

**Rousseau and the Ancients**  
**Rousseau et les Anciens**

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**sous la direction de**

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**Pensée Libre N° 8**

CANADIAN CATALOGING  
IN PUBLICATION DATA

Main entry under title:  
Rousseau and the Ancients  
(Pensée Libre: no. 8)  
Text in French and English  
Includes bibliographical references

ISBN 0-9693132-7-6

1. Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 1712-1778. I. Grant, Ruth. II. Stewart, Philip. III. North American Association for the Study of Jean-Jacques Rousseau IV. Title: Rousseau and the Ancients. V. Series

DONNÉES DE CATALOGAGE  
AVANT LA PUBLICATION

Vedette principale au titre:  
Rousseau et les Anciens  
(Pensée Libre: no. 8)  
Texte en français et en anglais.  
Comprend des références bibliographiques

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The publication of this volume was made possible by cooperation of the North American Association for the Study of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Duke University and Wabash College.

Ouvrage publié grâce au concours de l'Association nord-américaine des études Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Duke University et Wabash College.

ISBN 0-9693132-7-6

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Collection *Pensée Libre* dirigée par Melissa Butler  
*Pensée Libre* series editor: Melissa Butler

Imprimé aux États Unis  
Printed in the United States

## Justice in the soul: The *Rêveries* as Rousseau's reply to Plato's Glaucon

The *Rêveries du promeneur solitaire* constitutes, it can be argued, Rousseau's last reexamination of his own most fundamental or natural inclinations with a view, among other objects, to appraising the evidence for the conscience or for our attachment to justice.<sup>1</sup> The section of the *Rêveries* which contains Rousseau's examination of his own attachment to justice is framed by specific allusions to a speech in Plato's *Republic* delivered by the character Glaucon, who can be said to issue the most radical challenge to the naturalness or goodness of justice in that dialogue.<sup>2</sup> A consideration of the parallels between Glaucon's speech and aspects of Rousseau's last work serves to illuminate Rousseau's treatment of the problem of justice in the *Rêveries*.<sup>3</sup>

The *Rêveries* begins, infamously, with Rousseau's anguished ruminations about being the victim of a universal conspiracy. Rousseau's description of his fate duplicates the portrait of the just man painted by Glaucon in Plato's *Republic*, a portrait which Rousseau clearly knew well.

[Witness] the energy with which Socrates' friend, whose name I have forgotten, depicts the just man weighed down by the outrages of fortune and the injustices of men, defamed, persecuted, tormented, prey to all the disgrace of crime and meriting all the prizes of virtue, who sees death already approaching, and is sure that the hatred of evil men will not spare his memory, even when they can do no more against his person. What a discouraging picture for virtue, if anything could discourage virtue. Socrates, frightened himself, cries out, and believes he must invoke the Gods before answering. (*Lettre à M de Franquières*, 4: 1144)<sup>4</sup>

Rousseau portrays himself suffering the same destiny:

Could I in good sense suppose that one day I — the same man that I was, the same one I am still — would, without the slightest doubt, pass for and be taken as a monster, a poisoner, an assassin; that I would become the horror of the human race, the plaything of the rabble; that the only greeting of passersby would be to spit on me; that an entire generation would, in a unanimous accord, amuse itself by burying me alive? (995–96)

By drawing implicit comparisons in the *Rêveries* between himself and the figure of the just man painted by Glaucon in the *Republic*, Rousseau raises again, and for the last time, the question of the relation between

virtue and reason, or justice and happiness, with which he began his career as a public philosopher. When viewed in the light of this question, the “conspiracy” of which Rousseau claims to be the victim functions as a condensed, poetic treatment of the problem of justice. For the ordeal of “conspiracy” and universal ostracism concentrates our normally sporadic experiences of the iniquity of others into one of universal and irremediable injustice, bringing into sharp relief what normally remains muted and therefore less manifest. By confronting Rousseau with the problem of justice at its most acute, the drama of conspiracy presses him to question the foundation and merit of his desire to be treated as he deserves. It is the extreme test of the naturalness or goodness of justice. The *Rêveries* accordingly pursues the question whether moral goodness is happiness itself, or at least the necessary condition for obtaining it.<sup>5</sup> The similarity between Glaucon’s illustration of the problem of justice and Rousseau’s “strange situation” appears then to be not merely ornamental but essential. In Glaucon’s account, the just man endures the ultimate test of his devotion to justice. He is crucified as a criminal: he “will be whipped; he’ll be racked; he’ll be bound; he’ll have both his eyes burned out; and, at the end, when he has undergone every sort of evil, he’ll be crucified and know that one shouldn’t wish to be, but seem to be, just” (362a). By severing justice from all goods consequent to a reputation for it, Glaucon presses upon Socrates this question: what precisely is the goodness of justice in itself, unaccompanied by the honors and benefits consequent to the good opinion of others? Even as does one of Rousseau’s most moral characters, the Savoyard Vicar, Glaucon argues that “[if] moral goodness is in conformity with our nature, man could be healthy of spirit or well constituted only to the extent that he is good. If it is not, and man is naturally wicked, he cannot cease to be so without being corrupted, and goodness in him is only a vice contrary to nature” (*E* 595–96).

The apparent extremity of Glaucon’s statement of the problem is necessitated by the confusion most of us display in our attachment to virtue. Glaucon’s demand that the just man sacrifice himself stems from his apparent clear-sightedness concerning the problematic character of our claim to be deserving (358a; cf. 363 a–e). The question raised by Glaucon’s test is whether we aspire to be just, or only wish to seem devoted to justice in order thereby to gain a greater good than that we sacrifice through our apparent adherence to it. Thus we must separate being from seeming. “Otherwise it wouldn’t be plain whether [the just man] is such for the sake of the just or for the sake of the gifts and honors” (361c). Glaucon’s presentation, then, serves as an attempt to distinguish whether justice or noble sacrifice is choiceworthy for its own sake or only for the rewards it may bring.

“For I desire to hear what each [justice and injustice] is and what power it has all alone by itself when it is in the soul — dismissing its wages and its consequences”(358b). The just man’s immolation is thus indispensable to Glaucon’s trial of justice. Only then will he know whether his concern for virtue remains when it does not bring with it the reward he suspects it seeks.

Glaucon seems to believe that the experience of great sacrifice would lead the just man to conclude that “one shouldn’t wish to be, but seem to be, just” (362a). Upon reflection, anyone would realize that the aim of our adherence to the rules of justice was the honors and gifts, and more precisely, honor for the sake of “private profit”(360d). From Glaucon’s point of view, honor or praise, and the justice required to obtain it, are conventions ultimately unsupported by nature, which can therefore be manipulated by those who see through them in order to further our natural aim, to “get the better” (359c).

Rousseau’s view of the nature of our attachment to justice may be indicated by the differences in his own presentation in the *Rêveries*. The “conspiracy” strips Rousseau of all honor and destroys his reputation. He suffers “defamation, debasement, derision, and disgrace” (996; *Dial* 743–44). A criminal in the eyes of the world, his life has become a nightmare of universal condemnation and vilification orchestrated against him by the “directors of [his] destiny,” a nightmare in which he is supported only by the sense of his own moral “innocence”(1079). This, and his resulting solitude, is the sum of Rousseau’s “singular situation:” he remarks pointedly that he does not suffer in body (997).<sup>6</sup> The only cross he bears is that of the “disgrace of crime,” of being travestied into the false monstrosity called “Jean-Jacques” whom others have fabricated in order to “hate him at their ease” (1059). While it is clear that benefits devolve from a good reputation, Rousseau places no other goods in the balance; in Rousseau’s presentation, the test of justice is reduced to the loss of honor, that is, to the impossibility of being known and treated by others as one deserves. Rousseau in his account thus takes the concern for rightful reputation or honor itself more seriously than does the Platonic character in his speech.

In Glaucon’s portrayal, the just man’s plight is worsened by the foreknowledge that his memory will be reviled by every decent person. In the *Rêveries*, over which the thought of death hovers, Rousseau claims that his enemies will “not leave my memory in peace after my death any more than they leave me in peace during my life,” poisoning future generations against him (998). Now, Rousseau does draw a clear connection between his reputation and the effectiveness of his writings, and hence his survival as a philosopher (*Dial* 956, 976; *Fragments* 1: 1186). However, the loss of

his good name more profoundly points to the question of the character of Rousseau's own motives in becoming a publicly professing philosopher. By portraying himself as the victim of the wholesale destruction of his public representation, Rousseau calls into question the goodness of the "intoxication" with virtue which he at times describes as the motive for his writing (e.g., *C* 416). "Universal conspiracy" confronts Rousseau with the loss of what he stated was the aim of his own, and indeed of the "wise man's," virtue — namely, glory. While the *philosophes* may have no other god but their reputation, Rousseau distinguishes his own desire for glory from theirs as being a desire for the testimony that he was deserving of it.<sup>7</sup> In other words, if Rousseau is serious that his writing, and the risks he took on behalf of his work, arise from his desire for the just deserts of a true benefactor, then the absence of a necessary connection between his just claim and the gratitude of the public would render his effort deeply problematic.

While Glaucon seems readily to assume that we do not care by nature about honor or the good opinion of others, and while he is suspicious of moral virtue, he shows himself to be deeply moved by a kind of virtue, understood as the vigor with which one who was "truly a man" would never desist or be deflected from pursuing his true good. This same force of will is capable of looking forward with enthusiasm to the idea of a thoroughgoing and even painful dedication to justice, assuming a conviction that justice itself is the greatest good (359b). Rousseau indeed outdoes even the daring and courageous Glaucon in arguing that moral health is vigor of the soul which arises from the vigor of the body. Moreover, this same desire for thoroughgoing devotion is at the heart of Rousseau's description of the truly just or virtuous man in the Fourth Walk, who is characterized specifically by his willingness to endure sacrifice (1025; *Dial* 863). In Rousseau's view, history has left us "a thousand stunning examples" of men who have suffered what are to us unimaginable ills for the sake of duty (*EP* 260). Rousseau signally reduces virtue to courage or force — to the kind of energy or forcefulness of will that seems to be at the core of Glaucon's portrayals of both the just man and the unjust man — turned against our own passions and our own interest (1052–53; *E* 817). Justice, in the presentations of both the Platonic character and Rousseau, is a forceful self-restraint or self-overcoming by strength on behalf of equality. In Glaucon's view, the force of spirit which manifests itself in a natural desire for empire could be turned against itself, and not only against others: he seeks from Socrates a decisive reason why the former might be its real fulfillment. For as it stands, it seems to Glaucon that anyone who would respect the contract of justice, which curbs the desires of the stronger in

favor of the weaker, and yet is able to do otherwise with impunity, would be “mad” (358c–359a–b).

After having posed the question whether, and how, justice is a natural good through the drama of the travestied innocent who dies a wrongful death, Glaucon in the *Republic* and Rousseau in the *Rêveries* both turn to answer the question they raise. Rousseau returns to another parallel with Glaucon’s speech in the Sixth Walk of the *Rêveries*. The Platonic character, who presses Socrates to explain how justice and happiness coincide, argues that self-restraint out of respect for the common good is not natural, because we see in fact that “wherever each supposes he can do injustice, he does it” (359c). To show this, Glaucon asks us to imagine a magical ring belonging to the mythical figure Gyges, which allows its wearer to become invisible and therefore to shed all fear of punishment.<sup>8</sup> In the Sixth Walk Rousseau wonders how he would have used its powers if he “had been possessor of the ring of Gyges” (1057).<sup>9</sup> Like Glaucon, Rousseau uses the ring of Gyges as a metaphor for a situation in which we would have “as law only [our] natural inclinations” and would be “master of contenting [our] desires, able to do everything without anyone being able to deceive [us].” The ring of Gyges is a test of our moral nature, for it is “surely here that the temptation to abuse it must be close to the power to do so” (1058). Again, a comparison of the two accounts is instructive.

Glaucon argues through the Gyges ring story that “all who practice [justice] do so unwillingly, from an incapacity to do injustice” (359b). Only lack of power forces us to remain within the bounds of justice: anyone, even a supposed “just” man, who possessed this ring, he argues, would be shameless, taking, enjoying, and harming however it pleased him. The possessor of this ring would abide neither by the laws nor by any rule of justice; nevertheless, since he would be “as an equal to a god among humans” (360c), he would, like them, be beneficent, using his unjust gains to “care for the gods and those human beings he wants to care for far better than the just man” (362c). Glaucon thus portrays even an unjust man as naturally delighting in generosity. Rousseau too argues that weakness distorts our nature; not, however, because it prevents us from “getting the better,” but because it prevents us from being benign. The situation of great power unlimited by consequences, which according to Glaucon would reveal that justice is a social convention imposed upon inherently unjust natures, instead seems to reveal, according to Rousseau, that we are naturally inclined to be just and clement. For Rousseau, it is weakness which makes us prone to injustice, not strength; it is not power, but *lack* of power to do as they will which causes men to be unjust. Were he all-powerful, Rousseau says of himself, he “would even have been just against [his] own interest

without difficulty”(1053, 1058).

Further, this imaginary test seems to reveal that we are naturally inclined to extend our benevolence much farther than the demands of justice. Like Glaucon, Rousseau argues that superabundant strength spontaneously overflows into generosity. What could the possessor of the power of the ring of Gyges, which would give us the capacity to satisfy any desire, “have reasonably desired? One thing only: it would have been to see every heart content”(1058). Rousseau insists that this generosity would not be exercised solely in the moments in which we are not occupied with our personal gain; it would instead constitute our primary passion. “The sight of public felicity alone could have touched my heart with a permanent sentiment, and the ardent desire to contribute to it would have been my most constant passion”(1058). We take an untutored pleasure in being the source of benefaction: “when I give a gift it is a pleasure I give myself”(1054). “I know and feel that to do good is the truest happiness the human heart can savor”(1051). Freed from the anxiety of providing for ourselves, then, our self-love loves the common good more, or so it would seem, than the self, or the selfish desires dreamed of by Glaucon. For we do not by nature, according to Rousseau, seek to please others simply in order to make them pleased with us, or with an eye to future benefits. A situation of immense power, and hence independence, relative to others would, according to Rousseau, not only make us benevolent, but this benevolence would be accompanied by an absence of concern for honor or praise. Our enjoyment would consist simply in our unbounded capacity to confer benefits, for the “inner charm” of generosity lies in our conviction of having truly done some good to another who is not in the position to return the favor (1055, 1057, 1090–95). Even without such imaginary power, Rousseau argues in the Ninth Walk that by nature we are inclined to exercise benevolence as one of the most powerful and immediate reflections of self-love (*amour de soi*):

[T]here were happier times when, following the movements of my heart, I could sometimes make another heart content; and I owe to myself the honorable testimony that, each time I have been able to taste this pleasure, I have found it sweeter than any other. This inclination was intense, true, and pure, and nothing in my most secret interior has ever belied it. (1051; cf. 1085)

Self-love, our primary natural inclination and the root of all our passions, actively seeks to “extend and reinforce the sentiment of our being”(Dial 805–6). As described in the *Rêveries*, that sentiment is a “fullness of life which seems to want to extend itself beyond” us, “a condition



of strength which extends us beyond ourselves and leads us to take elsewhere activity superfluous to our well-being" (*E* 419, 430). In Rousseau's view, then, when nature dreams, it dreams of being "as an equal to a god" (514).

According to Glaucon's speech, natural goods are limited, and we seek power in order to prevail in the inevitable conflict over them. In light of this necessity, the forceful self-restraint which honors an unnatural equality is foolish. A Platonic suggestion with regard to Glaucon's view, however, is that we are led to transgress the limits of equality or justice, not so much from the scarcity of goods, as from boundless desire or *eros* which expands our desire for them without measure (e.g. 369d–373e). Rousseau strikingly concurs. He confesses that the ring would lead him to transgress in only one respect: he would succumb to uncontrollable erotic desire (1058; 360c). He concludes from this that he had better throw his magic ring away, because by permitting him to indulge in one of "humanity's weaknesses," it would only serve to "place him in effect beneath others and beneath what he himself would have been had he remained their equal" (1058). While, according to Rousseau, it is "a disposition natural to man to regard everything in his power as his", and while self-love can expand boundlessly, until it seeks to attach the entire universe to itself, the desire for empire is the product of an artificially inflamed imagination.<sup>10</sup> In his view, it is not best to do injustice, because the goods that Glaucon sees as requiring injustice are ultimately self-contradictory and impossible of fulfillment as we imagine (360b–c, 362 b–c). In society our active self-love, which attaches us to other beings and which expands to fill with our affections the sphere in which we live, eventually enslaves us, making us dependent on every whim of fortune and men.<sup>11</sup> We cannot guarantee the continued existence of those objects or persons upon which our happiness now hinges; we cannot secure our attachments to them without constant anxiety, effort, and labors the success of which we cannot assure.

It is life within society which excites our desires and our yearning for power by holding out an imaginary weapon, like the Gyges ring, through which immense power seems to be within reach: the possibility of authority or even mastery over others. By presenting us with the alluring possibility of limitless services, society multiplies our desires through "the ideas of dominion and tyranny" which it fosters (*E* 309–16). Against the spirited Glaucon, Rousseau alludes to an argument according to which the *amour-propre* which fuels love of empire over others harms us more than them. The kind of domineering, even vengeful, passions which underlie the desire to inflict suffering described by Glaucon arise from the actual dependence of our will upon others. Rousseau claims that he feels a real pity for

his enemies, because they have placed themselves in a position of dependence upon him through their desire to harm him (1056). Only superiority of power frees one from “dependence on men” and makes them “dependent upon” us: “to extinguish in me all desire for revenge, it would have sufficed for me to be able to revenge myself.”<sup>12</sup> According to Rousseau’s statement, desire for another’s misery arises, not from the sting of the pain we have suffered at his hands, but from the sting of being subjected to his will, since the desire for revenge is extinguished, not by freedom from the deprivations of others, but by the power to retaliate. Power, and the independence which it grants, leads not to cruelty but to clemency because shrugging off our enemies is the surest sign of the degree to which we are stronger than they. While Rousseau and the Platonic character generally agree on the character of natural virtue, then, Glaucon misconceives it as a means to ends which, in Rousseau’s view, are both artificial and destructive of it. Hence while Glaucon argues that “it is law which by force perverts [nature] to honor equality”, Rousseau insists that within society we need the restraint of equality so that we may remain as uncorrupted as possible.

In the end, however, neither for Rousseau anymore than for Glaucon does nature provide a full-fledged defense of justice. Both Glaucon and Rousseau agree that by nature each seeks to acquire “license to do whatever he wants” (359c; 1: 1059). Rousseau too, stresses that there is a conflict between justice and nature, or the “independence which the heart loves” (1054). In the Sixth Walk, leading up to the Gyges story, Rousseau gives an account of a difficulty regarding obligation or duty. This account suggests that the “holy” contract of justice arises from a more basic, unequal, relationship established and properly understood in terms of generosity (1053–54). This relationship or “society” is formed through an exchange of good will: the beneficiary engages to be grateful, while the benefactor engages to renew the same “good will” and the acts which follow from it whenever asked of him. The conditions of this mutual engagement “are not express [...] but they are the natural effects of the relation which has just been established between them” (1054). This mutual engagement, however, according to Rousseau, necessarily destroys its own foundation. He stresses that the impulsion of generosity is purely “free”; that is, free of consideration of gain, and one that is pleasant in itself. But the person who receives a free gift then imposes, or attempts to impose, a “law” upon us which demands that we “always be his benefactor.” The great pleasure of generosity, which arises from an “effusion of heart” becomes through this transformation a duty or obligation, a constraint upon our free inclination which is felt by nature, according to Rousseau, as an onerous enslavement

(1052). The pleasure we take in our own overabundant resources, in strength heedless of any thought of return, is destroyed by the constraint of the “law” of another will, which is imposed upon us “under threat of [...] hatred” (1053). For the feeling of freedom or of doing only what *we* please, and not as others please, is a pleasure central to beneficence and to the enjoyment of our own superabundant activity or strength. Further, in our real situation, which, unlike that of the possessor of the Gyges ring, is one of only limited power, we seek and enjoy testimony of our capacity to confer benefits:

The exercise of beneficence naturally flatters *amour-propre* through an idea of superiority; one recalls all one’s acts as so many witnesses [to testify that], over and above one’s own needs, one has strength to relieve those of others. This appearance of power makes one exist with more pleasure, and live more willingly with oneself. (*Lettres morales* 4: 1116)

The just man or benefactor therefore attempts to obtain gratitude or recognition as testimony of his abundant capacity. This attempt, however, is inherently problematic: he can only obtain gratitude at the price of accepting the imposition of others’ demands upon himself, demands which are the condition of their continued gratitude. This imposition is destructive of the pleasure we take in the independent power which is at the heart of generosity (1050–52). There is thus a conflict between natural liberty and adherence to justice in Rousseau’s account. The difficulty is that, precisely insofar as we do possess a natural love of beneficence, we resist justice because it is the imposition of duty — and duty, as Glaucon also argues, is constraint. Rousseau, as it were, answers the riddle posed by Socrates: we naturally delight in bestowing “what is fitting” only as long as it is not “what is owed” (332c).<sup>13</sup>

Rousseau concludes his discussion of the Gyges ring by remarking that “men persist in seeing me other than I am” and that it is “impossible” for others to see him, because they see in him only “the Jean-Jacques [...] they have made according to their own heart” (1058–59). Does Rousseau mean to suggest that the “conspiracy” performs a function akin to the Gyges ring? As several characters in the *Republic* make clear, the *real* Gyges ring is the cultivation by the unjust of a false reputation; the end of the Sixth Walk of the *Rêveries* is about Rousseau’s false reputation, imposed upon him by others (361a, 365b–d). Rousseau is, in effect, invisible, because he claims that others see nothing but a false image of him as the embodiment of injustice. The owner of the Gyges ring in Glaucon’s story “gets away” with much; what does the conspiracy allow Rousseau to “get away with” that he could not do otherwise? Only one thing, it seems: his quietism

(Starobinski 302). The conspiracy has removed him “from society as a useless member” because it treats him as a “pernicious” one. It is the conspiracy, he claims, which prevents him from engaging in benefaction; as he has made clear, however, it is not the conspiracy, but the imposition of duties, of the “holy contract” of justice which is always imposed upon the benefactor, which, in truth, prevents him from following his naturally generous inclinations (Grenier 47). The conspiracy is a Gyges ring because it allows him to escape society, for which he or nature is not, in the end, made, as he explicitly tells us, without incurring blame (1051, 1059). In short, the conspiracy allows him to get away with his lack of moral virtue: “this state is only innocent because it is coerced” (1056).

The defense of justice on the basis of nature is faced in the *Rêveries* with a number of other difficulties. Rousseau illustrates through his own case, for instance, how our concern for justice debilitates us, because it leads to a painful and incoherent dependence upon opinion. This desire for the good opinion of others is unlikely to be satisfied, given the partisan passions of human beings within society (998–99). Further, as he indicates in the Eighth Walk, satisfaction of the desire for gratitude and honor or praise is an accident contingent upon the present fancies of others, and is therefore not only unlikely but impossible to satisfy (1077). Lastly, hope that justice will, in turn, be done to us pits us against necessity, and leads us to make the same incoherent and perhaps impossible demand that Glaucon does. Glaucon’s apparent clarity about the problem of justice reveals a deeper confusion: what appears in him to be a demand for absolute devotion is underneath an absolute demand for a happiness which is guaranteed against fortune. Rousseau depicts this same confusion at the heart of his most moral character, the Savoyard Vicar, and at the base of his own claim in the Third Walk to be deserving of a “great and certain compensation” (1020). The Vicar believes that the just man is deserving because he does not think of his own happiness; yet he insists that justice must issue in happiness. Glaucon insists that even if they suffer the blackest of fates, the just must attain a resplendent happiness which they deserve as their due precisely because they have risked its loss. Our hope that justice be done seems to rest upon the expectation of a perfect happiness and independence which insistently rejects the full extent of the rule of necessity in our lives.

Finally, by providing an alternative psychological account of the “holy contract” of justice according to which it is a form of expectation that good will once manifested towards us will always be manifested, Rousseau raises a further question about the perfect coherence of our claim to be deserving ourselves. It is thus hard, according to the *Rêveries*, to distinguish our hope in and demand for justice from the extravagances of

*amour-propre*, and hard to see how the latter ultimately benefits us. In short, Rousseau suggests that he calls the naturalness, or at least the natural goodness, of our concern for justice very much into question. If so, one might ask if and how he continues to understand and desire justice as he claims he did at the beginning of the *Rêveries*.

This is a complicated question which can only be adumbrated here. By the Eighth Walk, Rousseau discusses his adherence to justice, not as an irreducible “inner sentiment,” but as a form of *amour-propre* which we mistake for a “pure love of justice” (1079). Unmasking the “fraud” perpetrated upon us by our *amour-propre* helps us ultimately to control it, but is not sufficient to eliminate its effect upon us (1079). Reason alone cannot cure us of it, for even though reason can decisively show us how the wise man understands the ills which he suffers, it cannot control outbursts of moral feeling, of “anger and indignation”, even though it understands these as “involuntary motions” rooted “solely” in our physical constitution (1078–79, 1083). While reason may show Rousseau that his concern for what is owed him is only ambiguously good, resignation to necessity is “not the work of my wisdom,” but “that of my enemies” and of Rousseau’s unusual temperament (1081, 1083–84). Not reason or philosophy alone, then, but a unique situation like that of conspiracy, in which the wills of all are immutable or unchangeable with regard to us, allows us to gain control of our *amour-propre*. Insofar, then, as we can overcome *amour-propre* only with difficulty, if at all, we are pointedly led by Rousseau to question whether a psychological account of justice is sufficient. After the clearest statement of such an account in the *Rêveries*, for example, Rousseau continues in the Eighth Walk to speak of “the happiness which I feel is due me” (1081). The other response to the wronged innocent, as Rousseau reminds us, is that he must look to divine redemption. “What a discouraging picture for virtue [...] Socrates, frightened himself, cries out, and believes he must invoke the Gods before answering. But without the hope of another life, he would have answered badly for this one” (*Franquières*, 4: 1144). As Rousseau tells us repeatedly in the *Rêveries*, the belief that “God is just; he wills that I suffer; and he knows that I am innocent” provides “the hope and consolations that I need in my situation,” the situation in which justice is bereft of natural support (1010, 1023). But as Rousseau’s presentation of the certainties of faith in the Third Walk seems to reveal, the eventual triumph of justice is nothing if not philosophically uncertain.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Many commentators consider that Rousseau fails to understand self-knowledge as a problematic enterprise, and fails to understand his own real autobiographical motive, which is to reveal, and to obtain recognition for, a preferred version of himself. See, e.g., Jean Starobinski 218, Marc Eigeldinger 66, Philonenko 3:257–78, Guéhenno 1: 9–10 and 2: 290–91. Others, however, argue that Rousseau methodically engages in a complex autobiographical project with a clear grasp of its difficulties, e.g., Kelly 8–47; cf. Crogiez 47. The following necessarily presupposes an argument, which cannot be provided here, that the autobiographical writings are an inherent part of Rousseau’s project in both its philosophical and poetic aims, and that the *Rêveries* is a further “piece of comparison” for the study of human nature by an author conscious of the complexities of such an enterprise.

<sup>2</sup>For a helpful summary (to that point) of the controversy regarding the extent of Plato’s influence on Rousseau, see Silverthorne 235–36.

<sup>3</sup>I wish to thank the Program on Constitutional Government, and Harvey C. Mansfield, Harvard University, for their generous support and encouragement during the writing of this article.

<sup>4</sup>See Plato 357b–362c; 368b–c.; cf. *Mon Portrait*, 1: 1125 and *E* 626, where Rousseau compares Glaucon’s portrait of the just man to Jesus Christ.

<sup>5</sup>According to one interpreter, the central problem in the *Rêveries* is that of the relation between “happiness and goodness” (Ricatte 103–4).

<sup>6</sup>This is a striking statement here given his admission at 1: 1080.

<sup>7</sup>*DI* 3, 26, 29; *D2* 189; *R* 1012–13; *CB* 965–66; *Fragments* 4: 1019, 1021–22.

<sup>8</sup>Glaucon does not fear the punishment of the gods because he believes them not to care about justice anymore than he suspects we do (362c).

<sup>9</sup>Cf. Herodotus 1: 8–13. Glaucon makes significant changes to the story. Though it has other sources than the *Republic*, Rousseau uses the essence of the Platonic version, and to the same end, as a thought experiment designed to make us reflect upon nature.

<sup>10</sup>*Lettres à Malesherbes* 1: 1140; *R* 1012; *E* 287–90, 304–5, 314, 743.

<sup>11</sup>*R* 1074–75; *Dial* 810; *E* 304.

<sup>12</sup>1053, 1056–57; *E* 288, 523–24.

<sup>13</sup>Cf. *R* 1026–28.

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