

Geneva's Jean-Jacques Rousseau
Resources Directory

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	<p>AEON</p> <p>Settling accounts</p> <p>https://aeon.co/essays/inequality-was-a-feminist-idea-before-it-was-rousseaus</p> <p>Before he was famous, Jean-Jacques Rousseau was Louise Dupin's scribe. It's her ideas on inequality that fill his writings.</p> <p>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louise_Marie_Madeleine_Fontaine</p> <p>She also practiced philanthropy. A staunch feminist, Louise demanded education for women and access to public office and professions that until then had been the exclusive preserve of men.</p> <p>Subsequently, the Dupins taken Jean-Jacques Rousseau as secretary after their return from Venice in 1745, when he is not yet a writer and for a modest salary. His job was to take notes and research for the book projected by Madame Dupin, namely <i>the defense of women in the 18th century are discussed in minor ... until they died</i>. Madame Dupin stood Rousseau almost to a subordinate or, in the words of Grimm and Marmontel, she gives him leave the day it receives academicians. Jean-Jacques Rousseau feels bitterness after leaving his job as a secretary in 1751, but will always keep good relations with the Dupin family.</p> <p>Madame Dupin provides financial support to his wife, Marie-Thérèse Levasseur, who gave birth to five children abandoned by Rousseau to the Foundling Hospital.</p> <p>On 10 August 1792, the people seized the Tuileries Palace. Three years before, the French Revolution had begun, but 10 August 1792 marked the end of the monarchy with the arrest of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. France has been at war since 20 April, and Paris was threatened by Prussian armies after the Brunswick Manifesto on 25</p>

July. Massacres are perpetrated in Parisian prisons in early September. Louise Dupin decided to leave Paris for Chenonceau.

On the equality of men and women, a book wrote by Madame Dupin with a real commitment to feminism. With the defense of the cause of women, an area that is close to her heart, she challenged the reasoning of Montesquieu, who exhibits on his works a clear misogyny (is believed that in fact the hate of Montesquieu to women was caused by jealousy to Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the rejection of Madame Dupin to his advances, and for this conflict he attacked Claude Dupin in his work [The Spirit of the Laws](#)^[51]). This book of 1,200 pages, written with the help of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, was unfortunately never published. Is uncertain why Madame Dupin renounced to the idea of her book could be known after years of work; probably because, despite being a salon-holder in the middle of the 18th century, she didn't have the complete freedom to publish this type of material. Olivier Marchal, author of two books about Jean-Jacques Rousseau, supports this explanation:^[52]

Like [Madame Geoffrin](#) and even [Louise d'Epinau](#), Louise Dupin also waives to any claim of her *beautiful spirit*. She therefore decided not to publish, and none of her works will appear in her lifetime. At that time, that is often described as feminist, women will be inevitably exposes to the ridicule when dares to compete with men in the most serious areas. For not having understood (or accepted?), Madame du Châtelet (who translated Newton into French), was the subject of the worst mockeries. Less emancipated, Louise Dupin finally agreed to stick into her role: that of one of the most notable salon-holders of her time.

Delphi Collected Works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau
(Illustrated) (Delphi Series Eight Book 18) . [Delphi Classics.](#)
[Kindle Edition.](#)

Social Contract

The Social Contract, Or Principles of Political Right was first published in France in April 1762. As with *Émile*, The Social Contract was banned and burned in both Paris and Geneva due to its chapter called ‘The Civil Religion’, which offended Protestant and Catholic authorities. Rousseau was distressed and appalled by the Genevan reaction to The Social Contract and *Émile* and he responded by renouncing his citizenship and writing two defences of his banned works.

The central concept and greatest contribution to political philosophy that Rousseau establishes in the work is the notion of the ‘**General Will**’, which is the **collectively held will of the whole people uniting individuals in a common good**. Individuals possess ‘particular’ wills which may cause them to come into conflict with their fellow citizens and threaten the common good, but **the general will is always driven towards the common good**. Rousseau argues that **it is the expression of the general will by the people as a whole that is sovereign**.

“Sovereignty is the exercise of the general will.”

Philosophically, Rousseau’s doctrine finds its expression in the view that the State is based not on any original convention, not on, any determinate power, but on the living and sustaining rational will of its members. We have now to examine first Sovereignty and then the General Will, which is ultimately Rousseau’s guiding conception. Sovereignty is, first and foremost, a legal term, and it has often been held that its use in political philosophy merely leads to confusion. In jurisprudence, we are told, it has the perfectly plain meaning given to it

in Austin's famous definition. The Sovereign is "a determinate human superior, not in a habit of obedience to a like superior, but receiving habitual obedience from the bulk of a given society."

Sovereignty, on the other hand, is in his view absolute, inalienable, indivisible, and indestructible. It cannot be limited, abandoned, shared or destroyed. It is an essential part of all social life that the right to control the destinies of the State belongs in the last resort to the whole people.

He substitutes for the co-ordination of the legislative, the executive, and the judicial authorities, a system in which the legislative power, or Sovereign, is always supreme, the executive, or government, always secondary and derivative, and the judicial power merely a function of government. This division he makes, naturally, one of will and power. The government is merely to carry out the decrees, or acts of will, of the Sovereign people. Just as the human will transfers a command to its members for execution, so the body politic may give its decisions force by setting up authority which, like the brain, may command its members. In delegating the power necessary for the execution of its will, it is abandoning none of its supreme authority. It remains Sovereign, and can at any moment recall the grants it has made. Government, therefore, exists only at the Sovereign's pleasure, and is always revocable by the sovereign will.

First, he rejects representative government; will being, in his theory, inalienable, representative Sovereignty is impossible. But, as he regards all general acts as functions of Sovereignty, this means that no general act can be within the competence of a representative assembly. In judging this theory, we must take into account all the circumstances of

Rousseau's time. France, Geneva and England were the three States he took most into account. In France, representative government was practically non-existent; in Geneva, it was only partially necessary; in England, it was a mockery, used to support a corrupt oligarchy against a debased monarchy.

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Encyclopedia Britannica

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jean-Jacques-Rousseau>

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jean-Jacques-Rousseau/Major-works-of-political-philosophy>

Major works of political philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau



Jean-Jacques Rousseau

As part of what Rousseau called his “reform,” or improvement of his own character, he began to look back at some of the austere principles that he had learned as a child in the Calvinist republic of Geneva. Indeed, he decided to return to that city, repudiate his Catholicism, and seek readmission to the Protestant church. He had in the meantime

acquired a mistress, an illiterate laundry maid named Thérèse Levasseur. To the surprise of his friends, he took her with him to Geneva, presenting her as a nurse. Although her presence caused some murmurings, Rousseau was readmitted easily to the Calvinist communion, his literary fame having made him very welcome to a city that prided itself as much on its [culture](#) as on its [morals](#).

Formative years

1712 Rousseau's mother died in childbirth, and he was brought up by his father, who taught him to believe that the city of his birth was a [republic](#) as splendid as [Sparta](#) or [ancient Rome](#).

Rousseau senior had an equally glorious image of his own importance; after marrying above his modest station as a watchmaker, he got into trouble with the civil authorities by brandishing the sword that his upper-class pretensions prompted him to wear, and he had to leave [Geneva](#) to avoid imprisonment.

1718 Rousseau, the son, then lived for six years as a poor relation in his mother's family, [patronized](#) and humiliated, until he, too, at the **age of 16, 1718** fled from Geneva to live the life of an adventurer and a [Roman Catholic](#) convert in the kingdoms of Sardinia and [France](#).

Rousseau was fortunate in finding in the province of [Savoy](#) a [benefactor](#), the [baroness de Warens](#), who provided him with a refuge in her home and employed him as her [steward](#). She also furthered his education to such a degree that the boy who had arrived on her doorstep as a stammering apprentice who had never been to school developed into a philosopher, a scholar, and a musician.

Mme de Warens, who thus transformed the adventurer into a philosopher, was herself an adventuress—a **Swiss convert to Catholicism** who had stripped her husband of his money before fleeing to Savoy with the gardener's son to set herself up as a Catholic missionary specializing in the conversion of young male Protestants. Her morals distressed Rousseau, even when he became her lover. But she was a woman of taste, intelligence, and energy, who brought out in Rousseau just the talents that were needed to conquer Paris at a time when Voltaire had made radical ideas fashionable.

Rousseau reached Paris when he was 30 and was lucky enough to meet another young man from the provinces seeking literary fame in the capital, Denis Diderot. The two soon became immensely successful as the centre of a group of intellectuals—or philosophes—who gathered round the great French Encyclopédie, of which Diderot was appointed editor. The *Encyclopédie* was an important organ of radical and anticlerical opinion, and its contributors were as much reforming and even iconoclastic pamphleteers as they were philosophers. Rousseau, the most original of them all in his thinking and the most forceful and eloquent in his style of writing, was soon also the most conspicuous.

He wrote music as well as prose, and one of his operas, Le Devin du village (1752; “The Village Soothsayer”), attracted so much admiration from the king (Louis XV) and the court that he might have enjoyed an easy life as a fashionable composer, **but something in his Calvinist blood rejected that type of worldly glory. Indeed, at the age of 37 Rousseau had what he called an “illumination” while walking to Vincennes to visit Diderot, who had been imprisoned there because of his irreligious writings.** In the *Confessions* (1782–89), which he wrote late in life, Rousseau says that it came to him then in a “terrible flash”

that modern progress had corrupted people instead of improving them. He went on to write his first important work, a prize [essay](#) for the Academy of Dijon entitled *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* (1750; [A Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts](#)), in which he argues that the history of human life on earth has been a history of [decay](#).

Throughout his life he kept returning to the thought that people are good by nature but have been corrupted by society and civilization. He did not mean to suggest that society and civilization are inherently bad but rather that both had taken a wrong direction and become more harmful as they became more sophisticated.

Rousseau may well have received the inspiration for that belief from Mme de Warens; for although she had become a communicant of the Roman Catholic Church, she retained—and transmitted to Rousseau—much of the sentimental optimism about human purity that she had herself absorbed as a child from the mystical Protestant [Pietists](#) who were her teachers in the canton of [Bern](#).

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Helena Rosenblatt
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helena_Rosenblatt

<https://www.amazon.com/Rousseau-Geneva-Discourse-Contract-1749-1762-ebook/dp/B001EQ622E/>

Rousseau and Geneva: From the First Discourse to The Social Contract, 1749–1762 (Ideas in Context Book 46) Kindle Edition
by [Helena Rosenblatt](#) (Author) Format: Kindle Edition

Cambridge

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/rousseau-and-geneva/26D02247A377970806CoDA7CC87D7513>

<https://politicalscience.common.gc.cuny.edu/helena-rosenblatt/>

hrosenblatt@gc.cuny.edu

<https://www.gc.cuny.edu/sites/default/files/2021-11/Helena-Rosenblatt-CV.pdf>

Helena Rosenblatt

short CV

Education: Ph. D. in European History, Columbia University, 1994.

Dissertation: “Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Geneva

<https://www.amazon.com/Rousseau-Geneva-Ideas-Context-Rosenblatt/dp/0521033950>

https://www.amazon.com/Rousseau-Geneva-Discourse-Contract-1749-1762-ebook/dp/B001EQ622E/ref=monarch_sidesheet_title

From the First Discourse to The Social Contract, 1749–1762

Rousseau and Geneva reconstructs the main aspects of Genevan socio-economic, political and religious thought in the first half of the eighteenth century. In this way Dr Rosenblatt effectively contextualizes the development of Rousseau's thought from the First Discourse through to the Social Contract. Over time Rousseau has been adopted as a French thinker, but this adoption obscures his

	<p>Genevan origin. Dr Rosenblatt points out that he is, in fact, a Genevan thinker and illustrates that Rousseau's classical republicanism, his version of natural law theory, his civil religion and his hostility to the arguments of doux commerce theorists are all responses to the political use of such arguments in Geneva. The author also points out that it was this relationship with Geneva that played an integral part in his development into an original political thinker.</p>
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	<p>Smith, Stephen</p> <p>https://politicalscience.yale.edu/people/steven-smith</p> <p>He is also the Co-Director of Yale's Center for the Study of Representative Institutions (YSCRI) that focuses on the theory and practice of representative government in the Anglo-American world.</p> <p>18. Democracy and Participation: Rousseau's Discourse https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFY6Kvardnw</p> <p>19. Democracy and Participation: Rousseau's Discourse https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cb3Gdo2QlB8</p> <p>20. Democracy and Participation: Rousseau's Social Contract, I-II https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vPwx8-mFvUs</p>
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	<p>Waller, Lewis 2023.</p> <p>How Switzerland Changed the World</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j537acWOhsY&t=530s</p>

Introduction to Rousseau: The Social Contract

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvjrE5nc4xs>

Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Jacques_Rousseau

Effect on the American Revolution

One of Rousseau's most important American followers was [Noah Webster](#) (1758–1843). In 1785, two years before America's constitutional convention, Webster relied heavily on Rousseau's *Social Contract* while writing *Sketches of American Policy*, one of the earliest, widely published arguments for a strong central government in America. George Washington, James Madison, and likely other founders read it before the convention.^[152] Webster also wrote two "fan-fiction" sequels to Rousseau's *Emile, or On Education* (1762) and included them in his 1785 Reader for schoolchildren. Webster's 1787 Reader, and later Readers, also contain an idealized word-portrait of Sophie, the girl in Rousseau's *Emile*, and Webster used Rousseau's theories in *Emile* to argue for the civic necessity of broad-based female education.^[153]

According to some scholars, Rousseau exercised minimal influence on the [Founding Fathers of the United States](#), despite similarities between their ideas. They shared beliefs regarding the self-evidence

that "all men are created equal," and the conviction that citizens of a republic be educated at public expense. A parallel can be drawn between the United States Constitution's concept of the "general welfare" and Rousseau's concept of the "general will". Further commonalities exist between Jeffersonian democracy and Rousseau's praise of Switzerland and Corsica's economies of isolated and independent homesteads, and his endorsement of a well-regulated civic militia, such as a navy for Corsica,^[120] and the militia of the Swiss cantons.^[154]

However, Will and Ariel Durant have opined that Rousseau had a definite political influence on America. According to them:

The first sign of [Rousseau's] political influence was in the wave of public sympathy that supported active French aid to the American Revolution. Jefferson derived the Declaration of Independence from Rousseau as well as from Locke and Montesquieu. As ambassador to France (1785–89) he absorbed much from both Voltaire and Rousseau...The success of the American Revolution raised the prestige of Rousseau's philosophy.^[155]

Rousseau's writings perhaps had an indirect influence on American literature through the writings of Wordsworth and Kant, whose works were important to the New England transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson, as well as on Unitarians such as theologian William Ellery Channing. American author James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*, and American novels by other

authors reflect republican and egalitarian ideals present alike in Thomas Paine and in English Romantic primitivism.^{[note 12][156]}

WorldHistory.org

https://www.worldhistory.org/timeline/Jean-Jacques_Rousseau/

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) was a Swiss philosopher whose work both praised and criticised the Enlightenment movement. Although a believer in the power of reason, science, and the arts, Rousseau was convinced that a flourishing culture hid a society full of inequalities and injustices. His most noted works include the *First and Second Discourse*, *The Social Contract*, and *Émile*.

- 1712 - 1778

Life of the Swiss philosopher [Jean-Jacques Rousseau](#).

- 28 Jun 1712

[Jean-Jacques Rousseau](#) is born in Geneva, Switzerland.

- 1750

[Jean-Jacques Rousseau](#) publishes his First Discourse.

- 1755

[Jean-Jacques Rousseau](#) publishes his Second Discourse.

- 1761

[Jean-Jacques Rousseau](#) publishes his bestselling novel *Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse*.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1762 Jean-Jacques Rousseau publishes The Social Contract.• 1762 Jean-Jacques Rousseau publishes his treatise on education Émile.• 1770 Jean-Jacques Rousseau publishes his Confessions.• 2 Jul 1778 Jean-Jacques Rousseau dies in Ermononville, France.