constructed that it is possible, in every situation in which human beings need to cooperate, to find a plan of cooperation which will be both advantageous and perfectly fair to all participants. That the universe suffers from this deficiency is a fact that we are all familiar with in our daily lives. What Rousseau failed to take account of is that it applies also to the most general constitutional issues.  

According to Hall, since there is no common interest in these cases, there is no general will.
Since there can be no general will in the absence of a common interest, we reach the conclusion that the occasion on which the people are exercising their legislative discretion is one on which they cannot be guided by the general will.\(^6\)

Hall believes that Rousseau's theory breaks down just because the 'supreme direction of the general will' cannot in principle apply to all the situations in which society requires its direction.

Hall's arguments for this conclusion reveal straightforwardly his assumption that the individuals of Rousseau's civil society are rational utility maximizers.

Consider the situation from the point of view of a single potential citizen--call him Smith. For him the best conceivable policy would be one in which large privileges were granted to him personally.\(^7\)

This passage is taken from one of Hall's arguments that is meant to show that there is only a limited number of cases in which Rousseau's citizens could plausibly be said to have a common interest. Hall's citizen Smith is clearly a rational utility maximizer, and so in setting up the problem to be discussed Hall is assuming what I argue is an incorrect view of Rousseau's citizen.

Again, in discussing the distinction Rousseau makes between the 'general will' and the 'will of all', Hall attempts to show where it is appropriate to expect a common interest to emerge (and therefore a general will to exist). Hall believes that at least with respect to the distribution of wealth it is plausible to identify a common interest, and thus the general will can provide a guide in this area. Yet even here Hall's argument begins with the assumption that the individuals concerned are rational utility maximizers.
Let us suppose that the state consists of three people (A, B, and C), and that the National Cake is cut into three equal slices. Let us further suppose that each person could cope with and would like to have two slices of cake for himself, and that it would be in his interest in that case for the third slice to be divided equally between the other two people.

If I am correct, Rousseau would simply deny that it is appropriate for A to desire two slices, and that it is to his interest to have two slices. He would deny this because such desires are not conducive to personal happiness, and such desires produce just the situations in which the conflict of individual wills is inevitable. On my view Rousseau's general will is not to be defined in terms of such situations; it is meant to eliminate them.

My interpretation, like that of Hall, allows the general will to provide direction with respect to distribution of wealth. The relevant common interest, however, is that the distribution is one which supports the structure of the ideal society. Exactly who gets what in such a distribution is not the focus of the interest of the individual, properly understood. Nor is his interest a progressive standard of living or an increase in material wealth. The question is rather whether the distribution as a whole promotes the society that is best for him.

Rousseau clearly states that the distribution of wealth is not very important as long as it is held within certain limits.

...so far as wealth is concerned, no citizen is rich enough to be able to buy another, and none so poor as to be forced to sell himself; and this presupposes, on the part of the great, moderation of possessions and prestige, and on the part of the humble, moderation of avarice and envy.

There can be many distributions of wealth which are to the common interest of all, because, contra Hall, wealth itself is to be an
unimportant part of the individual's interest. It is interesting to note that twenty years before the publication of the *Social Contract* Rousseau had expressed this very view of the importance of wealth.

What is needed according to Mr. Pope, beyond virtue or the peace of heart which is its fruit, to satisfy fully the happiness of man? Only two things, health and what is necessary. Happy is the heart moderate enough to be satisfied! It is a sad spectacle to see men on earth rush after honors and chimerical goods and therefore abandon the veritable sources of happiness to which Mr. Pope tries to lead them.20

The meaning of the general will as the common interest is further complicated by Rousseau's often convoluted style. This is illustrated by the following famous and controversial passage.

There is often a great difference between the will of all and the general will; the latter looks only to the common interest, while the former looks to private interest, and is simply the sum of particular wills. But if you cancel out from these same wills all the mutually destructive pluses and minuses, the general will remains as the sum of the differences.21

Consideration of this passage has led some authors to unpack the general will in terms of what is common to rational utility maximizers. However, a close examination of the passage allows another interpretation. First, though, I shall show how Hall has viewed this passage.

Hall, like others, attempts to unpack the general will by trying to calculate in given circumstances what it means to 'cancel out the pluses and minuses' of particular wills. In fact, Hall discovers that the pluses and minuses method does not yield a common interest in at least the following cases.

1) Decisions to implement what is common to all the rival proposals, while taking no action on the contentious parts. Such a decision, where it is possible (which is not often), would count as the promotion of a common interest and would thus be approved of by Rousseau;
but it is not a compromise, since there is no sense in which the contentious and unimplemented parts of the rival scheme could be thought of as pluses and minuses cancelling each other out.

2) Plain yes-or-no decisions (e.g., to build or not to build a supersonic airliner). In such cases there can never be a compromise between all the interests involved; either the promoters or the opponents of the scheme will be satisfied, and the other side will not.

3) Compromise decisions where the rival interests are not commensurable (for example, in a case where the number of miles of motorway to be built in an area of scientific interest was determined by compromising between the interests of motorists and scientists, interests that cannot in practice be measured on the same scale).

Hall is mistaken here. First let us note again that our concern with the general will is two-fold; what it is, and how to find it. Hall seems to be confusing these two questions in his discussion of the pluses and minuses passage. He refers to the pluses and minuses method of finding the general will, when, if I am right, it is not a method of finding the general will at all.

This passage is found in Book II, Chapter II of the Social Contract, entitled "Whether the General Will is Subject to Error". In this chapter Rousseau is discussing what the general will is. He does not address how the general will is to be found until later in the Social Contract. Hall is correct in arguing that there are cases in which the pluses and minuses method is not the correct method of finding the general will, but that is because it is not supposed to be. Instead we should view this passage as part of Rousseau's explanation of what the general will comes to.

The first thing to note is that what Rousseau wanted to cancel are the 'mutually destructive' pluses and minuses. (A point Hall
misses.) Now we know what kinds of interests and desires Rousseau considered 'mutually destructive'; egoism, ambition, greed, etc. Simply put, if these aspects of particular wills cancel each other out, then all that remains of the particular wills are their positive aspects, those desires and interests which are conducive to the ideal society. Consider that much of Rousseau's criticism of modern society is based upon his analysis of what may be called the 'mutually destructive' corrupt desires and appetites. If these cancel out, are eliminated from society, then most of the task of constructing the rousseauian state is accomplished.

It is also helpful to consider the explanatory footnote Rousseau added to this passage.

"Each interest", says the Marquis d'Argenson, "has different principles. The agreement of two particular interests is created by opposition to the interests of a third party". He might have added that the agreement of all interests is created by opposition to the interest of each individual. Rousseau is here addressing the particular wills and particular interests of individuals. The particular interests of modern man, according to Rousseau, are corrupt and tend towards the domination of his fellow man.

Now suppose we have a society which consists of three individuals, Joe, Jim, and John. Joe's particular will, being corrupt, is in part that he gain special privileges and a measure of dominance over the others. The same is true of the particular wills of Jim and John. The agreement of these particular wills, Rousseau has said, is 'created by opposition to the interests of a third party'. This works in the following way. It is in Joe's interest that Jim not be in a position
to dictate to him, that equality not be broken in Jim's favor. It is in Jim's interest that Joe not be in a position to dictate to him and that equality not be broken in Joe's favor. What is common to the interests of Joe and Jim is that equality not be broken in John's favor.

The reason Joe and Jim join in civil association in the first place is to gain the security of the whole community, to remain as free as before, and obey themselves alone. What is common to their interests here is that no third party prevent them from enjoying these privileges.

In the above example the common interest of Joe and Jim was found with John as the third party. But the same reasoning applies to Joe and John with Jim the third party, and Jim and John with Joe the third party. Thus what is common to the interest of all three is that no individual be in a superior position to anyone. And this is just what Rousseau's footnote says, "the agreement of all interests is created by the opposition to the interest of each individual".

The text just does not support Hall's assumption that the 'pluses and minuses' passage refers to the means of finding the general will. Rather this passage and its footnote are an exposition of the meaning of the general will. The difference here is that the 'pluses and minuses' passage and its attendant footnote are used by Rousseau to explain the nature of the general will as what would remain of individual wills if they were stripped of their unnatural characteristics; i.e., if their mutually harmful aspects were cancelled out. It is still an open question as to how such a cancelling out could be accomplished in an actual decision-making process. The answer to this question is
the method of finding the general will. As we shall see, Rousseau said that we are to find the general will by a majority vote under special circumstances. We shall see that these special circumstances are designed so that the mutually destructive pluses and minuses will cancel out.

The General Will as Law

Earlier I showed that for Rousseau, legitimate civil society must meet the condition that each individual obey only his own laws. I argued that the general will is an expression of the law which each individual would formulate if he properly understood his true interests. This is the underlying basis for establishing the general will in society, for the general will is to be incorporated as the fundamental laws of society.

The general will, as I interpret it, functions in Rousseau's thought as an ideal which is to be instantiated in legitimate society. Recall that individuals, through the initial compact, commit themselves to society in accordance with the purposes of association. They commit themselves to acceptance of the rule of law, where the law is whatever follows from the initial compact. Thus "placing ourselves under the supreme direction of the general will" means accepting the rule of law. The law is the 'will of the people', and only the people can determine the law. But the law does not mean what the people on any given occasion might say, but rather what they should say. In the next section on finding the general will, I shall show how Rousseau intends to instantiate the ideal in society by arguing that what the people do say can be just what they should say in the right circumstances. Here I am
concerned with how the general will functions as law.

A brief explanation of some of Rousseau's terminology will be helpful. When an individual decides to live in accordance with laws he sets up for himself, he becomes both the originator and subject of the laws. For example, I might construct rules to live by, such as 'Do unto others as I would have them do unto me'. I originate this rule as one I wish to live by, and make myself subject to this rule by holding myself accountable if I should break it.

The same reasoning holds for a whole people. A people may set for themselves a set of laws, such as our Constitution. In doing so, the people become both the originators of and subjects to those laws. Rousseau incorporates this reasoning in his discussion of legitimate society. Here each individual must voluntarily accept the general will as law. Rousseau considers the individual as 'subject' of the state when he is held accountable to its laws. He calls the individual 'citizen' as he participates in the public deliberation which is to find the general will. The members of society taken collectively as a people are 'Sovereign' when actively finding the general will, and the people are called the 'State' in their role as subjects to the law. Thus 'Sovereign' is the term to be applied to the people in their role as citizens determining the general will. The voice of the Sovereign is the general will. This voice properly addresses itself to the rule of law within which the society is to function.

Another way to put this is to say that the Sovereign has the ultimate legislative power. The laws produced by the Sovereign are the instantiation of the general will, and this is how the ideal is
established in society.

Once this idea is accepted, it is immediately obvious that there can be no further question of asking who has the right to make laws, for they are acts of the general will.\textsuperscript{27}

The law we are here considering does not mean all the specific regulations which have legal sanction. Rousseau is not referring to traffic laws and the like. Rather law here refers to the fundamental laws of political association. To see to what extent and in what manner the ideal becomes actual law we must look to Rousseau's discussion of the types of law which are to make up the system of legislation.

According to Rousseau there are four types of law. The first type is the political or fundamental law.\textsuperscript{28} Laws of this type determine the constitution of the government and the manner in which the state is to be organized. I think that the American Constitution would count as what Rousseau wants to call 'political law'.

The second type of law is civil law. Civil law covers roughly two areas. Firstly, it deals with the interrelationships among the citizens. It defines the legal duties and obligation of one citizen to another. The second area of civil law covers the duties and obligations of the citizen to the state, and the state to the citizen. Rousseau believes that the duties and obligations of citizen to citizen should be as weak as possible. However, the duties and obligations of the citizen to the state and the state to the citizen should be 'as strong as possible'.\textsuperscript{29} The idea here seems to be to construct civil laws which strongly bind the individual to the state, and make his relationship to the state of much greater importance than his relationships with others. Rousseau implies this by giving his reason for the 'weak
as possible', 'strong as possible' relationships:

In order that each citizen may be perfectly independent of all the rest, and extremely dependent on the city. 30

I believe we can understand what Rousseau is saying here by considering an analogy. We are soldiers in Vietnam on a military patrol which has ranged far into territory controlled by the enemy. Let us suppose that we return through an area in which there is a high concentration of the enemy, and enemy patrols are to be frequently encountered. The situation is severe to the point that detection is tantamount to death. In such circumstances many normal attitudes and relationships must be abandoned. Ideally the members of the patrol work as a unit. Individual relationships are relatively unimportant: in fact they should be quite weak in relation to the duties and obligations to the unit. Each individual ultimately relies on the strength of the unit, and his primary concern must be for the welfare of the unit. If an individual is friendlier with one member than with others, as will naturally happen, his friendship is permissible as long as it does not interfere with his relationship to the unit. Thus if his friend gets separated or injured, the individual may have to withhold whatever aid he might be able to give. He may have to do this because going to the aid of his friend would endanger the unit.

Now Rousseau's society is not in such dire straits. However, his civil laws, I believe, reflect the same point even though the necessity for such relationships rests on different reasons. According to Rousseau, the security and strength of the community lie in the relative strength of the duties of the citizens to the state over the duties of citizen to citizen. It is important to keep in mind that for Rousseau,
it is at bottom the acceptance of this situation in the minds and hearts of the individuals which gives the community strength, and not merely the existence of such laws.

The third type of law is criminal law. Criminal laws provide the punishments and penalties for individuals who break the political and civil laws. This type of law is uncomplicated and seems to be just what we mean by criminal law.

The fourth type of law, and the most important, is embodied in the "manners, moral, customs, and above all, public opinion". Though not strictly a product of legislation, and not law in the sense of 'being on the books', these are the most important influences on human behavior. Rousseau is here emphasizing that no matter what may be promulgated in the first three types of law, these three are not sufficient to motivate the transition from modern man to the new man. If we want to control the behavior of men, we must do so through the manipulation of their 'manners, morals, customs, and ... public opinion'.

Unfortunately Rousseau does not give us examples of these various types of law. Nor does he discuss, except in very general terms, how to legislator is supposed to effect the proper manners, morals, and public opinion of society. Presumably this would have been part of the Political Institutions which Rousseau had by this time given up. In any case, Rousseau declares that only the political laws are relevant to what he is attempting in the Social Contract.

Of these various classes, political laws, which constitute the form of government, are the only ones relevant to my subject.
Rousseau is not concerned so much with the details of civil, criminal, and moral law in this work. His first and most important task in establishing legitimate society is to provide the political framework within which those laws are to operate. He tells us that "laws, properly speaking, are nothing more than the conditions of civil association". Presumably, this definition of law is what allows him to consider the 'manners, customs, etc.' to be moral law. Ultimately the general will is to be determined by a vote of all members of society. This means that all laws, as 'conditions of civil association', are to be accepted or rejected by a vote of the people. We should keep in mind two points. The first is that there are to be few laws to be considered, for the stoic conditions of the rousseauian state require little in the way of formal regulation. The second point is that, according to Rousseau, the fundamental conditions of political association determine to a large degree the more specific conditions of society. An analogy may be helpful here. In one sense the Constitution of the United States is meant to embody the unvarying and fundamental laws that provide the legal framework of our society. Our Constitution can be taken as stating the rightful conditions of association. Our civil and criminal codes can be viewed as the more detailed and specific regulation of those conditions. Specific civil and criminal laws are judged appropriate or inappropriate, i.e., constitutional or unconstitutional, as they do or do not meet the conditions laid down in the Constitution. In our system it is the judicial branch of government which makes this decision. In Rousseau's system it is the vote of the people which is to determine whether specific laws do or do not meet the conditions set forth by the
fundamental laws. However, this process is of secondary importance to the determination of whether the fundamental laws themselves are appropriate. It is secondary both in practice—in actual voting situations—and in theory, for Rousseau's primary task in the *Social Contract* is to analyze the proper role and function of the legislative system in legitimate society.

The General Will and Government

To understand how the general will is expressed in political laws we must turn to the subject of government, for the political laws 'constitute the form of government'. Rousseau distinguishes three basic types of government; monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. These follow traditional lines—rule by one, rule by a group, rule by all. Choosing the right form of government for a given people is a complex task. For example, the larger the number of magistrates the more decentralized and less efficient the government, according to Rousseau. Yet the more numerous are the people to be governed, the more centralized and concentrated the government should be. In addition to problems associated with the size of the population, there are those related to the geography of the state. The fertility of the land, the climate, access to rivers and oceans, boundaries with other countries, etc., all combine to present different problems of government, and hence complicate the choice of government.

Moreover, various types of government require different amounts of surplus, for since the magistrates produce nothing, all government must function on the surplus a people is capable of producing. Though Rousseau admitted the complexity produced by such variables,
he believed there is a general principle relating geographic location to the type of suitable government.

In every region, therefore, there are natural causes which make it possible to determine the form of government necessitated by its climate, and even to say what sort of inhabitants it is bound to have.\footnote{41}

Rousseau's reasoning connecting geography, climate, etc., to particular forms of government is highly suspect. Fortunately those arguments are not important for my purposes. The question of concern here is what test or standard is to be used to determine when a government is appropriate.

Rousseau does give us a criterion by which to determine whether a people exists under an appropriate form of government.

What is the purpose of political association? It is the preservation and prosperity of its members. And what is the most certain sign that they are living and prospering? It is the number and increase of the population. Look no further for this much disputed sign.\footnote{42}

The mark of good government is an increase in population. Recall from my Chapter One that in the Second Discourse Rousseau assumed that a species is naturally well-adapted to its environment when the species survives and increases in population.\footnote{43} The purpose of political association can be viewed as the attempt to return the species 'man', (or at least a part of it) to its natural strength and vigor, and a mark of when this is being accomplished is the size of the population. This is accomplished by making men once again well adapted to their environment, where 'environment' now includes civil association. Here we have the tie between 'common interest' and 'the return to natural balance' which I argue is at the heart of Rousseau's political doctrine.
Nowhere in Rousseau is found the idea that the purpose of government is to increase the standard of living or to produce a great culture or civilization. In fact, Rousseau explicitly rejects such a role of government.

If your only wish is to become noisy, brilliant and fearsome, and to influence the other peoples of Europe, their example lies before you; devote yourself to following it. Cultivate the arts and sciences, commerce and industry; have professional soldiers, fortresses, and academies; ...try to make money very necessary, in order to keep the people in a condition of great dependence.44

In his discussion of the complexity of the task of choosing a government Rousseau reiterates his view of the purpose of government. Continuing the discussion of the relationship between geographic conditions and type of government suitable for a people, Rousseau states the following:

Places where the surplus of product over labour is small are suitable for free peoples. Those whose abundant and fertile soil produces much with little labour need to be governed monarchically, in order that the luxury of the prince may consume the excessive surplus of the subjects; for it is better that this surplus should be absorbed by the government than that it should be dissipated by individual citizens.45

Here Rousseau is once again attacking wealth and luxury. His constant thesis is that wealth and the good are forever at odds.

For luxury either is the consequence of wealth, or else makes wealth necessary; it corrupts the rich and poor alike, the first by possession and the second by covetousness; it sells out the country to effeminacy and vanity; it deprives the state of all its citizens by subjecting some to others, and all to irrational opinions.46

These passages support my general thesis, for once again the text is clearly incompatible with the contention that Rousseau is intending a society for rational utility maximizers. In addition, it should be noted that Rousseau is discussing the very foundations of the new society, for he is discussing the form the government is to take, and the
form the government is to take is the expression of the general will. This points out that his attacks on luxury and wealth are not merely a personal bias, as some would have it, but are used by Rousseau to unpack the fundamental notion of the general will.

The form of government is determined by the actual conditions in which the general will is to be brought into existence. The role of government is to operate society in accordance with the general will. As we have seen in discussing Rousseau's recommendations in Corsica and Poland, and again in the above discussion, the purpose of government is to produce and maintain the rousseauian state.

Two questions arise at this point. Firstly, given the complexity Rousseau foresees in determining the appropriate government, how is a 'blind multitude' to choose the right form of government? The second question is how are the people to know when its government is fulfilling its proper role? Both of these questions are addressed in the next section, "How is the general will to be found?" The first question comes under the heading of how the general will is to be found initially, because, as just discussed, initially finding the general will means finding the appropriate form of government. The second question comes under the heading of how the general will is to be found later in the history of the society. This is because the general will is Rousseau's ultimate test for legitimate society, and since the government runs society, the test for determining whether the government is properly fulfilling its function requires that the general will be found.
How the General Will Is To Be Found

The initial problem for the members of the civil association is to find the appropriate form of government. But this task is beyond their capacity. They require guidance from someone outside their society. They must import a legislator, a wise and impartial man who can solve the problem of government. The legislator has to be very wise concerning the ways of men, and how their habits, morals, and customs can be controlled. Yet the legislator must be a foreigner to the community in which he is to operate. He must come for a short while and leave upon completing his tasks. He cannot partake of the society he is helping to construct, for knowing that he would live under the laws he is making, he would lose his objectivity and impartiality.

Otherwise the laws he gives would minister to his passions, and hence would often do no more than to perpetuate his injustices; never would he be able to prevent particular or private views from impairing the sanctity of his work. The primary task of the legislator is to recommend the form of government. He is also to recommend the initial civil laws and moral laws of the state. Being the disinterested genius, the legislator can solve complex problems which are beyond ordinary citizens. He and he alone can see what is necessary to develop and mold the 'blind multitude' into rousseauian citizens.

Anyone who ventures to create institutions for a people must feel himself capable, so to speak, of changing human nature, transforming each individual, who in himself is a perfect and isolated whole, into a part of a larger whole from which this same individual in a sense receives his life and being.

Rousseau is here proclaiming a necessary condition of the balanced life of the new man. The Legislator must transform the
environment of man, in particular the legislative system, so that the new man can no longer act as an isolated and independent being. We have seen that all individuals are to give all their rights and powers to the Sovereign in their formal commitment into a practical reality. The practical reality is to have two key features. In obeying the laws the legislator proposes the individual cannot act other than to promote the common interest. And in thinking of himself and his relationships to others and to society in general, the individual constructs a self-image in which he considers himself part of the social whole, rather than as an isolated individual among other isolated individuals.51

An illustration may be helpful here. In principle individuals join a labor union such as the Teamsters in order to combine forces to overcome certain adverse conditions. The individual might have two quite different views of his situation. The individual teamster might think of himself primarily as a union member. He might also think of himself as an individual who merely uses the union when it serves his purposes. The difference is this, in the latter case the individual teamster can act as an independent agent whose desires and activities may or may not promote the welfare of the union. In this case the individual has selfish desires, and engages in activities where the motivation is directed to his own welfare. In the former case, the individual lives for the union, so to speak, and judges the desires he has at any one time against the criterion of the good of the union.

This would be a radical transformation, and it seems somewhat implausible on the surface. Yet Rousseau believed it not so impossible. He frequently praises communities such as Sparta and the early Roman
societies, and he does so on the basis that the members of those states did think of themselves as citizens rather than merely as individuals joined in a mutually cooperative venture. It is worthwhile to investigate the nature of the citizen of Rousseau's civil society.

The heart of this transformation from modern man to Rousseau's new man lies in the notion of the construction of a new self-conception. I believe Rousseau is right in maintaining that the desires we have, the activities we engage in, and how we relate to others depends to a great extent upon our self-conception. Moreover, I think the transformation which is required here is obtainable in at least some circumstances.

Let us reconsider the earlier example of the military patrol returning through enemy territory. The activities of the individual members are in this case necessarily tied to the preservation of the unit. To a large extent, each suppresses thoughts of his individual existence. He now operates as one member of a whole, his specific activities must aim towards the welfare of the unit, and cannot be considered without reference to the effect on the unit. Each performs tasks geared rather to the preservation and maintenance of the unit than to self-preservation. For example, no individual wants another to carry his equipment so that his load would be lightened. This would endanger the unit by slowing part of the unit, and thereby increasing the risk of detection. Nor would any individual fail to perform those necessary actions which might endanger himself, such as taking the point position or taking an observation post high in a tree. The requirements of the unit in this situation are clearly defined and each individual thinks of those requirements rather than the requirements of what would be the
safest course for him. Moreover, each member performs the necessary
tasks as a matter of habit, discipline, and general concern for the unit
as a whole. There is necessarily much esprit de corps involved. The
shift in self-concept can be encapsulated as the following: while each
individual considers the actions he might take from the standpoint of
the danger or advantage to be gained, it is danger or advantage with
respect to the unit which he calculates, not danger or advantage in re-
lation to his individual existence.\footnote{54}

Such situations do occur. However, the conditions required are
uncommon, and Rousseau must convince us that it is plausible to obtain
such a shift in self-concept in more normal circumstances. The extreme
conditions cited obviously contribute much to the shift in self-concept.
Yet the conditions themselves are not sufficient to produce such a
shift. If we were to take a group of civilians accustomed to thinking
of themselves as independent beings, and drop them as a group into the
conditions of the example, the shift in self-concept would not occur.
Much depends on the training, discipline, and experience of the members
of the patrol. Those who turn civilians into soldiers are, at least in
part, training them for just such a transformation in their mode of
self-awareness. This is not a matter of intellectual enlightenment.
No matter how clearly instructors could describe the purpose of the
training and what is required of soldiers in such situations, the result
cannot be produced merely through the understanding of the recruits. It
is necessary to mold the habits, customs, and relationships of the
civilians so that they begin to comprehend their duty in terms of a
larger unit than their individual selves. The task of the instructors
is, in part, to lead the trainees into a new, 'non-civilian' mode of thought and action.

The task of the legislator can be compared to the task of the military instructors. He must, in effect, lay down rules of behavior, and develop the habits of thought which are required to change modern man to the new man. Like the military instructor, the legislator faces the problem that no amount of explanation can produce the desired effect. Unlike the military instructor, the legislator can only prescribe, he does not have the power to enforce his prescriptions. Nor, according to Rousseau, should he have this power.

For if it is true that he who rules men should not rule the laws, it is equally true that he who rules the laws should not rule men.55

When Rousseau took on the job of legislator in Corsica and Poland he did not complete his tasks. In fact, he got no further than an initial analysis of what was to be done.56 We saw that he recommended different forms of government in the two countries, and different civil and moral laws. The reason for the difference was that the two peoples were in different circumstances. The Corsicans were, according to Rousseau, ready for citizenship in legitimate society, and so the principles of the Social Contract could be applied more directly. However, the Polish people needed a great deal of work before they reached the same point. Yet in both cases the end result was to be the same, the individual was to be 'transformed' from an independent existence into 'a part of a larger whole from which this same individual in a sense received his life and being'. The mechanisms the legislator introduced were to produce a spirit of nationalism in both cases, and control the
'manners, morals, and customs' to mold modern man into rousseauian citizen. And this in the abstract is the role Rousseau assigns the legislator in the Social Contract.

Note that the legislator does not have the power of legislation. The people in the guise of Sovereign are to accept or reject the recommendations of the legislator, and their word is law. Thus the legislator must convince rather than enforce what is good for the state he is helping to construct.

Since, therefore, the legislator cannot employ either force or argument, he must necessarily have recourse to another species of authority, one which can compel without violence and persuade without convincing. 57

This puts the legislator in a rather strange position. On the one hand he must see more clearly and more rationally than any other what will produce the rousseauian state. On the other hand the people to whom he must sell his conclusions are incapable of understanding and accepting his reasoning. In addition, if the people should reject the legislator's conclusions, they have lost legitimate society. According to Rousseau the legislator must sell his pronouncements as having divine inspiration. 58

As we can see, Rousseau's initial solution to the problem of finding the general will is problematic. It requires the combination of a rare people in rare circumstances, and a uniquely wise legislator. To top all of this off, the initial solution requires that the legislator have religious status as interpreter of the divine word. The probability of finding such a fortunate combination would seem quite low, perhaps even zero. 59 It is just at such points that one must remember
that Rousseau was investigating the possibility of legitimate society, and he followed his reasoning to the end. If the result is that legitimate society is practically impossible, Rousseau was not to blame. Indeed, given Rousseau's analysis of human corruption and the difficulties of overcoming this corruption, this result would not be surprising.

Finding the General Will After the Legislator Departs

For purposes of exposition let us grant that fortunate circumstances have produced a legitimate society. The government and laws, the educational and moral systems have been devised by a legislator and accepted by the people. The general will is incorporated in society. A new problem arises, how legitimate society is to be maintained.

One way to introduce this problem is to look once more to the role of government in the rousseauian state. According to Rousseau, government is necessary for modern man. Yet the existence of government poses a constant threat to man. A government consists of men (magistrates), and the corrupt desires of men always tend to make them abuse power. The concentration of power in the rousseauian state is to be in the hands of the magistrates, and so the government itself poses the threat of abuse of power, and therefore the greatest threat to the common interest. The danger in any form of society is that the power of the government will be abused and the general will replaced by the private will of the magistrates.

The same situation also arises when members of the government severally usurp the powers they ought only to exercise as a body.
Rousseau's solution to these threats is to have all members of society gather together in regular, and if need be, special assemblies. As soon as the people have assembled, two fundamental questions are put to them.

The first is: 'Does it please the sovereign to continue the present form of government?'

The second is: 'Does it please the people to leave the administration of that government in the hands of those who are presently entrusted with it?'

At the time the assemblies are convened the government is dissolved and the magistrates become merely citizens. This insures the proper servitude of the government to the Sovereign, and demonstrates the continuing supremacy of the general will.

The abuse of government is to be curtailed by the general will, as found by counting votes in such regular assemblies. This is the much discussed majority vote procedure. There is no legislator at these assemblies, and no divine inspiration. We might well wonder how a vote taken in the assembly is an accurate method of determining whether the form of government is still appropriate for the common interest, and whether the magistrates are faithfully and efficiently operating the government in a manner consistent with the general will. If things are not going as they should, then the society is no longer ruled by the general will, and hence no longer legitimate. But according to Rousseau the majority will is not identical to the general will. Thus on the surface the majority vote should not be an acceptable test for whether the general will still rules society. It could be argued that it is not acceptable on the practical grounds that a majority of admittedly
fallible individuals cannot be expected always to voice the ideal; that they just cannot be expected to make decisions consistent with the general will. It could also be argued that the majority vote procedure is unacceptable on the theoretical grounds that Rousseau himself has argued against the identification of the majority will and the general will.

Rousseau's defense of the majority vote procedure is to argue that in special circumstances the majority vote can express the general will. He argues that we must assume that the general will 'still resides in the majority of citizens'. Under this assumption a majority of the citizens still seek to maintain the original compact and all that it implies. Each citizen, or at least a majority of them, still maintains the identification of self and country which we saw was the heart of the social compact, and the foundation of the rousseauian state in Corsica and Poland.

An important condition of the voting situation is the denial of representation. Each individual must participate in the vote, and no one may delegate this responsibility to another. The most important business of the people is to maintain the conditions of civil association. When the people turn away from this goal, they turn away from the general will. Private interests always conflict with the general will, and when the people become concerned with matters other than the general will, private interest begins to rule society in place of the general will. The duty to participate in the vote helps insure that this will not happen. In fact, the idea of representation comes to the fore only when the people begin to turn away from their most vital
business.

The cooling off of love of country, the activity of private interest, the immensity of states, conquests, and the abuse of government have suggested the device of sending deputies or representatives to the assemblies of the nation. This is what, in some countries, has presumptuously been called the Third Estate, which means that the particular interest of two classes is placed in the first and second place, the public interest in the third only. 65

Another condition is that associations of individuals within the society must be disallowed. There are to be no labor unions, no political parties, no lobby groups, no partial associations of any kind. According to Rousseau, partial associations detract from the all-important role of the general will. For example, if a trade union should become established, and should become more concerned with its well-being and its benefits than with the good of society as a whole, there would be a division of loyalty and a loss of the common purpose which made the initial compact possible. Particular interests, here group interests, would be in competition with the general will. These particular interests would have real influences in the operation of society, but this would violate the conditions of the initial compact, and result in a society in which it is no longer the case that everyone places himself 'under the supreme direction of the general will'.

Another reason for the prohibition on partial associations stems from a thesis Rousseau holds concerning the wisdom of simple and independent men.

Upright and simple men are hard to deceive because of their simplicity; they are in no way imposed upon by wiles and subtle pleadings. 66

In addition to these factors, Rousseau has provided us with 'easy marks' by which to judge whether a government is good; the preservation
of society and an increase in population. He has provided similar marks by which to identify a bad government, e.g., when the private interests of the magistrates attempt to sway the wealth and power of society to their personal benefit.

According to Rousseau, when knowledge of these marks is combined with the simple wisdom of peasants who are uncorrupted by political association and uninfluenced by the subtle sophistries of self-interested parties, the answers to these questions will be clear.

When, among the happiest people on each, you see crowds of peasants deciding affairs of state under an oak-tree, and behaving with uniform wisdom, how can you help despising the subtleties of other nations, which devote so much skill and mystification to making themselves famous and wretched? 

Note that the general will makes itself felt primarily during the assemblies, and then on general concerns; whether the government and its magistrates are executing the general will, and whether any laws proposed are consistent with the general will. Thus the day-to-day operation of society is not under the direct supervision of the general will, as Hall would have it. The three kinds of cases which Hall used to argue that the general will was not a sufficient guide to the problems of social life, are in fact not a problem for the general will, for it is not directly concerned with their solution. The kinds of cases Hall makes so much of would become a concern for the general will only during the regular assemblies, and only then as evidence that the government or magistrates are or are not fulfilling their duties. The actual decisions in those cases would be a matter for the government to decide, and the government's decision, if all goes well, would be based solely upon the effect on the common interest—not, as Hall believes,
on the conflicting private interests of the parties involved.

The conclusion Rousseau wished to establish is that under these special restrictions the majority vote will, in fact, be the ideal will. In terms of an earlier discussion, the conditions of the majority vote are meant to provide the circumstances in which it is plausible that the 'mutually destructive pluses and minuses' of particular interests can cancel out, leaving the general will. The denial of representation keeps the minds of the people focused on the task of finding the general will. It also prevents the usurpation of legislative power by particular interests. Moreover, for the cancelling process to work, each individual must have an equal vote. If the voice of some carries more weight than the voice of others, as is the case with representation, then the cancelling of individual interests cannot occur. The restriction on partial associations is to have the effect that individuals deliberate on their own, without the interference of rhetoric from those who might try to convince them to their way of thinking. Without partial associations, trade unions, political parties and the like, the individual is independent of other citizens, as Rousseau had argued he must be. He has only his own force with which to pursue selfish interests. He cannot combine forces with others, and so his voice cannot weigh more heavily in public debate than that of any other individual. With the support of others, as in a trade union, he might have enough power to effect a situation of inequality in which his particular interests, and those of his 'friends', are promoted against those of another individual. Prohibiting such associations, according to Rousseau, maintains the situation in which one individual lacks the
effective power to pursue his particular desires against the common interest.

When this argument is added to the manner in which the initial questions are to be framed, Rousseau's position is more plausible. For example, neither of the initial two questions addresses a particular interest. The individual must vote on whether the common interest is being maintained, and this is different from whether the individual's particular desires are being met. Of course, it might happen that most individuals consciously or subconsciously 'cheat' and reframe the questions in their mind to "Does this government or its magistrates act to promote my selfish desires?" Rousseau admits that there is no effective measure to prevent this from happening. What we must do is simply assume that the majority will not do this; that most individuals continue to concern themselves with their true interests and with the ends of the initial compact. If it is not the case that the general will 'still resides in the majority', legitimacy cannot be maintained. Thus Rousseau accepts the result that there can be no guarantee, and no foolproof method of maintaining legitimate society.

This should not be surprising. Rousseau had always said that the ultimate course of human affairs rests on the hearts and minds of the people. They must voluntarily choose to form or join civil association in the first place, and may leave civil association as a people or individually at almost any time. Rousseau's civil society is an ideal to be approached, but the very conditions of the civil society require that the approach must be voluntary.
In judging the plausibility of the majority vote procedure we should keep in mind that the citizens voting are not quite the 'blind multitude' who formed the initial compact. In the initial organization of the new state the legislator was to discover the form of government and the laws appropriate to a particular people. The people were then to be 'convinced' to accept these prescriptions, primarily through the propaganda of the legislator who couches his recommendations in religious language. After the legislator has done his work and departed, the situation is somewhat different. The vote is then taken in an assembly of people on whom the influences of government, manners and morals have had a chance to effect a change in self-awareness. Though this transformation is a long and gradual process in Rousseau's eyes, the effects of properly educating the people have presumably had some effect.

We should also keep in mind Rousseau's faith in the 'wisdom of peasants' in determining questions such as whether there is corruption in government. They do not have to judge complex legal or economic questions, but simply whether the conditions of the initial compact are being kept.

The special qualifications of the majority vote procedure make it more plausible to equate the majority will and the general will. But is Rousseau's reasoning sufficient? Or do his qualifications provide merely a gloss on what turns out to be the insoluble problem of finding the general will? This is the conclusion of some critics who think that Rousseau's political philosophy breaks down at just this point. More than one critic has argued that the practical effect of Rousseau's
majority vote procedure is to produce a totalitarian state. If this
turns out to be true, then Rousseau's political philosophy does break
down. Obviously Rousseau's criticisms of modern society and his demands
for individual freedom are inconsistent with totalitarianism.

The Charge of Totalitarianism

The charge that Rousseau's philosophy is totalitarian takes many
forms. Some of them rest on a rather bad misrepresentation of his
thought. For example, it has been argued that the democratic element
of the voting procedure is merely a facade. The reasoning here is that
the 'blind multitude' are so ignorant and incompetent that they are re­
duced to merely accepting or rejecting the word of an all-wise legisla­
tor. Moreover this legislator has been given the appearance of a
divine authority by Rousseau, with the effect that the people are ex­
tremely susceptible to whatever the legislator decides. The freedom of
a democratic people becomes an illusion, for they make the decisions
they are told to make.

This is an unfortunate reading of Rousseau. It is true that the
legislator must give initial direction to the people, and must act as a
father figure to the 'blind multitude'. But Rousseau was assuming that
the legislator meets strict requirements that he be uniquely impartial
and concerned with the well-being of the people. Moreover the presence
of the legislator is brief. After the initial structuring of society
he departs. Rousseau was concerned with the very problem inherent in
this charge of totalitarianism. He solves the problem by prohibiting
the legislator from becoming a part of the society and by preventing
him from benefitting in any way from his prescriptions for that society. There could be a tension between the people and the legislator only in the initial formulation of society. But if the legislator did not address himself to the true interests of the people, he would not meet Rousseau's criteria for a legislator. As noted earlier, there is a problem in finding someone suited to the role of legislator, but this is a practical problem which does not directly concern the question of whether Rousseau's political theory, if realized in society, is totalitarian in nature.

However, not all forms of this argument are so easily handled. Consider that Rousseau's citizen is prohibited from the usual activities of a member of a democracy. He is not allowed the normal avenues of voicing his opinions and purusing his convictions. In fact, he seems to be allowed to voice his opinion only in the assemblies. And if he is in disagreement with the majority, he has no recourse. He cannot pursue his beliefs any further because, once outvoted, his belief is established as incorrect. In both his public and private thoughts and activities he must agree with the majority decision. He is not permitted to attempt to convince others, either before or after the vote; he cannot make public speeches, form associations, or join political parties. If the majority say that the government is appropriate, then it is true, and dissent becomes rebellion against what is known to be the general will, and hence immoral.

Not only is public debate prohibited with respect to politics, free inquiry in the sciences, the arts, and literature is disallowed. The government controls all means of public communication, as well as
the education and religious institutions. As a consequence, the major influences on the formation of opinion stem from the conservative voice of government. It is just this situation which Rousseau describes as making man free, but which in modern times has become a paradigm of totalitarianism. Lester Crocker has used this line in arguing that Rousseau's philosophy is totalitarian because

he was willing to give to government the power to do to men all it deemed necessary as the only way of achieving a true society.7

How would Rousseau respond to these charges? Note that if Rousseau's political philosophy is at bottom totalitarian, it must be because the qualifications of the voting procedure do not provide the protection Rousseau claims for them. Thus a reply for Rousseau should defend the protection offered by the voting qualifications. I shall attempt such a defense by reconsidering those qualifications to see if there are circumstances in which they might be sufficient for Rousseau's defense. I shall conclude that there are such circumstances, and that these are just the circumstances of the rousseauian state as described in the discussion of Corsica and Poland.

Rousseau had great faith in the common sense of the undereducated masses. This faith is not unqualified, however, for the masses are easily misled. Rousseau had also argued that the people will for the most part believe what they are taught to believe, and are molded by the customs and morals of their society. He believed that 'common sense would suffice' only if the people were free from the corrupting influences of modern society. According to Rousseau, in society one is never free from the influences of custom, religion, and education. But
Rousseau has a way to classify such influences. These influences are good if they make man self-sufficient, if they teach him the virtue of the life of the citizen, and if they curb his egoistic tendencies. Such influences are bad if they force him to rely on others, promote instability and dissatisfaction in society by giving reign to his selfish ambitions, and if they do not foment in him 'love of country' before 'love of self'. The relevant question here is that given the influences in society are good, is the 'wisdom of the peasants' sufficient for Rousseau's purposes?

Note that, if I am correct, the influences can be good only in the rousseauian state. Rousseau had said that if commerce is allowed, if money and luxury are made legitimate, if there is a possibility of moral or political inequality, then the influences which create character cannot be of the right kind. Thus the rousseauian state as I have characterized it is the only state in which the question of the efficiency of peasant wisdom is properly addressed.

If this is true, then our judgment of the wisdom of peasants need only apply to the judgment of the incomplicated caretaker government. Such judgment requires only that the peasants be able to see when the government is breaking the conditions of the initial compact. Consider the kinds of decisions which the masses face. In the assembly the first questions put to the masses are "whether the government is suitable to the people, and whether the magistrates are suitable to their office".

If the government or its magistrates are going bad, it should be easy to detect. In particular, the actions of the magistrates
should be relatively easy to judge. The magistrates are not allowed to build a career in politics. They may only serve for a term and then return to the ordinary life of a citizen. Thus if a magistrate seeks to maintain his office on some pretext he is no longer suitable for office. The same is true if a magistrate attempts to secure special privileges, to accumulate wealth, or to build himself a more luxurious life. In short, if a magistrate attempts to develop a lifestyle different from that of the ordinary citizen, or to define goals that differ from those of the ordinary citizen, he is to be removed from office.

The same reasoning applies to the judgment of government. In the rousseauian state there are to be few decisions for the government to make, and few programs for it to operate. Being anti-progressive, government has as its major function to maintain society as it is and prevent change. If the government attempts to promote commerce, foreign trade, or in any way institutes the means of accumulating wealth, then the government is to be removed. Any attempt of government to change the lifestyle of the people is a mark of a bad government. Thus if the government patronizes science, the arts, or culture beyond the needs of a simple farming community, the masses will easily see that their government is going bad.

The wisdom of peasants may not be sufficient to guide a society which faces complex problems. The undereducated and ignorant are certainly unequal to the task of deciding political affairs, foreign policy or determining the proper laws and regulations necessary to modern economic complexities. But then Rousseau was not writing for such societies, for those were the objects of his condemnation. The people
might become subjects of a totalitarian state if the starting point is any other than the rousseauian state. But if we start with the rousseauian state, then the wisdom of the peasants may well be sufficient to make the decisions it must make.

The same line of reasoning is appropriate to the formulation of the essential questions put to the assembly. On the surface the masses are at a great disadvantage in only being allowed to vote yes or no to the continuation of the government, its magistrates, and on the laws presented to it. We can easily predict that such a restriction in a modern society of any complexity could lead to a totalitarian state. Since the government has the only real means of formulating public opinion and disseminating information, the people would lack sufficient information to answer the questions properly. If the people are denied public debates, associations, access to information, and even the means of formal education, they could easily be convinced that the government is doing 'what is best for them'. However, this is not the case in the rousseauian state. Here the marks of good and bad governments are simple and open to public observance. The choice of the citizen does not depend upon any sophisticated reasoning, or upon a judgment of whether the society is progressing in an appropriate manner, for "progress" from what is already the best society is degeneration.

One of the most important and emphasized aspect of Rousseau's 'totalitarian' bent is his restriction on partial associations. Such a restriction is quite foreign to modern democratic thought. A common democratic criticism of communist countries centers on governmental control of public opinion. The objection is that so restricting the
free play of individual thought and public deliberation results in the enslavement of the minds of the people. In the USSR dissenters are often condemned by those in power as mentally ill, and therefore subject to regulation and confinement. The totalitarian position is that since the government or party beliefs are correct, any disagreement is wrong. To disagree, to criticize the government not only reveals individual error, but is counter-productive to the 'good of the people'. Thus it is permissible to punish dissent and to force the public to accede to the wisdom of the government, all in the name of what is right for the people.

This objection strikes to the heart of Rousseau's political philosophy. Certainly the most objectionable of the characteristic features of the totalitarian state are also features of Rousseau's legitimate society. Yet if I am right in my description of the rousseauian state, there are important differences. For one thing, modern totalitarian governments are quite different from Rousseau's version of legitimate government. The former wield power not present in the latter. In addition, the individuals who comprise the government are not subject to the limitations of office which exist in the rousseauian state. The governments exercise economic and political power, control science, education, and industry, and develop the prevailing view of what must be done to achieve the objections of that particular society. Moreover, in any modern country, decisions must be made with respect to the development of society. There is no alternative to the existence of some decision process which yields answers to foreign policy, economic goals, etc.... This is, of course, a fact of life for any modern
developed country. In totalitarian governments the rationale is that since such decisions must be made, and since the government has a clear view of the end to be achieved, the government is the best determiner of the appropriate means to get there. The masses are easily disenfranchised if they must rely on the information processed by the government in order to judge whether the government is fulfilling its function. However, in the rousseauian state, the people do not have to rely on government information in order to form correct opinions. They are aware at least of what is inappropriate, as noted above. Most importantly, in the rousseauian state no such decisions as to the appropriate means have to be made. Thus there is no excuse for the government to tell the people that they are not qualified to judge whether the society is functioning as it should.

The answer to the threat of totalitarianism posed by the ban on partial associations is the following. Partial associations can only be justified on the basis of some need. Since the individuals have what they need, and at least a majority of them want no more, there is no personal need on which to justify the formation of partial associations.

Nor will there be a need for partial associations for political purposes. Individuals form associations to promote common interests. But the only common interest is common to all, and that is to maintain the society as it is. If individuals do band together to try to change society, they are, in Rousseau's terms, promoting particular interests. The danger of banning partial associations is that the people lose control of their own destiny. If they have no means of constraining government and fighting its corruption, then they are indeed subjects
of a totalitarian regime. Yet in the rousseauian state, partial associations are not required for the control of government. The regular and special assemblies are, if we are to believe Rousseau, enough to prohibit government from disenfranchising the people.

Remember that in this society there is no standing army, no professional police, and no permanent set of members of government. Thus there is no real threat of tyranny by physical force. If we add to this the ban on partial associations, the self-sufficiency of the citizens, and the controlled, stoic lifestyle of the society, the threat of tyranny of the majority can be prevented. Loving their country and their way of life, the small community of farmers will not band together to force society into new directions, and will not force a minority to go along against their desires and interests.

All this clearly depends on Rousseau's necessary assumption that the general will resides in the majority. If this were not the case, then a tyranny of a majority could develop, or enough desire for change to allow the corruption of government. But this is not merely a bald assumption. Rousseau's citizens are to have been taught to keep the general will within them, through the indoctrination of the habits, morals, and educational system. If these should not be enough, then the society is doomed. Rousseau is merely giving them the best chance to take the right path, without a guarantee that they will reach the rousseauian state, or that they can maintain it.

Yet Rousseau's emphasis on the need for public education of the manners, morals and customs has itself presented critics with ammunition for the charge of totalitarianism. An important feature of this public
education is Rousseau's insistence on a 'civil religion' which is to teach man his duty and foster the love of country which is so important, on Rousseau's account, in motivating the citizenry in such a manner that the general will 'still resides in the majority'. Not a few critics of Rousseau see in his civil religion the mechanism of a totalitarian state.

Rousseau argued that most religions, and especially Christianity, posed a threat to the unity and harmony of society. According to Rousseau, if religion is not a servant of the state, and if the religious practices of the people are not controlled, then the people may develop divided loyalties. The general will is common to all men, and no individual or group interests may be allowed to develop in conflict with it. Religion can be another form of particular interest, and thus can turn the minds of men from the unity of purpose which is the general will.

In discussing the relationship between religion and political philosophy, Rousseau proposes a test of usefulness.

Anything which breaks the unity of society is worthless; all institutions which set man at odds with himself are worthless.

This is an attack on what Rousseau calls priestly religion. The major example of priestly religion, for Rousseau, is the Roman Catholic Church. This form of religion lacks usefulness because it divides the loyalties and duties attending the individual between what is relevant to the church and what is relevant to civil life. According to Rousseau, religion is useful when it combines 'divine worship' with 'love of laws', and is worthless when it puts them at odds with one
Rousseau stated that a man cannot live in harmony with one he thinks is damned. Thus the few atheists who might crop up must be removed from society, and no religious sect may be permitted to hold beliefs that entail that those of other religious sects are doomed to Hell.

This is hardly what most people would accept as a tolerant view of religion. Yet at the time the Social Contract was written, Rousseau's views on religion were damned as too liberal. His books were censored and burned, and he was several times forced to flee his home. Indeed, the European clergy was certainly correct to fear Rousseau's religious precepts. He was attacking both the authority of the Church to decide secular matters, and the authority of the clergy in passing moral judgments on man.

Civil religion was to play an important role in Rousseau's society. It was to provide the moral fiber and backbone of the society. In an earlier section we saw that, for Rousseau, the most important of the various types of law was moral law, which "forms the real constitution of the state". Civil religion is so important to the Rousseauian state because, as Ronald Grimsley points out

> love of humanity was too vague and weak an emotion to be completely compatible with the citizen's wholehearted devotion to his country.

Rousseau's civil religion is quite clearly a state religion, and in this lies the threat of totalitarianism. John Chapman has argued that the threat appears because, on Rousseau's account, the development of religious sentiment and understanding is curtailed.

Here authority is used to forbid exercise of reason as to the validity of [religious] dogmas.
Rousseau's civil religion, Chapman argues, sacrifices moral autonomy in the name of civic duty with the consequence that Rousseau's citizens "may be politically free, but they are not morally free".

I think this criticism slightly, but only slightly, misses the mark as far as Rousseau is concerned. Rousseau was not overly disturbed by the need to sacrifice intellectual inquiry into the fundamental bases of religious beliefs. It was enough that men would act correctly; they had no need for philosophical justification for their beliefs. Rousseau thought the metaphysics of morality was out of reach of most men, but he did believe that "common sense" in certain circumstances could lead men to virtuous behavior.

In contrast, Chapman's criticism assumes a view that reasoned investigation into one's religious stance is an important freedom which should not be prohibited by political theory. Though I personally agree with this view, it is not Rousseau's view. Rousseau would argue that "true" freedom is possible only when one can know what is morally correct behavior, and his tie of religion to duty and the general will provides this knowledge. The important thing, for Rousseau, was to construct a society in which men did not do evil to their fellow citizens, and so the restriction on moral reasoning is somewhat beside the point. Civil religion was meant to insure that the general will continued to be in sole command, and each citizen gained civil and moral freedom. In the words of J.C. Hall,

The most important freedom for Rousseau was not intellectual freedom, but the absence of subjugation to another man's will.
The threat of totalitarianism is not present just in the area of religious freedom, though that is where it is most obvious. It is the total control exercised by the state which causes alarm. As one author has argued,

Even in their private thoughts they are to submit, for there is to be an artificial ideology or 'civil religion', which all must believe on pain of banishment or death. 83

Again it is the special conditions of the rousseauian state which "save" Rousseau. While it is true that religious beliefs and values in general are strictly controlled, the control is not of a kind that would allow an individual or group to gain dominance in society. When every individual is under the same control, no one has power over others. The signs and marks of inequality are too clear in the rousseauian state, and the abuse of power easily remedied. This, then, is at bottom the defense of Rousseau's civil religion. Civil religion is necessary to insure the proper psychological motivation which guarantees the strong social sentiment necessary for a society which requires the guidance of a single will. The threat of totalitarianism can become a reality only if the means to Rousseau's civil society would allow the development of moral and/or political inequality. If, as I have argued, no such development follows in the rousseauian state, then the charge of totalitarianism is misdirected. (Of course, in conditions other than the rousseauian state the charge would most likely apply, but that is not my concern here.)

Perhaps the most important defense of Rousseau derives from his rejection of representation. Rousseau believed that representative government is permissible, but representative legislation is not. The
people can delegate the day-to-day functions and responsibilities of government, but not those of participation in discovering the general will. This is also the conclusion of John Chapman in *Rousseau: Totalitarian or Liberal?*

The people may no more have representation than they may agree to delegate authority to make law to the government. If the people would delegate authority to make laws, they would give up their sovereignty, and thereby their freedom.

As Hall has pointed out, Rousseau accepted a limited form of representative government. Yet even here the representation is severely confined. Given the small size of the rousseauian state, and the relatively limited scope of governmental functions, the representatives have a restricted range of powers and responsibilities.

Most importantly, the people must meet in regular and special assemblies. At this time the government and the magistrates, the people's representatives, are open to review. This review is the most solid device for the prevention of totalitarianism and of tyranny in any form, and such prevention was of major importance to Rousseau.

The need to protect the State against the usurpation of power by particular individuals or groups is one of the overriding concerns of Rousseau's political philosophy. The protection takes the form of denying the legitimacy of representation, thereby requiring the citizens to assume responsibility in the assemblies. In the words of Kennedy F. Roche, "Every assembly holds all the possibilities of a 'new beginning'. There is a possibility of 'new beginnings' because the whole system can be revised. Denial of representation thus provides insurance against the formation and
and development of a power base which could become a threat to the good of the people.

In fact it is the combination of several factors which guard against totalitarianism. The common beliefs embodied in civil religion, the independence from others, the denial of partial associations, the denial of legislative representation, the small size of the rousseauian state, and the limited government all combine to insure that no particular interests can successfully compete with the general will.

To this point I have tried to show that the charge of totalitarianism is misdirected towards Rousseau by arguing that in the proper circumstances the special qualifications on the voting procedure will work. If I am correct, Rousseau has sufficient safeguards to prevent the immediate deterioration of society into a totalitarian state. At this point, I shall turn to a related objection which has been presented by Lester Crocker in his *Rousseau's Social Contract*. Crocker argues that Rousseau was a forerunner of the modern idea of behavioral control, and, in the extreme, his works foreshadow Orwell's 1984. In discussing the citizen of Rousseau's political theory, Crocker argues:

But then, like Emile, he will be allowed "autonomy" only because his will has been captured, because he has been re-shaped in the desired mold, so that, thinking the right thoughts and experiencing the right emotions, he will respond, when he receives "guidance" with a precommitment to the moi commun. Rousseau's citizen is free only in the sense that, having been "formed", he has been compelled, unknowingly, to will this aim "freely". 87

Indeed, the case against Rousseau is quite plausible given his prescriptions and controls on the beliefs of individuals, and his restrictions on public debates. 88 However, it is important to note that
according to Rousseau's psychology the desires men have are always sub-
ject to the pressures of social life. Original man had but few desires,
because there were no causes to produce additional desires, e.g., there
was little contact with others and no need of such contact. Modern man
has corrupt desires because of the causal influences attending social
life. The desires of the man of the future will be heavily influenced
by his environment, especially because the new man is to be a social
man. For Rousseau, this is merely an observation of fact. Freedom
comes to the new man in the form of controlling the factors which will
mold him. We are to choose the social environment, and thus choose the
manner in which we and our children are influenced. Crocker's objec-
tion stems from his seeing what, from Rousseau's point of view, is a
false dichotomy, to be molded or not to be molded. In Western liberal
tradition it is common to think of freedom at least partially in terms
of the absence of behavioral control. Rousseau, I think, would simply
deny there can be freedom in this sense. Rather for Rousseau true free-
dom comes from the rule of law in which man chooses the type of society
he is going to live in, and therefore the type of influences he will be
exposed to.

The problem with this defense against Crocker's charge is that
it amounts to the claim that the 'molding of minds' is permissible if
it produces the right sort of individual. This, of course, is the argu-
ment frequently used to justify the propaganda machines of totalitarian
regimes. On my interpretation, this claim is inherent in Rousseau's
thought, especially in the idea that society is responsible for trans-
forming modern man into the citizen of legitimate society.
However, there are fundamental differences between the rousseauian state and typical totalitarian states. Any individual may leave Rousseau's state, whereas he cannot leave modern totalitarian states. Perhaps more importantly, Rousseau had an optimistic view of the individual's capability to see what he should be and the kind of life that is good for him, given the right social conditions. According to Rousseau, once an individual reaches adulthood in the rousseauian state, he is capable of judging for himself what is right. He also believes that a majority of individuals will make the right choice. They must be given that choice, however. Government does not have the right to disenfranchise the people for their own good, or for any other reason. If an individual should make a wrong choice, such as to leave the state, that is his problem. Such a choice would mean the downfall of the individual on Rousseau's account, but that does not give anyone the right to deny him the choice. In fact, Rousseau specifically says that if the people who created society through the initial compact should decide to dissolve it, they have that right. Thus if to be a totalitarian society includes the stipulation that the ordinary citizen is prohibited from making ultimate choices, then Rousseau's civil society is decidedly not totalitarian.

In this section I have attempted to show that certain common criticisms of Rousseau's political philosophy miss the mark. I have argued that when we combine all the major elements of Rousseau's work, he has sufficient answers to the major charges of totalitarianism in his thought. However, my interpretation and defense of Rousseau has a rather drastic consequence. If I am correct, Rousseau can be defended against
these charges only by making his political theory inapplicable to most of the modern world. Rousseau's system will work only if every aspect of it is strictly applied, and this can be accomplished only in a small agrarian community which faces no complex economic or social problems, which has no part in international affairs, and in which the drive for progress and development is stilled. It is unrealistic to expect that such conditions could be met by more than a tiny fraction of the world's population. Thus Rousseau's civil society is for all practical purposes unavailable to modern societies.

This same conclusion can be reached by other arguments. Consider that according to Rousseau, legitimate society is possible only if the conditions of the initial compact are met. Those conditions were that the individual is protected by the whole force of the community, that he obey only his own laws, and that he remain as free as before. Since this requires that individuals face few complex problems, the conditions of the initial compact cannot be met in most of the present world. Hence Rousseau's thought is again seen to be inapplicable for any but a small percentage of the world's peoples.
FOOTNOTES

1 J.C. Hall, _Rousseau_, "The Will of a Corporate Person", pp. 67-68; also Hall, p. 84 ff.


3 No matter what the number of individuals, minority or majority, they both represent particular wills. Rousseau talks primarily of the majority will, because in certain circumstances it will, according to Rousseau, be the same as the general will. Thus the majority will plays a fundamental role in finding the general will.

4 _Social Contract_, pp. 25, 29-30, 118. As explicitly as Rousseau denies that the general will is equivalent to the will of all, commentators often end up reducing the general will to the will of all, e.g., Masters, p. 421, "the only condition is that the ends of society be consistent with general laws enacted by the body as a whole". This view is one I am concerned to undermine in this section.


6 _Ibid._, p. 40.

7 _Ibid._, Book III, Chapter IX, p. 91, footnote 1.

8 _Ibid._, p. 18.

9 We should not forget that the citizen has the choice of leaving the society if he does not want to live under these conditions.

10 _Social Contract_, Book I, Chapter VII, p. 19. Of course, one must agree to this situation by agreeing to abide by the conditions of the society (no one can be forced to join society against his will). For a different view of this passage, see Plamenatz, p. 414. Plamenatz tries to make this into the acceptance of a decision procedure, rather than the stronger position that the individual is in fact wrong in disobeying the decision procedure. A view similar to mine is expressed by Henry David Rempel in "On Forcing People to be Free", _Ethics_, Volume 87, 1976-77, p. 18.
Poland, p. 206 ff.

Social Contract, p. 72.

Ibid., p. 25, Book II, Chapter I.

Hall, Rousseau, p. 73.

Ibid., p. 138.

Ibid., p. 73, cf. 124.

Ibid., p. 118.

Ibid., p. 128.


Social Contract, p. 29.

Hall, Rousseau, p. 128.

Social Contract, Book IV, Chapters I-III, p. 113 ff.

Ibid., p. 29.

Ibid., footnote 1.

Ibid., p. 26, Book II, Chapter II; also p. 98, Book III, Chapter VII.

Ibid., p. 39, Book II, Chapter VI.

Ibid., Book II, Chapter XII, "The Various Types of Law", p. 57 ff.

Ibid., p. 58.

Ibid. Plamenatz argues that this is an example of the true paradox of Rousseau's praise of 1) independence, and 2) uniformity of judgment, p. 423. Others see a tension between Rousseau's education of Emile, which is meant to make Emile independent, and the education of the citizen of civil society, which is to make the individual extremely dependent on the society (e.g., Masters, pp. 12-13). The point in contention is the supposed inconsistency of Rousseau's position on what is good for the individual. It is this point I shall be attempting to settle. My view is, in brief, that on Rousseau's account, the good for the individual in legitimate society is just the good of the society.
As Durkheim puts it, "the duties of the individual to himself are duties to society".

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid. It is at this point that many commentators argue for a totalitarian bent in Rousseau's thought. I shall discuss this below, p. 111 ff.

33 Ibid. I shall discuss the legislator below, p. 95 ff.

34 Social Contract, Book II, Chapter XII, p. 58.

35 Ibid., Book III, Chapter II, p. 68.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid., Book III, Chapter VIII, p. 84.

38 Ibid., p. 85.

39 Ibid., p. 84.

40 Book III, Chapter III, p. 70.

41 Ibid., p. 85.

42 Ibid., Book III, Chapter II, p. 68. Rousseau nowhere makes a direct connection between this criterion and his constant theme of creating a 'natural' society, though he seems to think that population increase is a sign that all is well, and that equilibrium is maintained. I shall try to make this connection for Rousseau, but I do not pretend to be able to find a convincing argument.

43 See my Chapter One, pp. 5-6.

44 Poland, p. 244.

45 Social Contract, p. 86.

46 Ibid., Book III, Chapter IV, p. 72.


48 Ibid. cf. Hall, pp. 112, 116 on the role of the legislator and the problem of his universal genius.

49 Ibid., pp. 42-43.

50 Ibid., p. 42.
51 Ibid. cf. Political Economy, p. 298; virtue is "nothing but conformity of particular wills to the general will".

52 See Shklar, "Rousseau's Two Models; Sparta and the Age of Gold".

53 Social Contract, p. 121, Book IV, Chapter IV, "The Roman Assemblies".

54 Ibid., Book II, Chapter VII, p. 42.

55 Ibid.


57 Social Contract, Book II, Chapter VII, p. 44.

58 Ibid., p. 45.

59 This problem has been frequently noted, e.g., Durkheim, p. 96.

60 Ibid., Book III, Chapter X, p. 95.

61 Ibid., Book III, Chapter XIII, p. 99.

62 Ibid., Book III, Chapter XVIII, p. 111.


64 Ibid., Book IV, Chapter III, p. 118.

65 Ibid., Book III, Chapter XV, p. 103.

66 Book IV, Chapter III, p. 113. cf. Emile, p. 267. Rousseau believed that the common man would, when freed from his acquired prejudices, reject the things which led to his corruption, for inequality of wealth is "contrary to reason, happiness, and virtue".

67 Ibid. In discussing the relationship of Rousseau's thought and the modern liberal democratic tradition, John Chapman notes that "Rousseau, by assuming that the people are sufficiently informed, all but assumes away the political problems as the modern liberal sees it." Rousseau: Totalitarian or Liberal?, p. 142. In the rousseauian state, as I interpret it, the citizens have no need of specialized or detailed information. Chapman's analysis is not a criticism of Rousseau's thought in that context, though it does add support to my thesis of the inapplicability of Rousseau's thought to modern political philosophy.

68 Ibid., p. 118.

69 Ibid., p. 111.
Ibid., p. 115. Rousseau does not discuss in detail the extent of the prohibition on public discussion, for this would require a treatise itself.


Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.


Social Contract, Book II, Chapter XII, p. 58.


John Chapman, Rousseau: Totalitarian or Liberal?, p. 66.

Ibid., p. 65 ff.

J.C. Hall, Rousseau, p. 125.

Ibid., p. 53.

John Chapman, p. 54.

Ronald Grimsley, p. 98.

Kennedy F. Roche, Rousseau - Stoic and Romantic, p. 128.


Crocker, as others, sees the restriction on discussion as evidence for the totalitarian bias in Rousseau. For an interesting rebuttal, see Merquior, Chapter 4. Merquior argues from Rousseau's discussion of the participatory role of the citizen in the workings of the government, to the conclusion that the Social Contract is arguing for the fundamental assumptions of democratic legitimacy.

Social Contract, pp. 15, 111, and especially 57, where Rousseau argues that they have this right even if the result is harmful to them.
An appropriate first step in evaluating Rousseau's political philosophy is to review what has been accomplished by this interpretation of his work. A brief comparison of the political theories of Rousseau and Plato will provide a useful device for explicating these achievements.

Both Plato and Rousseau base their political ideas on a theory of human nature. Both see the good life for man as consisting in a 'harmony of the soul'. The good society, they argue, is one which will aid men to achieve this harmony. However, they differ on what 'harmony' consists in, and on the political system necessary to promote harmony in men.

For Plato, harmony of the soul consists primarily of reason controlling the appetites and desires. Reason is to tell us which of the desires we have are appropriate in any given situation, and is to inform us of the proper extent to which our actions should be guided by our desires. For example, reason instructs us not to allow the desire for food to turn into gluttony. A man in whom reason rules does not let desires for wealth, luxury, and reputation dictate his actions to the detriment of his duties to himself and others. Plato believed that
such desires lead to unnecessary conflict, competition, harm to others, and the establishment of false goals and purposes. The role of reason is to establish true values, and therefore the proper goals for man. Reason, through investigation of the eternal a priori truths (Forms), establishes the correct standards of conduct for man, and thus his proper end.

The man of true harmony is one who turns his attention to the study of eternal truths and away from the temporary, changing world of material things. However, according to Plato, most men are incapable of achieving true harmony of the soul. Only the rare individual is born with the intellectual capacity necessary for such a life, and the ability so to suppress his material desires. When developing a political theory, it is necessary to keep these factors in mind. An ideal political association would consist only of philosophers who achieve harmony. Since this is impossible, a more realistic goal is to construct a society of men who, although not all capable of the highest intellectual pursuits, are free from the worst effects of the material desires. In this society cooperation would be limited to the production of the necessities of life—basically food, clothing, and shelter. Since such men would desire nothing further, there would be no need for extensive government. With no luxuries and no money, there is no real economy to regulate. Plato calls this the 'Healthy City'. Its main features are the lack of extensive cooperation, the lack of visible government, and the absence of conflict and discord. The absence of these factors is directly the result of the limited material desires of the citizens. Plato's Healthy City is in essence the rousseauian state
which Rousseau believed the only good society for man.

According to Plato, most men would not accept life in the Healthy City. Most men have more extensive material desires. They want a more comfortable and luxurious existence than would be possible in the Healthy City. Therefore, in organizing the best possible society for men, we must have more extensive cooperation. The production of luxuries requires a more complicated economy. However, the very desires which make the production of luxuries necessary, also produce competition, jealousy, and competition. Thus most men in this society are incapable of harmony.

To allow such men to rule society, to make and execute its laws, would be a mistake. This would result in laws based upon material desires and false values. Such leadership would lead society into internal conflict and discord, and unnecessary war with other societies. Plato's conclusion was that society must be run by those few men of reason who are capable of achieving harmony of the soul. In this way the laws of society will be founded in reason, rather than unbridled emotion. If all men obey the laws written and executed by men of reason, then the society will have eliminated most of the discord and conflict which would be present without such laws. When the nations of men in whom reason does not rule are governed by laws of reason, then the dangerous emotions and desires of men are effectively controlled. Although such men will lack internal harmony, their lives are nonetheless ruled by reason; reason imposed by the law. Rule by the intellectual elite is an essential feature of Plato's political philosophy and is derived from his theory of human nature.
Like Plato, Rousseau argued that the good life for man is one of harmony. But harmony, for Rousseau, is not rule by reason; it is the balance of needs-drives-abilities. Moreover, this balance is attainable to any normal human, not just the intellectual elite. According to Rousseau, what prevents most men from achieving harmony is not a lack of innate capacities, as it was for Plato. Rather it is the accumulation of artificial desires through the development of *amour propre*. Since the attitude of *amour propre* is a product of the influences of man's environment, a change in his environment can free man of those influences and allow him to achieve harmony. The common man, on Rousseau's view, is not fated from birth to be a prisoner of what both Plato and Rousseau consider to be harmful desires. Political theory is thus to prescribe the organization of society with the goal of so changing man's environment. What is called for is not rule by the elite, but control over the psychological mechanisms that produce *amour propre* from *amour de soi*. This is the story of the *Social Contract* and the ultimate justification of the specific principles which put the legislative power in the hands of the people, and which requires the kind of existence which Plato would attribute to his Healthy City.

Just as it is necessary to understand Plato's theory of human nature in order to understand the justification of his political theory, one cannot interpret Rousseau's political philosophy without an analysis of his theory of human nature. My contribution to the study of Rousseau consists to a large extent in providing this analysis by revealing Rousseau's ultimate reliance on what I have called the Principle of Natural Balance. To my knowledge no one has previously
developed the details of Rousseau's theory of human nature, and so there has not been a mechanism for following Rousseau's reasoning from human nature to political philosophy, and this has resulted in much confusion in the literature on Rousseau.

The comparison of Rousseau and Plato points to another contribution of my interpretation. In developing Rousseau's analysis of the best society—the rousseauian state—I have shown that the specific details of this society, e.g., denial of wealth and luxuries, the limited role of government, the absence of political parties, etc., are a necessary background for understanding the abstract principles of the Social Contract. Thus my work in this area has shown that the Social Contract is aimed at the production of a society much like Plato's Healthy City, and that on Rousseau's account, no more extensive state is truly legitimate. Although some commentators have agreed with this conclusion, none of them has been able to show how this conclusion can be derived in Rousseau's political philosophy.

Some Problems of Interpretation

An interpretation of Rousseau's political philosophy should reveal the position Rousseau holds in the history of philosophy. In the literature on Rousseau one finds that he has been interpreted as the founder or forerunner of most current political traditions. For example, J.G. Merquior sees Rousseau as providing the basis for the modern democratic tradition and in fact makes of Rousseau a kind of rule utilitarian; A. Cobban believes Rousseau not a utilitarian, but rather a proponent of a form of tyranny of the majority; and Lucio Colletti.
argues that Rousseau was at heart an early Marxist whose theories are best unpacked in terms of class struggle. Now it is true that one can pull from Rousseau's work support for all these theses. Sir Ernst Barker put this point succinctly:

You can find your own dogmas in Rousseau, whether you belong to the Left (and especially to the left of the Left), or whether you belong to the Right (and especially to the right of the Right).

However, it is a mistake to extract one aspect of Rousseau's thought as his essential contribution to political philosophy. Rousseau's political philosophy must be viewed as an integrated whole in which each thesis is supported and qualified by the others. It is an error to emphasize Rousseau's seemingly utilitarian aspects without placing equal importance on his special view of the good life for man. Similarly, it is misleading to stress the totalitarian bent of his recommendations while underplaying the severe limitation he places on the application of his political system.

Such interpretations would have us believe that one or another modern political tradition would capture the heart of Rousseau's thought. As we shall see, such attempts are an oversimplification of a complex philosophy. Much of the confusion which attends the interpretation of Rousseau results from taking Rousseau's thought out of context. By this I mean that Rousseau's ideas work in the Rousseauian state, and only in the Rousseauian state. Yet it is common in the literature on Rousseau to attempt understanding and insight into his thought by comparing it to political philosophies which developed later. The success of such efforts clearly rests on the extent to which one
first understands Rousseau. This is why we should concentrate on Rousseau's texts prior to making such comparisons. As Cobban notes,

The confusion may have arisen partly from reading back into Rousseau his supposed historical influence, partly in an attempt to force his thought into theoretical categories that he never had in mind when he wrote.\textsuperscript{13}

It is tempting and easy to ignore such warnings, for Rousseau's thought has elements which are, at least on the surface, consistent with most major political traditions. However, Cobban is correct, and, as the next two sections will show, the differences outweigh the similarities when comparing Rousseau with modern political traditions. It is beyond the scope of this work to address all that has been written in this area. Instead, we shall address two questions; whether Rousseau was a proto-Marxist, and whether he was a collectivist. The answers to these questions will provide an accurate gauge of Rousseau's position in political philosophy, and establish a framework for evaluating other efforts to modernize Rousseau.

Was Rousseau a Proto-Marxist?

The similarity between Rousseau's rejection of wealth, luxury, and the rich and the Marxist critique of capitalist economics has frequently been noted. This has led some commentators to view Rousseau as a proto-Marxist. One critic has asserted that "the heirs of Rousseau are Marx and Lenin"\textsuperscript{14} and another has called Rousseau the "spiritual father" of communism.\textsuperscript{15} This is a mistake, for the differences between Rousseau's view and the standard Marxist analysis of capitalism are as important as the obvious similarities. A comparison of Rousseau and the Marxist political philosopher Mihailo Markovic will bear this out.
The format for this discussion is to explicate the similarities and differences of Rousseau and Markovic in four areas: 1) their general approach to the analysis of human nature, 2) the conclusions they draw from that analysis, 3) the central problems for political philosophy which follow from those conclusions, and 4) the political procedures and institutions which they considered necessary to solve the central problems discovered in (3). On the basis of this discussion I shall argue that Rousseau's perspective is fundamentally different from that of Markovic.

Rousseau and Markovic on the Analysis of Human Nature

Mihailo Markovic is perhaps the most sophisticated of leading contemporary liberal Marxist philosophers. His major work, From Affluence to Praxis, is especially helpful to my discussion, as its central themes are presently in language reminiscent of Rousseau. In this work Markovic is concerned with practical political change and with the operation of his country, Yugoslavia, on Marxist principles. He views this task as one in which awareness of man's potential and man's 'true' needs are to be the guiding force for political organization and for the overt operation of Marxist principles. For Markovic, this requires a view of what society can be, and what forces and conditions in the world are preventing the realization of this potential society. Markovic's statement of this requirement reflects several rousseauian themes.

Only when we have a definite idea of what man is, what in given historical conditions he can be, and which of his essential needs can be realized, can we establish what is negative in existing reality, and what are the institutions which prevent man from being what he can be.
Here Markovic is calling for a science of man as Rousseau had done in the *Emile* and the *Second Discourse*. Like Rousseau, Markovic expects this study to yield facts concerning the variable character of man, as produced to a large extent by the historical conditions in which man has at various times found himself. Markovic agrees with Rousseau's view that the task of political society is to control those factors in order to produce the most desirable type of man, and if this is accomplished, man will have altered "the circumstances whose product he is".\(^{17}\)

However, their respective approaches to the science of man are quite different. Rousseau had attempted a cultural anthropology which would uncover the mechanisms of alteration in the character of man while revealing his true, essential nature. Moreover, Rousseau desired this to be an objective science. He argued that his analysis was grounded in the descriptive laws of the operation of Nature; what I have called "The Law of Natural Order" and "The Law of Natural Balance".\(^{18}\)

Markovic rejected the idea that there is an objective truth with respect to man's nature, and this affected his view of the goal of the study of man. Markovic argued that man is a complex organism which exhibits a variety of characteristics in different circumstances. For example, the typical activity of man during some periods in history is more rational than in other periods, and at times man has formed communities in which peaceful behavior predominates, while at other times the community life has been marked by belligerance and aggression. For Markovic, the proper approach to the study of man is to examine the
characteristics which men exhibit in varying historical contexts, and to study the features of those historical contexts which promote or suppress the various characteristics in man. Ultimately, the science of man is to reveal the relationships between the various historical settings (in particular the economic, social and political institutions) and the kinds of behavior typical in those settings. Markovic describes the correct approach to the science of man in the following terms:

In attempting to arrive at a proper understanding of man, we must distinguish two different concepts of human nature. When we analyze history and establish certain general opposite tendencies of human behavior we arrive at a descriptive notion of man which can be expressed by a series of factual empirical statements. But when we prefer some human features over others—such as being social, productive, creative, rational, free, peaceful, and when we classify these characteristics as "truly human", "genuine", "authentic", "essential", "natural", and so on, we arrive at a value notion of man, indicating that man is essentially a being of praxis, and that his nature can be expressed by a set of value statements.19

As this passage indicates, the final choice of what in man's potential is to be promoted is a prescriptive choice. There is no purely objective ground for the values of our political theory, as there was to have been for Rousseau.

This difference in approach can be partially accounted for by contrasting the contexts in which these two philosophers worked. Rousseau was a contractarian thinker, and wrote in the framework established by Hobbes and Locke. The task before political philosophy, as those philosophers saw it, was to establish the proper goals for the social compact, based upon the true nature of man as revealed in the state of nature (though they disagreed about the proper characterization of the state of nature). The reason for political government was derived from
the conditions which would exist without structured political organization, where those conditions reflect the degree of conflict which would result if human nature went unchecked by a political structure. Thus Hobbes derived the necessity of absolute sovereignty from his analysis of the state of nature as a situation of extreme conflict among men. He argued that an essential characteristic of man is the attitude of egoism, and that without political restraints this egoism would lead men into a "war of everyman against everyman". Locke argued that the reason for political society was to overcome the 'inconveniences' of the state of nature. For Locke, man was a rational creature, for the most part cooperative and sociable, and of a generally peaceful disposition. However, some problems would arise. In particular cases the interpretation and execution of moral law (Natural Law) would lead to some conflict, and we need political society to arbitrate such disputes. Rousseau argued that man's essential nature is to be unpacked in terms of the natural balance which is fixed in other animals, but which was lost in the transition from the original situation to the present. For Rousseau, legitimate government is based upon the requirements for returning man to a natural balance.

Markovic, in contrast, wrote in the Marxist tradition, which rejected the contractarian approach to political theory. Where the contractarians attempt to uncover the essential man, thinking it necessary to separate man from the superstructure of beliefs and attitudes which result from life in society, Markovic argued that no such separation can be made. We cannot ask what the essential nature of man is, but only what characteristics predominate in a given context. Thus,
according to Markovic, the state-of-nature, contractarian approach is inappropriate to the study of man, for it aims at the impossible task of extracting man from the context in which he exists.

The Conclusions Drawn from the Study of Man

Although the approaches of Rousseau and Markovic to the study of man are dissimilar, some of their central conclusions are not. Both accept the idea that modern man (man in the present historical context) is a product of political institutions. For Rousseau this is a consequence of history gone awry, while for Markovic it is simply an observed fact. These two philosophers agree that the problems facing man are to a large extent due to a lack of control of the political institutions which mold man. Most importantly, both think that it is time for man to take control of those factors in order to produce the new man, who for the first time will be in full control of his future.

Yet the difference in approach yields quite opposing views of the specific nature of the problem for political philosophy, as the following two passages indicate. According to Markovic,

The main philosophical problem, which is at the root of all philosophy and which I intend to elaborate is: How Can Man Realize Himself and Create Himself in a World Which He Accepts as His Own?

However, for Rousseau the problem is:

To find a form of association which defends and protects the person and property of each member with the whole force of the community, and where each, while joining with all the rest, still obeys no one but himself, and remains as free as before.

The difference here can perhaps best be seen in contrasting their respective views on the concept of 'freedom', which for both philosophers
is a central concept in political theory. Rousseau and Markovic share the thesis that a central task of political philosophy is to construct institutions which will make man free. For Rousseau 'freedom' is, on my interpretation, to be understood in terms of the absence of the imposition of the will of others and the self-mastery which frees one from one's own corrupt desires. In the words of Charles Hendel, the problem for Rousseau was to "set men free from their own tyranny, tyranny within as well as without".  

John Plamenatz has noted that the essence of Rousseau's notion of "freedom" is freedom from, e.g., freedom from the domination of others. In contrast, most modern political theorists seek a sense of freedom which incorporates the notion of freedom to, e.g., freedom to develop one's capacities and to actualize one's potential in some sense. This is the position Markovic takes in defining freedom in terms of "both independence and self-realization".  

Where Rousseau was content with making man free to live a natural life in harmony with society, and especially without the desire or opportunity for self-development, Markovic attempts the further task of opening up the future to creative development of individual talents. This difference produces a divergence of thought in areas in which, on first reading, they seem to be in close agreement. For example, one of the most important areas of agreement between the two, with regard to the analysis of the problems of modern man, is the rejection of capitalism. (Rousseau did not use this term, for it has not been invented in his time, but he would surely embrace it.) For purposes of this discussion, I shall define capitalism as an economic system in which there is
both private property (private ownership of the means of production) and free enterprise.

We have seen that Rousseau was opposed to both institutions. He rejected the private ownership of the means of production as the first step in the production of moral and political inequality. (Rousseau had in mind the ownership of agricultural land, for in his time there was relatively little industry. However, his attack was based on the evils of private property per se, and so would be applicable to the modern industrial context which was the concern of Markovic.) Rousseau's argument was that the illegitimate claim of entitlement which accompanied the assertion of property rights produced the first step towards inequality among men. While private property established the foundation of legitimacy (i.e., private property came to be accepted as legitimate) for economic inequality, free enterprise provided the means. Rousseau argued that if the means of great economic inequality were available, then great economic inequality could not be prevented. On Rousseau's account, this would lead directly to moral and political inequality.

Markovic agrees wholeheartedly with this reasoning, at least in its central features. Markovic saw in private ownership of the means of production the introduction of an irreconcilable gap between the interests of the workers and the interests of the owners. The interest of the owner is to maximize his profits, which meant to pay the workers as little as possible. Free enterprise, according to Markovic, serves to magnify this problem. The capitalists are in competition with one another, and so must direct a great deal of their efforts to cutting
production costs, especially the cost of labor. To a large extent, the interest of the capitalist can be construed as maximizing the profit he gains from the labor of the worker. The interest of the worker is to receive as much in wages as he can. He cannot directly gain from the profit of his labor, for that is the property of the owners of the means of production. Instead, any gain to the worker must be in wages, and thus in an increase in production costs. This clash over wages typifies the opposition between the class interests of workers and capitalists.

According to Markovic, the most serious problem in the capitalist system is that the forces of both the capitalist and the worker are geared to the profit motive. Both classes must expend much of their energy in pursuit of the class interests which are inherent in the system. This effectively prevents them from seeking the 'self-actualization' which is, for Markovic, the proper goal of man. Thus Markovic's attack on capitalism has both a material and a psychological basis. On the one hand, the material well-being necessary to the development of the individual is in control of the capitalist, who, qua capitalist, is antagonistic to the worker's achieving that well-being. On the other hand, the dominant motivation which drives the capitalist system, both workers and capitalists, is to increase material wealth, and this results in ambition, greed, envy, and the like. In short, the capitalist system does not allow most individuals the opportunity for psychological growth in the sense Markovic favors.

The psychological component of Markovic's attack on capitalism is particularly important. It could be argued that Markovic's reasoning
is faulty, that the material conflict over wages is not a necessary feature of capitalism, or at least not an irreconcilable problem. In support of this, evidence could be produced to show that the wages received by workers in capitalist countries, with the U.S.A. as the prime example, are very high, and that the average worker has never been better off with respect to material wealth.

The psychological component of Markovic's rejection of capitalism provides him with a reply. On Markovic's view, even if the problem of material wealth is solved, and the worker does achieve a high standard of living, he is not much closer to the ideal of self-development. In order to achieve a high level of material well-being the worker has to compete against both the capitalists and against his fellow workers. His mental life becomes focused on success in the market place, and his psychic energies are to a large degree exhausted in competition rather than in self-development. The result is that the material gain is achieved at the cost of the opportunity to develop his more valuable (according to Markovic) potential. In support of this, Markovic argues that this result is just what is observed in modern capitalist countries.

The most developed societies have the highest percentage of suicides, mental illnesses, rapes, juvenile delinquency, drug addicts, and alcoholics. Industry and civilization have made man more rational, powerful, and efficient in some important spheres of human life; but at the same time they have reduced warmth, sincerity, solidarity, spontaneity in human relations. Emotional hunger in material affluence, desperate loneliness amidst the crowd, boredom in spite of a huge variety of entertainment for sale, utter powerlessness amidst gadgets which multiply senses, create the situation to which modern civilized man often reacts by developing strongly aggressive and destructive dispositions.
The point to be made here is that Rousseau also rejected capitalism on both material and psychological grounds. He argued that the capitalist system produces material inequality and develops harmful attitudes, beliefs, and human relations. The remedy that both philosophers see is a change in the dominant motivation of man and a refocusing of effort towards other than the material aspects of life.

Rousseau wanted this change to combine self-mastery with a new concern for the equality and well-being of all members of society. Markovic had a different goal in mind. For Markovic the wealth made possible by capitalism is not in itself bad or dangerous, as Rousseau had argued. Rather, it is only the inappropriate use of this wealth and the unfortunate cost of achieving the capitalist system which produces harmful consequences. In fact, the gains in material wealth under capitalism are an important base for the development of individual potential, for that system has "increased man's possibilities for a richer, freer, more creative life".

According to Markovic, if this new material wealth is properly used, the individual has new opportunities for the creativity and self-realization which is vital to his development as the new man.

Nevertheless, one can already envisage conditions under which basic changes in human motivation might take place. If an individual were to have a real possibility of choosing his place in the social division of work according to his abilities, talents, and aspirations, and if in general, professional activity were reduced to a minimum and to a function of secondary importance with respect to the freely chosen activities in the leisure time, the motive of success would lose its dominant position. Success would no longer be regarded as supreme and worthy of any sacrifice, but only as a natural consequence of something much more important. This more important and indeed essential thing is the very act of creation no matter whether in science, art, politics, or personal relations.
Creativity is a key feature of Markovic's prescription for man, though there are others. He thinks that the various capacities of humans which are to be considered essential and most valuable include:

A Capacity for Creative Activity, one which does not invariably repeat the same form but introduces novelties. Modern industrial society is inconceivable without this faculty; however, it favors its one-sided actualization toward increasing efficiency and success at the market. In modern industrial production of commodities, the producers are condemned to a complete uniformity and a renunciation of all creative impulses.32

Markovic's emphasis on creativity is a clear example of the difference between his approach and that of Rousseau. For Rousseau, an individual with relatively great potential for creativity, though it goes undeveloped, and who lives the simple communal life of the rousseauian state, has achieved the best life possible for him. He is in no sense worse off than an individual who lacks his potential, but shares his non-progressive yet harmonious existence. Where Markovic views the pursuit of creativity as an important criterion of the good life, Rousseau saw in it a definite threat to the peace and stability of society.

The Political Procedures and Institutions Necessary to Solve the Problem

Obviously both Rousseau and Markovic want to rid society of the capitalist system, though Rousseau would destroy it while Markovic would transform it into a form of socialism.33 Yet the particular institutions and procedures they see as necessary to their respective ends are quite similar. On both accounts it is necessary to prevent a monopoly of power in the hands of any individual or group.34 They agree that such a monopoly must be prevented in the political as well
as in the economic sphere. Rousseau argued that it was necessary to prevent partial associations of any kind in the political arena, and particularly to outlaw political parties. With respect to this last recommendation, Markovic concurs:

The existence of political parties is not a necessary condition of democracy, and they should be gradually replaced by various forms of direct democracy, at least to the extent to which it is possible in very large communities.35

Rousseau also desired the elimination of professional magistrates, so that no one would be able to make a career in government employment. This was to prevent the arising of a special class whose interests would conflict with the general will. Again we find that Markovic embraces the same recommendation:

The abolition of politics as a profession which enables a social group permanently to control social operations, and the abolition of bureaucracy as a privileged elite is the second decisive step. Each is a necessary condition of radical humanization, but only both taken together constitute its sufficient condition.36

There is fairly close agreement between the two with respect to how the society is to run without professional politicians and bureaucrats. Both have faith in the ability of ordinary citizens to make whatever decisions are necessary and to see that they are carried out. We have seen that Rousseau's belief in the wisdom of the common man provides the foundation for the primary decision procedure in the rousseauian society, for it is the common man who, left to his own powers of reason, is to make the major legislative decisions in the all-important assembly of the people. Markovic thought that while the ordinary citizen has not always had the ability to govern his own society, he has that ability in the more developed countries of our day.
For the first time in history it becomes clear that in the social division of work there is no need for a special profession of people who decide and rule in the name of others. Bureaucracy as an independent alienated, political subject becomes redundant.37

The major difference between these recommendations is that Rousseau would carry them to an extreme Markovic would reject. For Rousseau the goal was to eliminate as much as possible any form of government by producing a situation in which the areas usually requiring governmental functions are eliminated, e.g., the abolition of commerce. On Markovic's view, it is not so much that the areas themselves are to be done away with, but rather than regulation of those areas is to be transferred from the government to the people.

The purpose of this comparison of Rousseau and Markovic is (1) to establish the rousseauian features of Markovic's theory, and (2) to reveal the differences in perspective which run through every level of their thought. In particular I hope to have shown that Rousseau would reject Markovic's society, and the reasons for this rejection.

The discussion of Rousseau and Markovic has provided the basis for a more general conclusion: that Rousseau's thought differs from the two most important political traditions of our day, Marxism and capitalism, for the same reasons that his thought differs from that of Markovic in particular. The first step in establishing this conclusion is relatively simple. Markovic is, of course, a Marxist. He does disagree in certain respects with other Marxists; for example, he rejected Lenin's view that elitism in the form of the communist party was necessary to produce the transition from capitalism to communism. He also disagrees with Marx himself on the nature of man. According to
Markovic, the early Marx thought that the dark side of man was socially acquired, and so not an inherent part of human nature.

A careful study of Marx's early anthropological writings leads to the conclusion that evil is excluded from his concepts of human essence and human nature and referred to a historically transient phase of alienation. As long as private property still exists, and relations among men are still dominated by selfishness, greed, envy, and aggression, man is alienated from his essence. These negative features of empirical man--such as they have existed so far in history--are not part of human nature; as long as they characterize human relations man is not truly human. 38

For Markovic, none of the contradictory aspects of man, those that are to be called 'good' and those that are to be called 'bad', are more basic than any others. None of them can be eliminated as potentials that man has, and so it is inappropriate to classify the 'good' characteristics as essential features of human nature, and not also classify the 'bad' the same way. On Markovic's view, "man is neither good nor bad". 39

Such differences are not important for the conclusion I wish to draw. Markovic shares with all Marxists the ideal of a society in which men can develop their latent abilities to the fullest. Common to all Marxist theories is the criticism of any form of society which does not promote individual development for the majority of the people, and this is enough to show that Rousseau cannot be considered a pre-Marxist philosopher.

The second step is to extend such reasoning to the difference between Rousseau's thought and the capitalist tradition. The capitalist tradition also accepts the notion that the goal of legitimate society includes the achievement of individual potential, although this gets
unpacked in quite different terms from the Marxist version. A standard ideal of capitalist societies is that every individual has the opportunity to go as far as his abilities can take him. A common argument among supporters of capitalism is that free enterprise allows one to achieve as high a standard of living as possible and that this frees one to develop in any way which does not harm others. This ideal is observed in the operations of some laws of capitalist countries, e.g., equal opportunity laws and the construction of educational systems which, at least in theory, allow any individual the possibility of unlimited education and learning. The major forerunners of this tradition, especially Mill, incorporated freedom for individual development as a central thesis of their political writings. The same is true for modern proponents of capitalism such as Robert Nozick and John Rawls. In fact, Rawls makes this thesis the central theme of his work. In *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls argues that the principles of justice under which society is to function must allow each individual to formulate his own conception of what is good, and to allow him to pursue his system of values to any degree short of violating the equal opportunity of all others to pursue their own conceptions of the good. John Plamenatz makes this same point in comparing Rousseau and Mill.

He [Rousseau] had almost as strong a preference for flatness and the commonplace as Mill had for variety and excellence. He praised virtue often and intelligence seldom, and even said that where there is virtue there is no need of talent.  

The point here is that although there are fundamental differences between the Marxist and capitalist conceptions of individual development and what is required for that development (and even differences
among those of the same school of thought), both conceptions are opposed to Rousseau's view of the good life for man as one of a static non-developing simplicity. From Rousseau's point of view, the capitalist and Marxist traditions are different approaches to the development of what will inevitably be an unjust society. Rousseau cannot be put into either tradition, because they are attempts to solve a problem—namely, what society is best suited to man's individual development—which is a problem Rousseau did not accept as the central concern for political theory.

In the next section I shall extend and defend this thesis further. It might be argued that while Rousseau was not a proto-Marxist, in a broader sense he was a collectivist, for he opposed the individualism on which the liberal democratic tradition is based.

Was Rousseau a Collectivist?

This issue of whether Rousseau's political philosophy is collectivist or individualist crops up throughout the literature on Rousseau. Moreover, the arguments take a variety of forms. I shall not discuss all the various arguments, for what I have to say on the subject is essentially the same no matter the form of the argument.

One proponent of the view that Rousseau's political philosophy is essentially collectivist is Kennedy F. Roche. In *Rousseau: Stoic and Romantic*, Roche shows that Rousseau describes one form of education for Emile, and quite a different brand of education for the individual who is to become a citizen according to the Social Contract. The essential difference, as seen by Roche, is that in *Emile* "perfection is attained
by the individual and through the individual" and in the Social Contract perfection is attained "by the collectivity and through the collectivity". According to Roche, men who are to join Rousseau's civil society must be educated to:

lose themselves in a collectivity which would ensure automatic and effortless compliance with the recta ratio or the dictates of uncorrupted instinct, which are the same thing; this is the General Will of the ideal State.

Since it is the Social Contract and not Emile which is to provide the political framework for man, the political theory of Rousseau is collectivist.

Other commentators have focused on the fact that Rousseau expounds two different education systems. Some, for example Vaughn, came to the conclusion that there was a gradual transition in Rousseau's thought from individualism to collectivism. Others, such as Roger Masters, believe this difference indicates an 'unavoidable conflict' in his teachings which signify an internal inconsistency in his thought. These interpretations focus on a central problem—whether Rousseau was at heart an individualist or collectivist.

This problem is addressed from a different perspective by Judith Shklar. Shklar argues that although there is an inconsistency between the individualist and collectivist aspects of Rousseau's thought, this inconsistency is not important. Through extensive investigation of Rousseau's works, Shklar discovers that Rousseau presents to us two models of the good life, which she calls the models of "Sparta" and "The Age of Gold."
The model of Sparta exemplifies the "active, soldierly life" and is used by Rousseau as "the most perfect model of public service". According to Shklar, the model of Sparta is meant to capture the ideal of Rousseau's citizen, for here, as in no other form of social endeavor, the individual loses his personal identity and becomes part of a purposive social unit.

The Age of Gold model, in contrast, praises the happy family life of the quiet isolated village. When using this model, Rousseau was praising the simplicity of life in its 'utopian innocence', a life not possible in other circumstances. This model, Shklar argues, is the more attractive, for here self-love leads effortlessly to love of humanity. However, the end result is a life which is not only 'dull and isolated', but one which "precludes the wish to develop civic capacities and to belong to a purposive order".

These two models are clearly incompatible. The Age of Gold represents an individualism which Rousseau never fully renounced, while the model of Sparta represents the collectivism he found necessary for his political philosophy. Shklar's solution to the problem of the conflicting tendencies in Rousseau's thought is to argue that there is really no problem in his endorsing both models, and thereby endorsing both individualism and collectivism. Her reasoning is that both models are meant to capture different aspects of the good life as purely an ideal. On her view, Rousseau's political philosophy was never meant to be a practical plan for man which could actually be implemented. Each model is used by Rousseau to provide a criticism of existing civilization. One of the models provides an appropriate and useful contrast
by which to criticize certain aspects of modern civilization, and the other model performs this function with respect to other aspects of modern society. According to Shklar, we must view his work as a critical yardstick by which to evaluate and, hopefully, prevent future abuses. On this view, the Social Contract is not a constructive guideline for society, but merely a "book of warnings". Shklar thinks that Rousseau, by his use of these two incompatible models, meant to present man with a personal choice, "to be men or to be citizens", but did not himself believe there was a way to make the choices compatible.

The focal point of Shklar's treatment of Rousseau's philosophy is her assertion that Rousseau meant to present us with a choice--either to be "men", individuals like Emile, or to be "citizens", the patriot soldiers of the collective. My position is that there is confusion attending such readings as Roche and Shklar give to Rousseau's work. I shall attempt to clear up this confusion in what follows.

Some of the confusion is relatively easy to resolve. I have argued that the education of Emile and that of the citizen are different precisely because Emile was not, on Rousseau's account, the model of the citizen of legitimate society. Emile was to be trained to live the best possible life for a 'natural' man in an 'unnatural' and illegitimate society, while the citizen was to be trained for the most 'natural' life in a legitimate society. Since Emile and the citizen are to live in different environments, what is proper for the one, with respect to his attitude toward society and his relationships with others, is not proper for the other.
Once we understand this, we can see the confusion in the argument of critics such as Roger Masters who base their conclusions on an observed tension between Rousseau's views on the correct attitudes and virtues for Emile and Rousseau's teachings with respect to the psychology of the citizen. The same kind of reply can be given to Shklar's arguments.

It is true, as Shklar argues, that Rousseau makes use of two quite opposed models of the good life. Yet the model of the Age of Gold is not a model for political society. Rather it is a model for a very small community without government, in fact a decidedly non-political community. The ideal of the model of Sparta is the appropriate model when discussing Rousseau's political system. Yet even here the model must not be taken as a perfect reflection of Rousseau's legitimate society. Rousseau used this model to underline the proper attitude of the citizens with respect to their formal relationship to the community as a whole, as Shklar herself notes.

The point here is that the extreme militarism of the individual in the model of Sparta is appropriate to reveal the necessary loyalty of the individual to the community if the community is to maintain its legitimacy. The model of the Age of Gold reveals the self-dependency which is necessary for the good life of those who are unable to rely on the community for justice and support.

In using the model of Sparta Rousseau was praising the spirit of the Spartan, not his life in all its various aspects. The new citizen is to be educated to realize that his primary duty is love of country, and for this the spirit of Sparta is an excellent model. In fact, the
patriot of this model would actually live as a 'warrior-citizen' only when his society is threatened from the outside, a condition Rousseau believed would not frequently be encountered.

To this point I have attempted to show that some of the confusion concerning individualism versus collectivism in Rousseau results from failing to distinguish those passages in which Rousseau was discussing that part of his science of man which bore directly on political organization and the possibilities of political life from passages in which he was dealing with other parts of the science of man. Admittedly, it is not always easy to make such distinctions, for Rousseau often ran discussions of various topics together. It is clear, though, that not everything Rousseau wrote was meant as somehow a part of, or an implication of, the principles enunciated in the Social Contract.

However, even though some of the confusion is cleared up by the above, the central issue of individualism versus collectivism in Rousseau remains. My own view is that this issue will never be completely resolved. I think both tendencies exist in Rousseau's thought, but that neither the modern individualist nor the modern collectivist could wholeheartedly embrace Rousseau's views. The reason, I argue, is that the anti-progressive nature of Rousseau's solution has the effect of eliminating much of the tension between the collectivist and individualist tendencies, but at the cost of setting Rousseau's thought against part of the positive doctrine of both individualism and collectivism.

I shall begin my argument with a set of terms and definitions borrowed from Donald McIntosh which provide a satisfactory framework in which to develop my argument. I hope that it will become apparent that
my reasoning establishes a central difference between Rousseau's concerns and those of modern political philosophy, whether or not the particular conceptual apparatus is accepted.

Following McIntosh, I shall first distinguish between two broadly depicted types of de jure authority. 55 On the one hand, there is political authority, in which the official government has the right to regulate society and its members through the established mechanisms of positive law and its enforcement. On the other hand, there is social authority, in which the right to regulate is a right of the social body as a whole. Social authority operates through (1) the 'unofficial' control of public opinion, (2) the manners and customs accepted within the society, and (3) ostracism and the like. The major difference between the two is that, unlike political authority, social authority does not imply the legitimate use of physical or legal coercion or the power of corporal punishment. (Most modern societies incorporate both types of authority as legitimate.)

Again following McIntosh, I shall define 'individualism' as the thesis that "there ought to be some area of privacy where the individual is not regulated by either social or political authority". 56 One denial of this thesis is the view that political authority extends to every area of the individual's life, so that there is no "area of privacy" not regulated by political authority. This, according to McIntosh, is authoritarianism. 57 Another denial of the individualist thesis so defined is collectivism. 58 The collectivist thesis is that social authority extends to every area of the individual's life, so that there is no "area of privacy" not regulated by social authority.
It might be argued that on these definitions Rousseau must be considered an individualist, since he allows the individual the final say as to whether to stay in society. Thus there is an area of privacy not regulated, namely the decision to accept or reject the authority of society.

This would be a weak defense of Rousseau's individualism. There is probably no society which does not reserve some area of privacy to the individual, even if it is only the choice of the wine one drinks, or the choice of one's mate. The real concern is the effective control of the more important decisions and actions of the individual. It is all well and good to say that the individual has the right to abandon his family and friends, that he may leave his native country and most likely abandon all his possessions, but in a real sense this is not much of a privilege. For example, in the rousseauian state the individual will have been trained from birth to love his country, honor his duty, fear foreign influence, and look down on other ways of life. Here the de jure right to leave society is in a de facto sense regulated by the social and psychological control of his beliefs, attitudes, and desires. Thus the mere existence of an 'area of privacy' is not enough to classify the social arrangement as individualist. In Rousseau's case the extreme social regulation of the habits, manners, and morals is a strong argument for his collectivism.

A stronger argument for the individualism of Rousseau is the necessary condition that 'each obey himself alone', which is effectively guaranteed, on Rousseau's account, by the special conditions of the voting situation. The individual, independent of government and social
propaganda, is to vote his own reasoned opinion as to the general will. The general will is to be found, not by the steamroller effect of developing common consensus, but rather by the common sense of the individuals reasoning in isolation from the typical collectivist influences.

Rousseau's citizen, on my interpretation, does not have to decide complex issues and does not have to rely on 'experts' of any kind in making his decisions, for the choices are simple and the criterion he is to use is straightforward—namely, what will maintain the rousseauian state. Moreover, the participation in this process is both a sacred right of the individual and a necessary condition for the maintenance of legitimate society. Were the individual to accept the judgments of others, whether political or social leaders, he would thereby be violating the conditions of the initial compact.

As we can see, there are strong arguments on both sides. The true concern here is whether Rousseau's solution is collectivist or individualist in a de facto sense, since either side may cite passages which would indicate, in a de jure sense, that the other is wrong.

A common concern of collectivist views is that a great amount of social control is necessary to prevent the inequalities and abuses which typically exist in individualist societies. The most obvious example here is Marx's critique of capitalism. The collectivist thesis is based upon the fear that if individuals are too little regulated by the collective, then some individuals will gain de facto authority at the expense of the good of the majority of individuals. The remedy is to regulate the life of the individual to guarantee that his actions
are consistent with the espoused social goals.

The individualist fears the power of the collective, seeing in it a threat to the security and well-being of the individual whose talents and abilities are sacrificed to the 'common good'. The individualist is opposed to what he sees as the enforced limitation and leveling of the individual's life to the extent that the individual has little real control over his destiny. This, for example, is the objection of G.H. Sabine.

Rousseau's tradition flattened individuals into a likeness of kind. But likeness of kind carries no implication of spontaneous, active, and contributing membership in a social community which is certainly what the individualist intended that liberty should mean.59

The remedy, for the individualist, is to limit the areas in which regulation is permitted.

Rousseau, in fact, shared the fears of both the individualist and the collectivist. This is why the rousseauian state must have exactly the characteristics it has, for it is only in the rousseauian state that both fears can be allayed. These conditions prevent the development of inequalities by limiting the opportunity for such through the establishment of an essentially collectivist society. Yet the fear that the individual will be sacrificed to the collective good is allayed by limiting the decisions of the collective to the true interest and true will of the individual. This is possible, I have argued, because in the rousseauian state the individual can see for himself what is appropriate, and does not need to be guided toward some future ideal. The fear of the modern individualist that in a collective the individual loses self-determination is resolved because, as McIntosh
suggests,

If everyone wills the same thing, then authority is reconciled with individualism. With the establishment of such a general will, power and coercion disappear, for where there is no conflict there is no power, and coercion is not needed to compel what one has already willed.60

Neither the modern individualist nor the modern collectivist could accept Rousseau's version of legitimate civil society. Rousseau's view that the appropriate life for man involves a severe limitation on the extent to which he develops his 'perfectibility' is not a modern view. Moreover, it is somewhat irrelevant, for such stoicism is not a realistic political goal in the context of modern technological society, and thus cannot be an acceptable solution for theorists concerned with solving modern problems. Individualism and collectivism are modern concepts which arise in the framework of questions concerning the proper direction for progressive societies, and thus it is misleading to use those concepts in the framework in which Rousseau was working.

Evaluation of Rousseau's Political Philosophy

The previous two sections showed that Rousseau cannot be considered a modern political philosopher. Yet it would be a mistake to conclude that he was a throwback to an earlier age of philosophy. His acceptance of an essentially mechanistic universe and his empirical 'science of man' are decidedly modern. Rousseau, after all, was a contractarian, following directly in the path of two of the principal founders of modern political philosophy, Hobbes and Locke. It was not so much Rousseau's approach to political philosophy which separates
him from what comes later, but rather his unusual application of it.

What we find, then, is that Rousseau holds a unique position in the history of thought, rejecting the methodology and world view of the classic philosophers while embracing the ancient notions of virtue and civic duty, which he tried to reestablish with modern science. The wisdom of Plato, Plutarch, and Seneca was to be given new foundations and new life. Yet here again, Rousseau's view of man is strictly his own. While he praised the ancients for their virtue and simplicity, they would no more than modern philosophers accept Rousseau's ideal man as one who must refuse to develop the talents he was born with, and who must be contented with the pastoral tranquility Rousseau prescribes.

In the final analysis, the uniqueness of Rousseau's philosophy requires that we evaluate his work within the framework he established. In regards to this, the two most important features of his thought are the limited applicability of his political principles and his rejection of individual development as a desirable criterion of the good life.

The inherent limitation of Rousseau's solution renders it viable for only a small minority of the earth's population. Given present economic conditions and for existing political realities, it is unrealistic to suppose that the present world could be transformed into a large number of rousseauian states. Recall that Rousseau believed that in his time only one country in all Europe--Corsica--was adapted to his system. Other countries might, like Poland, be gradually transformed to the point that they also could be adapted. However,
the measures necessary for such evolution—e.g., isolationism and the
division of the large countries into small 'sub-countries'—proved
unrealistic; witness Rousseau's abandonment of the project for Poland.
And what was true in that time before the great industrial revolution
is even more true today. Thus we must conclude that Rousseau's solu-
tion is not of much help to modern states.

A second important feature of Rousseau's thought is the anti-
progressive nature of his solution. Rousseau's citizens are to de-
velop their talents and abilities only insofar as they are necessary
to produce the harmonious balance within the individual, and within the
society as a whole. Rousseau, I believe, would have us reject the
emergence of nations into the modern technological era of the twenti-
eeth century.

Rousseau's recommendation that pursuit of intellectual achieve-
ment be severely restricted would have enormous consequences for
modern civilization. To cite just a few examples, progress in medi-
cine, psychology, and agriculture would be at least slowed to a crawl,
if not stopped altogether. Consider the consequences if Rousseau's
theories had been adopted during his time. Major advances in high-
yield crops, basic health care and immunization would not have come
about because they could not occur without complex effort, and without
individuals developing their intellectual capabilities. This is not
to mention less obvious, but arguably as important, advances in tech-
ology and science which have produced new methods of transportation
and communication, information processing and other benefits. Of course,
it might be argued that there have been harmful effects as well. It
could be suggested that the dangers of nuclear warfare, environmental pollution, etc., outweigh any advantages gained in other areas, and that the world would have been a better place without progress of this kind. I believe it would be very hard to provide a convincing argument here. Note that it is not enough to argue that the disadvantages resulting from the pursuit of abilities not required for a rousseauian balance outweigh the advantages gained (itself no easy task).

One would also need to show that this result is an inevitable effect of intellectual progress. Otherwise there is an obvious reply--namely, that it isn't intellectual progress which is harmful, it is what men have done with the results of intellectual progress. For example, it could be argued that research into the atomic and subatomic regions of matter is not harmful per se, but harmful only when men use the knowledge gained to build bombs and unsafe nuclear reactors. In short, the 'anti-progress' argument required to resurrect Rousseau would appear implausible at best.

Moreover, this is all somewhat beside the point as far as modern political theory is concerned. We do have the results of progress before us. Such developments as nuclear research and computer technology will not disappear. The question for modern political theory is "Where do we go from here?". Clearly the rousseauian alternative is not acceptable. Among other things, an attempt to implement the Social Contract today would require the curtailment of the work of literally millions of individuals who are engaged in or support research in physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, sociology, economics, and other fields. It would require a revamping of virtually every major modern
country to do away with the growth-oriented economics which currently underlies their socio-political structure. To say the adoption of Rousseau's political model is impractical is an understatement. Moreover, many philosophers would argue that even if such a retrogression were possible, it would not be desirable: As we shall see below, it is just this point that produces a fundamental limit on attempts to interpret Rousseau in modern terms.

Of course, Rousseau's claim that the rousseauian state is the proper society for man is the end of a long and detailed chain of arguments. An important question to be addressed is whether Rousseau's arguments provide justification for his solutions to the problems of man. The answer to this question, I believe, is clearly "No". As noted earlier, Rousseau's 'science of man' is flawed. His thesis that all life is meant by nature to exemplify a natural balance of abilities-needs-desires is an erroneous view of biology. His anthropology is also mistaken. According to current theories of anthropology, there seems to have been no time in man's evolution in which he existed as a solitary wanderer. Rather the best evidence indicates that man was always a social creature. Rousseau's original man never existed. This casts doubts on the accuracy of Rousseau's description of the beginnings of the 'artificial' desires such as dominance, competition, and envy.

This same conclusion can be obtained in discussing that part of Rousseau's psychology which addresses the fundamental desires and drives of man. According to Rousseau, if we could strip away from man the effects of his social environment, we would see that man is
naturally neither egoistic nor competitive, and that jealousy, greed, and the like are foreign to the fundamental psychology of man. Yet this is at best a dubious thesis. Modern work in child development strongly suggests that competition in the form of sibling rivalry, ego­ism, and a self-centered view of the world are inherent features of the species, rather than merely socially acquired.61

Yet it is just these central theses of biology, anthropology, and psychology which allow Rousseau to argue that his solution is necessary. His solution, remember, is to strip man of the 'artificial' and corrupt desires through social and political organization. In this way man would 'return' to his natural harmony and balance, and his 'natural' goodness. Given that Rousseau's science of man is erroneous, he cannot convincingly argue that such social and political organization is necessary.

This leads us back to the question of applicability. It might be argued that even though it is not necessary for man, the rousseauian state is a possible alternative, at least for a small portion of mankind. This is true, but with certain qualifications. In a general sense the rousseauian state must be considered possible, but only in rare circumstances, such as the formation of a small community which isolates itself from the general population of the world. In fact, the rousseauian state has had historical counterparts, at least in regards to its general features. There have been isolated agrarian communities which might fit the rousseauian model. Yet these communities are only approximations of the rousseauian state. It is highly unlikely, for example, that any of them would incorporate Rousseau's majority
vote procedure. However, the general features and peaceful agrarian lifestyle, it might be argued, are those Rousseau recommended.

The major qualifications on an affirmative answer to the question of possibility have to do with the psychology of Rousseau's citizen. Rousseau believed that in a properly constituted society individuals would not seek progressive change. Yet in actual societies which might be considered as roughly equivalent to the rousseauian state this does not appear to be the case. It is a familiar argument that when a more 'backward' civilization comes into contact with a more 'advanced' civilization, the former become attracted to the advantages and conveniences of the latter. In fact, many anthropologists argue that the investigator must be extremely careful not to expose his subjects to the invariably corrupting influences of modern societies. The fear, in rousseauian terms, is that whatever natural harmony and balance exists in the subject culture is too fragile to withstand exposure to new ideas. In short, individuals in seemingly rousseauian societies are 'natural' only to the extent of their ignorance. It would seem that those societies are rousseauian by accident and not by inclination; and that the individuals of those societies are anti-progressive only because of a lack of opportunity to be progressive.

Perhaps the rousseauian state could find a closer parallel in some of the communes which have sprung up throughout history. Here individuals group together for the express purpose of constructing a 'new' type of social organization. Arguably some of these communes address the same concerns which Rousseau considered. Possibly some of the solutions presented are quite similar, and certain of the communes
might possibly match the conditions Rousseau specifies. At least it is conceivable that the rousseauian state could be a viable community. One gets the impression, however, that the life of Rousseau's citizen is an alternative for man, but is not one most men would accept. Rousseau's belief that if men were truly free they would accept and strive for the rousseauian state is not sufficiently argued. In fact his own empirical science of man could be used to argue for the opposite conclusion. Consider that no creature other than man, on Rousseau's account, leads an unnatural life, because none of them has the capability to do so. As it turns out, the only creature capable of rejecting the natural balance, universally does so given the opportunity. Rousseau argued that it is the causal factors in the environment which sway man's choice, but he does not show that a free man, given the choice of life in a rousseauian state would not reject that choice in favor of a life in which he could more fully develop his natural abilities. Thus the evidence of Rousseau's own science does not support the claim that man is psychologically predisposed to the natural balance which is, on Rousseau's account, his proper life. Thus I conclude that the rousseauian state is a possibility in its general features, but is unrealistic with regards to the psychology of the individual citizen.

I have argued that Rousseau's solution to the problem of social man are unrealistic and can offer little aid to modern political thinkers. I have also tried to show that Rousseau cannot be viewed as the forerunner of any modern political tradition without doing an injustice to his thought. Assuming that I am correct on these points, one might naturally wonder why we should trouble ourselves with reading Rousseau.
It might be suggested that, aside from those with a special interest in the history of philosophy, we should no longer concern ourselves with Rousseau when engaging in political philosophy.

I believe this would be a mistake, on the grounds that we can learn much about doing political philosophy from Rousseau, even though we might not get final answers from him. Judith Shklar states this point well:

To have read Rousseau with some care is to have thought about all that is most relevant to political philosophy and to intellectual imagination in general.63

I think that Shklar's point is well established in my work by the wide range of subjects I have had to discuss in order to present an interpretation of Rousseau. I have had to discuss subjects as diverse as principles of biology, the relationship of religion and state, social psychology, anthropology, natural law theory, the relationship of individual and state, human nature and the proper end of human societies, the role of reason in human affairs, and other topics. According to my view, it is necessary to discover Rousseau's thoughts on all these subjects, because Rousseau's solution depends on a unification of all that is relevant to human affairs.

The study of Rousseau forces us to consider the relationships among numerous concepts and issues in political philosophy. As Shklar argues,

The scope of his theory, therefore, demands that all its aspects be studied without allowing later categories of thought to cut out what was essential for him. There is, moreover, a judgment here also. For surely Rousseau is so penetrating and convincing because this was so comprehensive a structure of ideas about man and society.64

Because of the extensive range of his thought, the study of Rousseau's
work can provide a valuable setting for the comparative study of modern political philosophers and modern political issues. In revealing the manner and extent to which various theories reject Rousseau's analysis of the human situation, it is possible to uncover the central issues of disagreement among them. For example, one can provide an interesting contrast between the Marxist and capitalist conceptions of human nature, by showing the difference between their respective views and Rousseau's theory. I do not claim that the study of Rousseau is in any sense necessary for doing modern political theory, just that it provides an interesting and historically logical starting point.

Whether or not my suggestion is accepted, Shklar's conclusion remains. If an introduction to the complexities of political philosophy is desired, and if one wishes to see what kind of work must be done to bring into one theory all that must be discussed in providing a complete political philosophy, I can think of no better introduction than Rousseau's political philosophy.
FOOTNOTES

1 All references to Plato will be taken from Plato's Republic, trans. G.M.A. Grube, Hackett Publishing Co., 1974, Indianapolis. To establish the points I wish to present here, it is sufficient to provide a brief overview of Plato's thought.


3 Ibid., Book IV, 422-423, pp. 89-91.

4 Ibid., Books VI and VII, which contain the famous metaphors of The Sun, The Line, and The Cave.

5 Ibid., Book II, 372, p. 43.

6 Ibid., Book II, 373, p. 43.

7 Ibid., Book IX, in which Plato details various forms of abuse of government and the ways that having the wrong rulers can yield harm to society.

8 Ibid., Book IV, 428, p. 94.


10 Alfred Cobban, Rousseau and the Modern State, p. 78.

11 Lucio Colletti, From Rousseau to Lenin, p. 185.


13 Alfred Cobban, Rousseau and the Modern State, p. 31.


16 Mihailo Markovic, From Affluence to Praxis, p. 196.

17 Ibid., p. 25.

18 See my discussion in Chapter One.

19 Markovic, pp. 75-76.

20 I have discussed these views earlier; see Chapter One.

21 Markovic, p. 74.

22 Ibid., pp. 24-25.

23 Ibid., p. 16.


26 Plamenatz, p. 384.

27 Markovic, p. 257, footnote 27.

28 Ibid., p. 220.

29 Ibid., p. 224.

30 Ibid., p. 71.

31 Ibid., pp. 224-225.


33 Ibid., p. 144.

34 Ibid., p. 79.


36 Ibid., p. 81.

37 Ibid., p. 231.

38 Markovic, p. 218.

39 Ibid., p. 221.

40 Plamenatz, p. 438.
42 Ibid.
43 C.E. Vaughn, *The Political Writings of Rousseau*, Vol. 1, Chapter IV.
46 Ibid., p. 40.
47 Ibid., pp. 33-34.
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid., p. 37.
52 Plamenatz, for one, sees this clearly. "To be able to live the good life, to attain the proper balance of their faculties and passions, men must either live in the right kind of society or else be made by education immune from the corruptions of corrupt society", p. 385.
55 Ibid., pp. 257-258.
56 Ibid., p. 259.
57 Ibid.
58 Ibid.
60 McIntosh, p. 250.

62 John Plamenatz believes that the Paris Commune of 1871 was very close to Rousseau's ideal. cf. *The Revolutionary Movement in France 1815-71*, p. xi.


64 Ibid., p. 225.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


