

BANISHING THE PARTICULAR

Rousseau on Rhetoric, *Patrie*, and the Passions

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I begin with a dilemma: how to combine political *rule*, which rests ultimately on a moment of coercion, with *freedom*—freedom from subjection to the arbitrary and particular will of an other. In this formulation, political rule threatens freedom with (1) the possibility of subjection to an *arbitrary* will, that is, a will that is either inconstant, uncertain, and ungrounded, or that simply rests on a particular and arbitrary ground, and (2) the possibility of subjection to an *external other*. This fundamental modernist dilemma makes an appearance in Locke, receives its most famous formulation in Rousseau's *Contrat social*, is moralized by Kant, and is a central animating force of Hegel's political philosophy.¹ Of course, a powerful strand of liberalism concluded that the dilemma is essentially unresolvable and rested its hopes not on a *reconciliation* of political rule and freedom but on freedom *despite* political rule, via a protected private sphere. In this article, I examine what is perhaps the most uncompromising attempt at resolution. I argue that in his efforts to reconcile political rule and freedom, Rousseau is led to ground the *volonté générale* in the silent and introspective disclosure of the solitary citizen's inner conscience, which now, through a sentimentalist transformation of Descartes's category of *bon sens*, is recast as an eminently *public* sentiment. When the strategy fails, Rousseau turns to republican virtue and the

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trope of *grounding* the polity's freedom in the *patrie*'s territory and, subsequently, in the citizen's heart.

THREE SOLUTIONS AND A DILEMMA

The classic as well as Lockean response to the arbitrariness of political power was the rule of law.² But while the rule of law can mitigate arbitrariness in the sense of inconstancy, uncertainty, and ungroundedness, constancy of itself fails to ensure that the law is not arbitrarily grounded in some ascendant particular will, which thereby imposes itself externally on the wills of all other citizens. This latter problem is potentially resolved by showing that the ruling political will (1) has some universal or general ground, rather than an arbitrary and particular one, and that it (2) is none other than the citizen's own will, rather than an external imposition. In the Rousseauist formulation, the legitimacy of the *volonté générale* derives from two features beyond constancy: (1) it must be a *universal* or *general* will and not a particular one, and (2) it must be the *authentic* will of (all the members of) the polity itself.³ The two requirements are not unrelated: a ruling will that was authentically mine, but only my particular will, would be an arbitrary imposition on everyone else's will, securing my freedom at their expense.

There are at least three intellectual resources from which modern political philosophers have drawn in order to grapple with the dilemma. The first is the classical dichotomy between *persuasion* or speech and *coercion* or force. This dichotomy already overlapped with an overtly political dichotomy for the ancient Greeks: tyrants rule by coercion; democrats rule by persuasion.⁴ This equation of republican liberty, or collective self-government, with eloquence—an equation explicitly suggested in Tacitus's *Dialogue on Orators* and in the pseudo-Longinus treatise *On Sublimity*—later became an important republican theme, so entrenched by the eighteenth century that even absolutists such as Voltaire drew the link.⁵ The dichotomy helps to “solve” the dilemma in two ways. First, it attenuates coercive *subjection* itself: a republic is to rule, at least in the first instance, by persuading rather than coercing its citizens to follow the laws. Second, it attenuates rule by *an external other*, by grounding the possibility of republican self-rule.

But this conceptual resource has been haunted by a spectre that has threatened its deployment in this manner since its very inception in Greek thought. This is the spectre of rhetoric. In order that the dichotomy successfully carry out the profound theoretical work assigned to it, philosophers at least tacitly relied on a portrait of discourse as a medium free from (arbitrary and coercive) power *internal* to discourse itself. But the spectre of rhetoric raises the

possibility of the coercion *in* speech. This spectre is already found in Gorgias's defence of Helen's return to Troy, where he claims that persuasion by a false speech "has the same power, but not the same form as compulsion."⁶ It is also found in Plato's Socrates, for whom *andreia* or courage is the virtue that in part serves to withstand this alleged "coercion" in speech.⁷ In Plato's *Gorgias*, reason stands in opposition to both coercion *and* persuasion, allied together; the possibility of a discursive form of "coercion" exists because persuasion proceeds via an appeal to (certain kinds of) passion.⁸ The military imagery becomes all the more explicit among the classical Roman theorists, who describe an "orator who deploys the right *ornamenta*" as "a man brandishing a sword with the aim of wounding his adversaries as grievously as possible."⁹ Rousseau was not insulated from this imagery: Bernard Lamy devotes an entire chapter of his *L'Art de parler*—whose influence on the *Essai sur l'origine des langues* is manifest¹⁰—to the parallel between "a soldier who combats" and "an orator who speaks." The figures, earlier defined as the characters that express the passions, are akin to "the weapons of the soul."¹¹

While the classical theorists may have resembled one another in their militaristic characterization of rhetoric, the exact nature of the implied threat to the persuasion-coercion dichotomy depends on their particular conception of rhetoric. And here, there are significant differences. For Gorgias, rhetoric is a process by which an orator deploys his eloquence to delight and even bewitch his audience in an effort to single-mindedly effect persuasion (and perhaps action) in its members. Conley calls this a "motivistic" conception of rhetoric, involving a "unilateral transaction" in which "an active speaker" attempts to overpower "a passive audience."¹² For Cicero, by contrast, rhetoric is a means to resolve disputes via a bilateral examination by arguing *in utramque partem*, on both sides of the question. This "controversial" conception of rhetoric inherited by the renaissance humanists, which finds its roots in Protagoras and Isocrates rather than Gorgias, rests on a skepticist presumption that the question at hand does not admit of certain knowledge, only *probabilitas*.¹³ While in the motivistic model the coercion in speech appears as a direct assault on the audience, in the controversial model, the militaristic characterization of the rhetorical duel in the face of uncertain knowledge threatens to collapse the basis of persuasion into a ground no more secure and no less arbitrary than the outcome of war.

There exists a second resource to draw on. If the first resource derives from the meaning of *logos* as speech or argument, then the second one derives from its meaning as reason. This resource is the classical dichotomy between *reason* and *coercion*. To ground political rule in reason, rather than coercion, is to provide it with a universal basis, one reflecting perhaps—hopes

vary—the moral or rational structure of the cosmos. The problem is that this resource, almost decisive against the first threat to freedom, that of arbitrariness, is ill-equipped to address the second: the law, however rational, might yet be experienced as an alien, external imposition on the actual will of each citizen.

The third resource is republican virtue. Where rhetoric threatens to collapse relations of persuasion to ones of coercion, republican virtue attempts to immunize those relations against any human will's power, whether physical or discursive. And where the rationally grounded law might still confront citizens as an external imposition, republican virtue substitutes a generalized patriotic sentiment for an alien (and perhaps impotent) universal reason. The particularity of the passions are to be “generalized” via an anchoring in the particularistic, patriotic love of the *patrie*, and the only coercion to which citizens are to be subject is the naturalized and internalized one of virtue.

I wish to demonstrate that in his attempt to reconcile political rule and freedom, Rousseau draws on each of these three intellectual resources, depending on the philosophical problem that has seized his attention and that provides the background motivation for the argument in a given moment. In other words, I neither seek to demonstrate that Rousseau is a hopelessly incoherent thinker nor to arbitrarily impose a structure of logico-deductive coherence that does violence to his thought and inevitably obfuscates his key insights. Rather, first by identifying the background problem that fuels Rousseau's ensuing discussion and then by tracing his successive argumentative strategies and the intellectual resources they draw upon, my intention is to demonstrate the *narrative logic* in Rousseau's work, a logic that unfolds when his “solution” to the previous problem serves to disclose new dilemmas of its own.

THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE VOLONTÉ GÉNÉRALE

In his quest to reconcile liberty and political rule, Rousseau most clearly builds on the first resource, the persuasion-coercion dichotomy, in his attempt to secure his second requirement: the authenticity of the general will. For the Genevan, citizens maintain their freedom only if the laws that they are constrained to follow are authentically their own. And for the laws to be authentically based on the general will, then, the “people” who would be free requires, in its unmediated capacity as self-present sovereign, a transparent language capable of authentically expressing that will. Chapter 20 of the *Essai sur l'origine des langues* refers to exactly such a language:

There exist languages that are favourable to liberty; these are the sonorous, prosodic, harmonious languages whose discourse one can distinguish from a considerable distance . . . any language with which one cannot make oneself be heard by the assembled people is a servile tongue; it is impossible for a people to remain free and to speak such a language. (5:428-29)

The most immediate problem facing Rousseau here is that for him, language proceeds via representation¹⁴ and that representation is the category *par excellence* that threatens presence and authenticity.¹⁵ Rousseau's opposition to the political representation of sovereignty is, of course, famous. His *Contrat social* champions "the assembled people," a physical gathering of citizens as the sovereign from which emanates the general will: "the instant at which a people gives itself representatives, it is no longer free" (3:431). Rousseau's condemnation of theatre in his *Lettre à d'Alembert* is also a condemnation of representation: in French, a theatrical performance is a *représentation*.¹⁶ And here, Rousseau identifies precisely the danger: "everything that one puts up for performance (*en représentation*) in the theatre, instead of approaching us, is distanced from us" (5:24). What is represented is distanced from us, for representation is the denial of the veridicality of presence. Linguistic representation, then, like theatrical representation, *replaces the presence of the object with a sign implying its absence*. To allow it into the political process would threaten to erase the presence of the people and, hence, the authentic determination of the general will.

The threat of linguistic representation is further clarified when we consider Rousseau's vehement attack on *copia* in the context of traditional rhetorical theory. In the debate between *copia* and *brevitas*, Rousseau sharply sides with the brevity Plutarch attributed to Lycurgus and his Spartan citizens. While Plutarch (in Amyot's French translation) was Rousseau's literary hero, the Spartans and Lycurgus as depicted by Plutarch were his political heroes. Amyot's Plutarch recounts that the Spartans taught their children to be "*brefs et aigus*," so that "en peu de parole" the child would capture "beaucoup de substance."¹⁷ Characterizing the ancients' prodigious eloquence, Rousseau exclaims, "It never had more effect than when the orator spoke least" (E 4:647). Émile is praised for having been successfully raised to "never speak too much" (4:666).¹⁸ As Terrence Cave notes, both Cicero and Quintilian had used the term *copia* in the context of the "fundamental duality of 'things' (*res*) and 'words' (*verba*)."¹⁹ When Rousseau attacks the *copia* he finds in the traditional rhetorical education of children, his concern is that a superfluous abundance of *words* threatens to drown out the ideas of *things* they are meant to represent, thereby severing the link to the object, and the concomitant idea of that object, which anchors and helps to fix the meaning of the linguistic sign. The superfluity of words results in the "very great

inconvenience that there be more words than ideas” (E 4:298), and the multitude of words, having lost their anchor in nature, are but “words without sense” (4:354); “never substitute the sign for the thing except for when it is impossible for you to show it, because the sign absorbs the child’s attention and makes him forget the thing represented” (4:434).²⁰

But why should the free-floating of signs, and the disappearance of the things that anchor them, pose a threat to *freedom*? Plutarch’s Spartans had already anticipated the political import Rousseau would attribute to speech, suggesting that the *copia* of the people generates a kind of political disorder that proliferates an ever-increasing number of laws.²¹ But in *Émile*, Rousseau is more specific about what is at stake:

There are two sorts of dependence: that upon things (*choses*), which is of nature, and that upon men, which is of society. Dependence upon things, having no morality, does not harm liberty, and engenders no vices; dependence upon men, being disorderly, engenders them all, and is that by which master and slave mutually deprave each other. (4:311)

Freedom is destroyed not by dependence on things but by dependence on the wills of other men. And if the *thing* is effaced by linguistic production, then language can only produce social relations of the pernicious kind—ones of mutual domination.

So when the *Essai* invokes a language designed to serve the authentic self-expression of a free people, it turns out to be a language promising to overcome the problem of representation and the effacement of things. This “langue sonore,” associated with the liberty of ancient peoples, is modeled after the eloquent speech of the south, born of passion, filled with music, accent, and voice, which the *Essai* contrasts with the cold, monotonous, rational northern speech that has come to corrupt it (5:409).²² The speaker of this southern *parole pleine* would have been able directly (and so *authentically*) to intimate the passions in her transparent heart, because hers would be a *melodious* speech: Rousseau refers to a “time” when speech was not yet separated from music. And music is for Rousseau a medium that affects directly *without the mediation of representation*:

The art of the musician consists in substituting for the insensible image of the object that of the movements that its *presence* excites in the heart of the contemplator. . . . *It does not directly represent these things*, but excites in the soul the same sentiments that one experiences in seeing them. (EL 5:422)²³

By bypassing the *representation* that threatens the authentic self-presence of the sovereign, this musical speech would undergird the *authenticity* of the sovereign’s political rule. So at first blush, the reconciliation of political rule

with freedom appears to hinge on the people's ability to communicate with itself via a tongue that recovers the eloquent transparency of southern speech, a tongue that enables it to rule not by the coercive force of tyranny but by the eloquent self-persuasion worthy of a free republic.

THE COERCION IN SPEECH

But Rousseau is not quite at ease in relying so singularly on persuasion, and its contrast to coercion, to secure political freedom. Of course, to rule by naked force would be to give up all hope of reconciling political rule with freedom, but Rousseau was keenly aware of the threat that rhetoric posed here. In fact, the very same passage from chapter 20 of the *Essai* that invokes this dichotomy characterizes the relation between eloquence and public force as one of substitution or supplementarity: "In ancient times, where persuasion took the place of public force, eloquence was necessary. Of what use would it be today when public force substitutes (*supplée*) for persuasion?" (5:428).²⁴ The supplementarity between speech and force is intimated even earlier, in the very first chapter. There Rousseau notes, "The only instruments by which a man can act upon another" operate via the senses; these "general means by which we can act upon the senses of another are limited to two, that is, *movement* and *voice*" (5:375). Thus, there are only two means by which to *exercise one's will over an other*: physical movement or voice. That the latter is a simulacrum of the former is suggested by the fact that the second species of movement itself is a form of communication: movement breaks down into "immediate" movement (*le toucher*) and "mediate" movement (*le geste*). That suggestion is confirmed elsewhere when, warning against accustoming the child to dominating others via language, Rousseau indicates that even the latter, vocal means of acting on an other directly mimics the former as *movement*: "It is agreeable to act through the hands of another, and have only to move (*remuer*) one's tongue to move (*faire mouvoir*) the universe" (E 4:289).

The link between eloquent persuasion and coercion arises because, like coercion, persuasion affects the body and is not restricted to the rational mind. Effective Rousseauist rhetoric negotiates a realm—that of the heart—between strict dualism's starkly opposed categories of body versus spirit/mind. Rousseau draws on a traditional technical distinction in rhetorical theory—which corresponds to our first two resources—between *persuading* or *moving* (*émouvoir*) someone to a proposition or to action via rhetorical *eloquence* and *convincing* (*convaincre*) someone of a proposition via the sole weight of *reason*.²⁵ The originary southern language clearly falls under the former category: "elle persuaderait sans convaincre et peindrait sans

raisonner” (EL 5:383). For Rousseau, eloquent rhetoric appeals to the all-important category of the heart, a not-solely physical organ that at times oscillates between, and at other times squarely straddles, dualism’s opposed categories. The Janus-faced status of the heart is reflected in the fact that it is the seat of the sentiments: sometimes, Rousseau sharply distinguishes the sentiments from physical sensations and the passions, at other times, he uses the terms interchangeably; the French verb *sentir* can mean to feel, to sense, to perceive, and to think, and Rousseau uses it in all these senses. The violence of rhetoric operates through its action on the body (and its temperature), for it is a question of “émouvoir le coeur et d’enflammer les passions” (5:377). It is, as Saccamano notes, a violence signaled by the terminology frequently used to describe how persuasion operates: “*arracher*—to uproot, tear or rend (*déraciner, déchirer*), and to carry off, seize, wrest, or extract violently (*ravir; soutirer*).”²⁶

Thus, while the eloquence modeled on southern speech initially promised to help reconcile political rule with freedom by replacing tyrannical might with an authentic form of collective self-persuasion, it turns out that speech can only be a *supplément* for coercion to the extent that it reproduces the very features of public force that rendered it antagonistic to freedom.²⁷ To the extent that persuasion must carry out the tasks for which tyrants employ coercion, to that same extent must the orator treat the heart as a *physical* organ of the *body*, mimicking discursively the violence effected by a soldier. And to that same extent does the dichotomy between persuasion and coercion collapse.

*THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE VOLONTÉ GÉNÉRALE:
“AUCUNE COMMUNICATION”*

With the threat of rhetoric writ large, Rousseau shifts his emphasis: the heart is distanced from the body and begins to approach the spirit or mind. In other words, where the coercion in speech begins to collapse the first resource, Rousseau increasingly draws on the second resource, *reason*, to hold at bay the looming violence of physicality. And the particular text in which Rousseau most heavily relies on reason is the one in which he expounds on the rationally articulated “principles of political right”:²⁸ the *Contrat social*, an early draft of which finds the laws articulating “the precepts of public reason” (GM 3:310). In what is perhaps the most shocking moment for the reader of the *Essai*, this rationalist tendency receives its most extreme articulation when, in stark contrast to the *Essai*’s celebration of a

language suited to freedom, the *Contrat social* explicitly bans *any* communication among citizens in the process of determining the *volonté générale*.

If, when the people, sufficiently informed, deliberates, the citizens were to have no communication between them, from the large number of small differences would always result the general will, and the deliberation would always be good. But when there are factional intrigues, [and] partial associations . . . then there is no longer any general will, and the opinion that prevails is but a particular opinion (*avis particulier*). (3:371-72)

Rousseau continues in the same vein in Chapters 1 and 2 of Book 4, where debate is characterized as a serious danger to the *volonté générale*. There, Rousseau notes that when passing laws, in a well-governed state, “it is a question neither of factional intrigues nor of eloquence” (3:437). Heated debates are a sign of corruption, and the language Rousseau uses to condemn them is sufficient to alert us that the kind of rhetoric he has in mind is the controversial one celebrated by renaissance humanism: “long debates, dissensions, tumult, announce the ascendance of particular interests and the decline of the state” (3:439).²⁹

Not only does rhetoric introduce discursive violence, but its violence can also always be used to serve particular interests. It is no surprise, then, that Rousseau bans communication and partial associations in one and the same breath. On one hand, rhetorical speech might facilitate faction formation and the seduction of the people by particular interests; on the other hand, both rhetoric and factions signify the particular that opens the chasm of difference threatening to bury the universality of the people’s will. Moreover, the presence of *controversial* rhetoric in the determination of the general will announces the presence of *uncertainty* at the polity’s foundation, further undermining Rousseau’s bid to eliminate arbitrariness via a unitary ruling will.³⁰ (Recall the skepticist presumption of controversial rhetoric.) Three dangers—the coercion in speech, the disclosure of particularity, and uncertainty—lie at the heart of Rousseau’s banishment of discourse.

Thus, the sharp political discrepancy between the *Essai* and the *Contrat social* is grounded in a fundamental tension, in relation to language, between Rousseau’s requirements of authenticity and universality. To the extent that Rousseau is successful in securing a passionate speech that discloses the speaker’s being in unmediated or transparent fashion—that is, to the extent that Rousseau is successful in overcoming representation and assuring authenticity—to that very same extent he magnifies the coercion in speech and the disclosure of difference and particularity. For the voice of fully present southern speech always belongs to a *particulier*, and when that particular voice speaks, “the general will becomes mute” (CS 3:438). Conversely, the

more Rousseau tries to tame rhetoric by drawing on reason, the more he rationalizes language, and the more it thereby resembles the cold speech of the north, becoming a mode of representation attenuating authenticity.

Political legitimacy, then, is subject to a contradictory imperative when it comes to language. On one hand, viewed from the point of view of transparency or authenticity, legitimacy requires a fully present speech, disclosing the being of the speaker without any distorting mediation. Here, legitimacy hinges on presence. On the other hand, viewed from the point of view of universality, legitimacy requires a speech from *no one in particular*. It requires the anonymous voice of the universal or general, not that of an individual. Here, legitimacy hinges on anonymity, on absence.³¹ Rousseau is in a quandary.

ABSENT PRESENCE: THE INNER VOICE OF SOLITUDE

Rousseau wants authenticity and so needs voice and presence; and he wants universality and so needs silence and absence. In fact, I argue, he takes a stab at opting for both: he chooses a silent voice; he chooses an absent presence. Rousseau does so by reintroducing, into society, a moment of the lost silent *solitude* of the pure state of nature. Natural man's ghost is, contrary to many recent commentators' contention,³² not completely exorcised from the citizen. For Rousseau transfers the moment of authentic transparency from the realm of social relations to within the solitary individual himself. He renames fully present speech as the voice of the inner *conscience*. Outwardly silent, the solitary individual can hear his authentic inner voice. Rousseau secures universality via an outward silence and authenticity via an inner voice. The general will finds its voice in the outward silence of *les particuliers*.³³ Retreating inward, the citizen hears the infallible voice of the conscience:

Conscience! Conscience! Divine instinct, immortal and celestial voice, sure guide for a being who is ignorant and enclosed, but intelligent and free; infallible judge of good and evil that renders man like unto God. (E 4:600-1)³⁴

It is by a silent retreat into the inner conscience, and not by rancorous, passionate debate, that the voice of the general will is heard. "The conscience is timid and fearful; it seeks solitude; *le monde* and noise terrify it."³⁵ The inner voice that sounds the general will, to be heard, requires neither sophisticated philosophizing nor book-learning but rather the *bon sens* of a simple people—it is "le peuple" (and not sophisticated men of letters) who have "plus de bon sens" (E 4:601-2):

The common good manifests itself everywhere with evidence, and requires only *bon sens* to be discerned. . . . It is a question neither of factional intrigues nor eloquence to make into law what everyone has already resolved to do. (CS 3:437)

Thus, just as judges must use their “lumières naturelles” and “du bon sens” to interpret the laws according to circumstances (GP 3:215), so too is the general will itself simply an expression of the “natural disposition of the assembly” (EP 3:246-47). This “bon sens qui prononce,” “far from giving birth to interminable discussions, is on the contrary what prevents them” (M 3:861). To break the outer silence and to allow “éloquence” into the assembly is to subject “le peuple” to being “seduced by particular interests” (EP 3:246).

The starkly Cartesian terminology Rousseau draws on here (*bon sens*, *lumières naturelles*) is no coincidence. Just as Rousseau locates *bon sens* in the people, Descartes began the first part of his *Discours de la méthode* with the starkly egalitarian announcement that “Le bon sens est la chose du monde la mieux partagée;” “that which is called *le bon sens* or reason is naturally equal in all men.”³⁶ Again like Rousseau, Descartes contrasted this egalitarian “bon sens” or “raison naturelle toute pure” with the book learning of those who “believe only in ancient books.”³⁷ In an almost exact anticipation of Rousseau, the “bonnes moeurs” of the Spartans prompted Descartes to conclude that “the sciences in books . . . cannot approach the truth as much as the *simples raisonnements* that a man of *bon sens* could conduct by nature (*naturellement*).”³⁸ Elsewhere Descartes clarifies that our “lumière naturelle”³⁹ appears not via public debate⁴⁰—debate that he characterizes with the vocabulary of armed struggle⁴¹—but via the monological meditations of the solitary man “cloistered alone in a chamber.”⁴² His *Méditations* make it clear that the introspective turn to the inner “lights of nature” is designed to ground knowledge in complete certainty. While public debate of both sides of a question yields only uncertain probabilities,⁴³ when the human mind turns inward and by its natural lights conceives an idea clearly and distinctly, it attains certain knowledge.⁴⁴ As Genevieve Lloyd has pointed out, Descartes severs the link between rational inquiry and “public procedures of discourse, debate and successful argument.”⁴⁵

Rousseau’s invocation of the infallible conscience (and in parallel fashion, of a general will that cannot err) is also in part driven by his concern to hold at bay the uncertain knowledge that controversial rhetoric announces. But the effort to trace the Cartesian lineage of Rousseau’s conceptual apparatus should not obscure the fact that in Rousseau’s hands it undergoes a subtle yet crucial transformation. The transparent form of communication that Rousseau identifies with the moment of solitude is neither mutual discussion and debate nor Descartes’s strictly monological ratiocination but, rather, a

self-disclosure of sentiment directly from one heart to another, the transparent revelation of one conscience to another. Rousseau repeatedly uses the term “solitude” to characterize the mutual transparency of two persons engaged in a *tête-à-tête*. In his *Lettres morales*, he uses the phrase “promenades solitaires” to refer to his idyllic walks with Sophie (4:1084). And when St. Preux exclaims to Julie, “Reprenons-la donc, cette vie solitaire,” which contrasts with “le tumulte du monde,” he is referring to a harmonious union of lovers (2:107).⁴⁶ In the *Profession de foi*, Rousseau presents the *tête-à-tête* between the Savoyard Vicar and the libertine as a paradigm case of authentic, immediate communication from one conscience to another: “I opened my heart up to you without reservation” (4:630). Having explicitly made reference to *bon sens*, the Vicar explains, “I do not wish to dispute with you . . . for me it is sufficient to expose to you what I think in the simplicity of my heart. Consult your own during my discourse” (4:565-66). Descartes’s monological intellectual *bon sens*, centered on the innate ideas of the rational mind, is transformed by Rousseau into a spiritual *bon sens*, centered on the pure sentiments of the human heart, which not quite alone, gestures toward the presence of a silent other to whom one authentically unveils one’s heart in spiritual communion.

But tracing the Cartesian background of Rousseau’s terminology does reveal the precise nature of Rousseau’s argumentative strategy here: he is shoring up the first resource by appealing to a spiritualized and naturalized version of the second. It is true that Rousseau substitutes the voice of *nature* or the *conscience*, a universal innate sentiment, for universal reason. But while, as Charles Taylor has noted, Rousseau provides later romanticists with the conceptual apparatus to articulate a thorough-going subjectivism grounded in sentiment, Rousseau himself never took this radical step.⁴⁷ The Rousseauist conscience remains at least partly grounded in universalism through a kind of “fusion of reason and nature.”⁴⁸ Like the conscience, “the general will is in each individual a pure *act of the understanding that reasons in the silence of the passions*” (GM 3:286). Here, the passions have become an instance of a marked particular which is necessarily excluded in the construction of the universal. True to the Cartesian heritage, Rousseau constructs the universality of reason through an active exclusion of the bodily passions. (And since here rhetorical eloquence sounds the note of a siren to the passions, ready to unleash their unruly particularity upon the general will, it must be silenced in favor of the inner voice of reason so that the sovereign can discern the general will.) But to have simply relied on philosophical *reason* would have only reintroduced the problem of northern speech and representation at a level internal to the citizen. The Cartesian background demonstrates that while the first *Discours* contrasts nature to the sophisticated rea-

son of the philosophers, Rousseau's *bon sens*, which discerns the general will, is an unpretentious form of *natural reason*, an innate sentiment.

This formulation already helps to attenuate the force of an obvious objection to my interpretation of the general will as being grounded in the sentiment of the conscience. This objection is based on the widespread view that while Rousseau may be a sentimentalist in the realm of ethics or personal relations, he unreservedly banishes sentiment from politics. Politics, on this view, is the realm of a decidedly unsentimental reason.⁴⁹ Ostensible evidence for this sharp division of labor between sentiment and reason comes from *Sur l'économie politique*, where Rousseau says that "the voice of nature . . . is but a false guide for the magistrate. . . . He ought not follow any guide but public reason" (3:243). But this passage is about the magistrates, not the sovereign, and Rousseau's concern is not to contrast sentimental nature to reason but to ensure that magistrates follow the sovereign's general will rather than their own particular wills. The keyword here is not *reason* but *public*. Rousseau rules out not only the magistrates' "inclinations naturelles" but also their own private reason: "sa raison même lui doit être suspecte, et il ne doit suivre d'autre guide que la raison publique." This interpretation is later confirmed when Rousseau employs the same phrase (*raison publique*) in explicit identification with "voix céleste," the phrase he elsewhere uses for the conscience: referring to the laws, he says, "It is this *voix céleste* that dictates to every citizen the precepts of *la raison publique*" (3:248). Clearly, the law and the conscience are related,⁵⁰ and the inner sentiments of the heart have a political dimension. Little wonder that Rousseau refers to a paradigmatically political value as the "*sentiment of the just and the unjust*" which is "innate in the heart of man" (E 4:286) and proclaims that "the voice of the people" (which issues forth in the general will) "is in effect the voice of God" (which is heard by the solitary conscience) (EP 3:246).

Now we can see exactly why the standard objections against attributing to Rousseau a notion of authenticity lose their force here. The most common objection, perhaps best articulated recently by Ruth Grant, is that such an attribution is anachronistic: "*authenticité* did not acquire its association with sincerity or its quality as an attribute of the self until long after Rousseau's death." According to Grant, a focus on authenticity attributes to Rousseau a subjectivism that "conceals the moral content" of his thought: "One can be authentically many things, including authentically dishonest."⁵¹ Grant is of course correct to object to reducing Rousseau to radical subjectivism, but as I have suggested, *Rousseauist* authenticity is neither the thorough-going subjectivist notion nor the fully Romanticist attribute of the private self targeted by Grant: Rousseauist authenticity hinges on the sentiments of the heart, sentiments whose epistemological status oscillates between the subjectivism of

the bodily senses and passions and the universalism of natural reason. Rousseau's is a political and hence ultimately *public* notion of authenticity, as illustrated by the *Contrat social*'s reference to "all acts of sovereignty, that is all authentic acts of the general will" (3:374). Rousseau tries to resolve the tension between authenticity and universality by giving authenticity itself, in the political realm, a universal basis. Nor is the notion of authenticity at work only in texts that treat of "expressive" subjects such as music, love, or autobiographical confession. In a passage from the very political *Lettres écrites de la montagne* that identifies the institutional location of the general will in Geneva, Rousseau writes that sovereignty "is not gathered and does not speak authentically except for in the *Conseil général*" (3:845). Once we make clear what *Rousseauist* authenticity means, the charge of anachronism loses significance.⁵²

THE ELOQUENCE OF REPUBLICAN VIRTUE

But this universalistic "solution" ultimately poses its own problem for Rousseau: if from the philosophical tradition (in which Descartes must be placed) Rousseau draws the lesson that the general will must be discerned in the "silence of the passions," from the rhetorical tradition he concludes that politics does away with the passions only at the risk of impotence. For "la tranquille raison" is impotent if the passions are not mobilized: "il n'y a que la passion qui nous fasse agir" (E 4:453). Above all, it is only by moving the passions that the *grand Législateur* or Lawgiver can *institute* and bind together the sovereign people capable of exercising freedom: "All the passions unite men, while the necessity to survive forces them to flee one another" (EL 5:380). The *Législateur* must use eloquence—the substitute that negotiates a realm between reason and force—in the founding: "Not able to employ either force or reasoning, [he] must of necessity have recourse to an authority of another order, which can prevail without *violence* and *persuade* without *convincing*" (CS 3:383).⁵³

Rousseau signals his apprehension with this reentry of rhetoric when he dictates that the great *Législateur*, after having founded a people by persuading them to adopt the laws he has drafted, must—to avoid tyranny—depart from the city (CS 3:382-83). But after the *Législateur*'s departure, the magistrates turn out to perpetuate the many tasks initially reserved for him: even the proposal of new laws is restricted to the magistracy (CS 3:439), who—using ruse, public education, the civil religion, and national festivities—continually attempt to (re)institute the sovereign people.⁵⁴ So if rhetoric's appeal to the unruly passions is an anathema to the legislative process of determining

the general will, it turns out to be indispensable to politics as a whole: the exclusion of humanist-controversial rhetoric (and hence particularity) from the *determination* of the general will in the assembly must go in tandem with the use of motivistic rhetoric to *declare* what “all have already sensed” (CS 3:437), to move and virtuously form the citizens to act accordingly. That rhetoric’s reentry into politics via the motivistic declaration of the general will threatens to smuggle *coercion* back into politics is intimated by Rousseau’s infamous choice of words: compelling the citizen to abide by the general will simply means that “on le forcera d’être libre” (CS 3:364).

The question is how to *harness* the passions for politics without allowing their unruly particularity to overwhelm the general will and to combine the *force* of eloquence’s appeal to the passions while securing the citizens from coercion. The answer is republican virtue.

Rousseau’s attempt to shore up the legitimacy of the general will by shifting its natural grounding from an internal, spiritualized *universal* reason to a patriotic *generality* centered on a concrete polity must be such that it fulfills at least two functions. First, if the universal was constructed by the active exclusion of particularity, generality must be constructed not by expelling the particularity of the passions but by stabilizing and anchoring them in (the virtuous love of) a concrete *patrie*. Here, Rousseau bases political rule not in a *universal* rational will but in a will that is *general* in relation to a *particular* polity. Second, this anchor itself, in order that it not be dislodged by an overabundant sea of free-floating signs, must mimic the conscience in grounding the polity in nature. Rousseauist reason must be patriotic *and* natural.

Rousseau prepares the ground for republican virtue by noting that the passions are not good or bad in and of themselves: “All are good when one retains mastery over them; all are bad when one is their slave” (E 4:819). It is, in any case, “an undertaking as vain as it is ridiculous to wish to destroy them” (4:490-91). The task instead should be to “place order and regulation upon the passions” (4:500). Even if they could be eliminated, it would be undesirable to do so in the citizen: “A man who had no passions would certainly be an awful citizen” (EP 3:259). Without passions, citizens would at best emulate cosmopolitans who proclaim their love for humanity to avoid their duty toward their neighbors (E 4:248-49).

Not eliminated, the passions are to be *domesticated*: they are, in one sense, directed to the sphere of “domestic” politics—*la patrie*; they are, in another sense, collectively banished to the domestic sphere of woman; and in a final sense, their apparent unruliness is thereby tamed. Above all, Rousseau wants to transform the citizens’ passions, and especially their *amour-propre*, into the virtue of *amour de la patrie*, a “sweet and lively sentiment which joins the *force of amour propre* to all the beauty of *virtue*, [and] gives it an energy that,

without disfiguring it, renders it the most heroic of all the passions" (EP 3:255). It is the task of the female *citoyenne*, in the domestic sphere, to inculcate such a virtuous passion in the children of *la patrie*.

It is no surprise that Rousseau turns to the notion of virtue here. Our discussion of rhetoric showed that to the extent that eloquence provided a *supplément* for coercion, it did so only insofar as it reproduced its objectionable characteristics. So Rousseau turns to a second *supplément*: "there is no . . . virtue without combat. The word *virtue* comes from *force*; force is the basis for all virtue" (E 4:817). Virtue is, like eloquence, a form of *combat*. By harnessing the passions, it provides politics with the *force* to motivate. By domesticating the passions, republican virtue, which is nothing but "the conformity of the particular will to the general" (EP 3:252), ensures that the passions motivate action in accordance with the general will, rather than particular ones. This second *supplément* for coercion simultaneously draws the citizen's passions *outward* (republican virtue is anchored externally in the *patrie*) and *returns inward* (the anchor penetrates the heart of the citizen). For Rousseau's model of virtue is Cato, not Socrates, and Cato "always carried" his *patrie* "in the depths of his heart" (EP 3:255).

This virtuous domestication of the passions allows Rousseau to envision a form of speech proper to modern republican citizenship. It is precisely this speech, which echoes the *Législateur's* virtuous combination of heartfelt eloquence and rational constancy, that Émile learns.⁵⁵ Émile authentically "transmits in speaking the movements of his soul" (E 4:547), but his language is not quite the same as the figurative southern speech: it is "un langage simple et peu figuré"; he ordinarily speaks literally (*au propre*) (4:546). Although, like all modern languages, Émile's operates via representation, the literalness of his sparse speech tightly binds word to thing, thereby attenuating northern mediation. His speech manifests his inner constancy: he is "rarement passionné" (4:546), and Émile attributes the durable effects of his speech to "un raisonnement froid et fort" (*Émile et Sophie*, 4:922). This not to say, however, that Émile's speech "is altogether *flegmatique et froid*." Like the passionate southern speech, Émile's has "accent" and "de la force"; he even speaks "occasionally with vehemence" (E 4:546-47). After all, the rational articulation that his speech shares with all modern tongues stems in his case from a sentimental, natural reason or *bon sens*, not the corrupting reason of philosophers. This sublime combination, more "enchanteant" than the "artificieuse éloquence" of others, yields a "généreuse franchise" that is alone "veritably eloquent" (E 4:546-47).

This *domesticated* speech, which combines rationality with a force that pierces through the artificial gallantry of *politesse*, can be heard in Geneva's

masculine *cercles*, where a dozen or so men regularly assemble to play, chat, read, drink, and smoke in fellowship:

Amongst themselves, the men, freed from having to lower their *ideas* to the reach of women and to dress up *reason* in gallant attire, can immerse themselves in weighty and serious *discourses* without fear of ridicule. One dares to speak of *patrie* and of *virtue*, without passing for a bore; one dares to *be oneself*. . . . If the turn of the conversation is less *polite*, the *reasons* are more weighty . . . each, feeling *attacked* by all the *forces* of his *adversary*, is obliged to use all of his own to *defend* himself; in such manner does *l'esprit* acquire precision and *vigour*. (LA 5:96)

Speech as a form of combat has its place in the Rousseauist polity after all but only when it borrows its force from the patriotic *virtue* that simultaneously domesticates it and banishes it to a nonlegislative social sphere. The real site of citizen “participation” is not the silent legislative assembly but the gendered social arena of family, *fêtes*, and *cercles*, which are political only in the *passive* sense that it is here that citizens receive instruction in republican virtue.⁵⁶

If virtue recovers the *force* of eloquence, then how does it secure citizen freedom against coercion? Not eliminated, its force must be *naturalized*.

If the laws of nations could have, like those of *nature*, an inflexibility that no human *force* could ever vanquish, dependence upon men would become again dependence upon things. (E 4:311)

Rousseau’s hope is that by naturalizing the external ground of the general will, the citizen would no longer be dependent on any will at all; and dependence on things, it will be recalled, does not threaten freedom. Just as the conscience was an internal conduit to the voice of nature, the *patrie* must be provided with a *natural*—even if external—anchor for virtue’s ordering of the passions. For the *patrie* itself is not a natural object; instead, it is a highly conventional (and in Rousseau’s oeuvre a multifarious) construction, more a result of, rather than a ground for, the act of founding. Rousseau takes the concrete particularity of the *patrie* for granted; the task he sets himself is to stake out its rootedness in nature.

The problem is the following. On one hand, Rousseau believes in a myth of “concreteness,” which holds that it is just a fact of human nature that our affections cannot firmly attach themselves to abstract objects (in contrast to allegedly concrete ones). To be stabilized, the passions require a concrete object, attachment to which can transform dependence on another’s will into dependence on things. On the other hand, our affections are unstable insofar

as they are attached to *exterior* objects, because those objects are subject to constant movement themselves.

Everything is in a continual flux over the earth (*sur la terre*): nothing keeps a constant and stationary form, and our affections that *attach* themselves to exterior objects (*choses extérieures*) pass and change necessarily like them. . . . There is nothing solid to which the heart can attach itself. (*Rêveries*, 1:1046)

All affections attached to external objects suffer from those objects' continual flux "sur la terre"—all external objects except, by implication, "la terre" itself.

In his *Projet de constitution pour la Corse*, Rousseau quickly stumbles on the earth and its soil as the master-trope that provides a natural and solid ground on which the *patrie* can be rooted: "It is from the nature of the soil that the primitive character of the inhabitants is born" (3:913). Rousseau advises the Corsicans to adopt a constitution that "carries a people to spread itself out over the entire surface of its territory" (3:904), as if to maximize the polity's rootedness in the land. That Rousseau had a political preference for peasant life in the country over city life is often recognized; that this preference is deeply rooted in Rousseau's strategy of (what I call) the territorial domestication of the passions is less often remarked on. "The peasants are *attached* to their *soil* much more than city dwellers are to their cities," and their rustic life nurtures women "whose senses are less inflamed" and men who are less "enervated by debauchery" (3:904). Rousseau proceeds to sharply contrast the rural life of working the land and the urban life of commerce. Lamenting the gradual corruption of the Swiss, he finds the culprit in a life increasingly centered around commerce. But what exactly is the problem with a commercial and money-centered life? "Not only is money a sign, but it is a relative sign." (Worse still, it is a "signe d'inégalité" [3:921].) As a sign, its proliferation threatens to dislodge the "thing" that grounds the polity in nature: "partout où l'argent est de première nécessité, la nation se *détache* de l'*agriculture* pour *se jeter* [as if to drown itself] dans les professions plus lucratives" (3:920).⁵⁷ The link to liberty is explicit: "Commerce produces wealth, but agriculture ensures liberty" (3:905). Commerce undermines the project of virtuous domestication by subjecting society to the constant flux and circulation of goods between counties, of people between classes, and (above all) of money. "In the middle of all this movement in trade and exchanges, it is impossible for destructive vices not to creep into a nation" (3:924-25). To anchor the polity in nature against this chaos of free-floating signs, Rousseau makes three key recommendations. First, the state should

draw its funds not from taxes on commerce but primarily from public *lands*. Second, it is crucial that “All these public revenues” be “in the nature of *things* rather than money” (3:933). Third, the Corsicans must *labor the land*, for it is the soil that anchors *la patrie* in nature: “Le meilleur mobile d’un gouvernement est l’amour de la patrie, et cet amour se cultive avec les champs” (3:941).

And now, it turns out that attachment to the land not only naturalizes the *patrie* but is the exterior source of republican virtue’s capacity to emulate (like eloquence) the force of combat: “From the *force* with which this laborious and independent life would attach the Swiss to their *patrie* resulted two greater means for its *defence*, that is, concert in resolution and courage in *combat*” (CC 3:915). For republicans, the battles waged by virtue are not just internal ones but those waged against the foreign other. “The cultivation of the earth forms patient and robust men, the kind that is necessary to become good soldiers” (3:905). Even for Rousseau, whose emphasis on the virtues of *defensive* militarism contrasts with the more thorough-going belligerence of the republican tradition as a whole,⁵⁸ the foreign other is at once a disease to be expelled from the Republic *and* a spectre who is necessary to give definition to its concrete boundedness. Republican generality actively excludes the foreign other, and territory serves as the master-trope not just for grounding the *patrie* in nature but also for the boundedness of the Republic.⁵⁹

But what if the territory underpinning the *patrie* is itself physically threatened by the foreign other? Even if the earth is the most constant of external objects to which the passions can attach themselves, in an international state of nature, the Republic’s particular territory is far from secure.⁶⁰ Where the territory’s physical integrity cannot be secured, Rousseau is forced—lest he abandon his master-trope—to find a *supplément* for the bounded earth. He now comes full circle: the *supplément* is found within the citizen, who, deprived of a secure physical land, must offer up his *heart*—where Rousseau had previously located the voice of nature—as the supplementary soil in which to cultivate the liberty of the Republic. This retreat inward is precisely what Rousseau advises the Poles in his *Considérations sur le gouvernement de Pologne*. Describing Poland as weak, oppressed, lacking military discipline, and, above all, as a country whose territory is “always threatened” and subject to the “caprice of its neighbours,” Rousseau proclaims that the only “means to give it the stability that escapes it . . . is to so establish the Republic in the heart of the Poles, that it subsists despite all the efforts of its oppressors.” What cannot be anchored in the earth must now be secured in the heart (3:959).

Desperate circumstances call for desperate measures. And the character of those measures, designed to enable the heart to better emulate a bounded

territory, serves to better disclose and accentuate the exclusionary, violent, and tenuous character of Rousseau's republican master-trope. Having cited three great *Législateurs* of antiquity—Moses, Lycurgus, and Numa—as ancient models to be emulated, Rousseau then goes on to expound on the general republican principles that guided them:

All sought ties that would *attach* their citizens to the *patrie* and to each other; these were found in particularistic customs, in religious ceremonies that, by their nature, were always *exclusive and national* . . . in games . . . in shows (*spectacles*) that, reminding them of the history of their ancestors . . . would capture their hearts, would inspire (*enflammaient*) in them a lively emulation, and forcefully attach them to this *patrie* with which they were incessantly occupied. (GP 3:958)

Of the three ancient models, it was Moses whose enterprise most precisely anticipated the Polish territorial predicament: it was he who undertook “to found *en corps de nation* a swarm of unfortunate fugitives . . . who, not owning a single inch of land, were a band of foreigners upon the face of the earth.” By what means was Moses able to give his landless people an “institution that endured the test of time, fortune, and conquerors, which five thousand years were not able to destroy”? Moses' genius, according to Rousseau, consisted in substituting, for the boundaries of the territory the Jews lacked, exclusionary practices and *moeurs* that built up within the hearts of each “citizen” the required barriers against the foreign other (and the hybridity that it represents):

To prevent his people from melting away amongst foreign peoples, he gave them *moeurs* and customs that were unalloyable (*inalliables*) with those of other nations; he overloaded them with rites, particularistic ceremonies . . . [to] render them strangers amongst other men; and all the fraternal ties that he fostered amongst the members of his republic were but so many *barriers* that kept them apart from their neighbours and prevented them from *mixing* with them. (3:956-57)

It turns out that a great *Législateur* whose citizens face territorial insecurity must create ever stronger *exclusionary boundaries within their hearts* as a substitute for the territorial boundaries of more fortunate *patries*. And the greater the territorial insecurity, the greater the consequent violence of the exclusionary sentiments that must be fostered. Thus, Numa, able to attach the Romans directly to the soil because their territory was secured, could afford to soften the exclusionary violence in their hearts, founding his people “by gentle institutions that *attached* them to each other and all to their *soil*” (3:957).

The Poles of course have no such luxury. It is precisely for this reason that Rousseau's advice to the Poles produces what is perhaps the most xenophobic of his texts. Via an elaborate set of national practices—public *fêtes*, monuments, distinct Polish clothing, public games, and ceremonies—Rousseau hopes (in a most totalitarian moment) “that the citizens be ceaselessly occupied with the *patrie* . . . that it be incessantly held before their eyes,” in order to “make of *l'amour de la patrie* the dominant passion.” This republican “zèle patriotique” implies “a natural repugnance for mingling with the foreigner,” a repugnance for the foreign other designed to prevent the Poles “de se fondre, de se plaire, de s'allier” with other peoples (3:960-64).

This is not to say that exclusion is a feature only of polities whose territory is at risk. Rather, those polities simply accentuate a fundamental feature of Rousseau's republican attempt to secure freedom. The general will of any polity is particular in relation to all foreigners,⁶¹ and “every patriot is harsh towards foreigners” (E 4:248-49). Rousseau's exclusionary politics is ubiquitous: he repeatedly praises ethnonational “purity,” in contrast to the mixture that for him represents the corruption and confusion of the people's *moeurs*. The Republic is one in which difference is buried.

CONCLUSION

In the final analysis, it is unclear which—heart or territory—is the originary model and which the simulacrum. When Rousseau tells the Poles that the heart “is the *unique sanctuary* that force can neither reach nor destroy” (3:959), it sounds as if territory is simply a fragile copy. Even the natural force that territory lends to politics may simply be in emulation of the heart: the “conserving *force*” that “will secure you against destruction, and will conserve your government and your liberty in its *only true sanctuary*” is “the heart of the Poles” (3:1013). No wonder that when the trope of territory is at risk, Rousseau bids a hasty retreat inward. And the physical territory provides no more (or less) of an anchor in nature than the heart. The return to the heart casts doubt on territory's status as a *thing* grounded in nature—a status crucial for freedom, because only if force is natural(ized) can it remain distinct from sheer coercion. While the earth itself may be a thing of nature, a *bounded territory* as the *property* of a particular people is ultimately a highly conventional construction resulting from a social contract that accompanies the great *Législateur*'s act of founding. The famous “beginning” of civil society described in the second *Discours* demonstrates not only that property and society are founded in a ruse but also that their origin is in a verbal (and hence conventional) act: *ceci est à moi* (3:164). Ultimately, no idea of natural things

whose independence can serve to anchor the word in nature is possible, for as a veritable *supplément*, the sign even modifies the idea supposedly at its origin: “les langues, en changeant les signes, modifient aussi les idées qu’ils représentent” (E 4:346). The attempt to ground the word in the thing (and the parallel attempt to ground the *patrie* in nature) faces the problem that the distinction between word and thing is a distinction articulated in language itself. Hence, Rousseau turns to the eloquent *Législateur* who is able, via an almost *supernatural* act, to produce linguistically the appearance of a dichotomy grounded in the nature of things. *Nature*, like Julie’s garden, turns out to be a construct whose artificiality is masked by the eloquent skill, not to say artifice, of the founder. The polity may *appear* anchored in nature either via its physical territory or via the voice within the citizen’s heart, but both objects must already bear the denaturing imprint of the founding act. The “voice of nature” heard by the citizen who turns to his conscience echoes the sublime eloquence the god-like *Législateur* recorded on his heart. It is the *patrie* that Cato “always carried . . . in the depths of his heart.” Ultimately, neither heart nor territory is sufficient to naturalize the force of the laws. Everything hinges on the nature of the *Législateur*’s founding verb⁶² whose imprint both objects must already bear.

We are now in the position to more fully make sense of the narrative logic of Rousseau’s argument. First and foremost, we have seen that there is an inner logic to the text itself: Rousseau marshals successive intellectual resources when solutions to previous puzzles disclose new dilemmas of their own. But to fully appreciate the trajectory of Rousseau’s argument requires understanding the intellectual background that furnishes not just resources but also the parameters for the puzzles to be solved. If Rousseau’s appeal to reason is best understood against a Cartesian background, the broader context that fuels his argumentative strategies is the debate, stretching back to antiquity, between the partisans of philosophy and rhetoric. Both sides of the debate hold enough purchase on Rousseau to compel him to acknowledge their commonplaces when he wanders into their intellectual territory. So when contemplating the requirements for epistemically justified conviction, Rousseau is impressed with the commonplace that unadorned reason is sufficient and that eloquent rhetoric is either superfluous or a tool for deception. But when dealing with the ethico-political question of the motivational bases for action and persuasion, his argument is compelled by the rhetoricians’ commonplace that reason is impotent if the passions are not mobilized. Rousseau’s successive appeals to the heart, territory, and again the heart can be seen as an attempt to navigate these poles in an ongoing quest for freedom. The heart invites a constant return because it is the site of the novel answer available to Rousseau—the category of sentimental, natural reason, in uni-

versalist and patriotic versions—that attempts sidestepping the whole debate between the partisans of rhetoric and philosophy. “The noble *sentiment* that inspires [Émile’s language] gives him *force* and *elevation*” (E 4:547).

NOTES

1. In Rousseau’s famous formulation, the problem is, “Trouver une forme d’association qui défende et protège de toute la force commune la personne et les biens de chaque associé, et par laquelle chacun, s’unissant à tous, n’obéisse qu’à lui-même, et reste aussi libre qu’auparavant” (CS 3:360). (All references to Rousseau’s writings are to the *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Bernard Gagnebin & Marcel Raymond, 5 vols. [Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1959-95], and appear parenthetically in the text as title [volume: page]. Title abbreviations are as follows: CC = *Projet de constitution pour la Corse*, CS = *Contrat social*, E = *Émile*, EL = *Essai sur l’origine des langues*, EP = *Sur l’économie politique*, LA = *Lettre à d’Alembert*, GM = Geneva Manuscript of CS, GP = *Considérations sur le gouvernement de Pologne*, and M = *Lettres écrites de la Montagne*. All italics and translations are mine.) In his *Lettres Morales*, Rousseau says “La liberté consiste moins à faire sa volonté qu’à n’être pas soumis à celle d’autrui” (3:841). See Frederick Neuhouser, “Freedom, Dependence, and the General Will,” *The Philosophical Review* 102 (3) (1993), 363-95, 380-81 for commentary. Locke’s definition of freedom reveals all the features I identify: freedom is “not to be subject to the inconstant, uncertain, unknown, Arbitrary Will of another Man” (*Two Treatises on Government*, ed. P. Laslett, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, [1960] 1988, 284).

2. See Aristotle, *Politics* 1286-88, and Locke, *Two Treatises on Government*, 303-4 (II.57). Rousseau of course makes a similar move—see EP (3:248-49).

3. Patrick Riley, *The General Will Before Rousseau* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), is not mistaken to see Rousseau’s decisive contribution as grounding politics in a general, as opposed to a universal, will. But as Riley himself concedes, Rousseau does not cleanly distinguish between generality and universality in his work and often refers to the universality of the general will. Riley interprets this ambiguity in terms of a progression to Rousseau’s mature position. The problem with this interpretation is that the references to “universalité” and indeed, as we shall see, the appeal to a universal reason appear in the mature works as well. I think it best to see Rousseau’s oscillation in terms of the different strategies he deploys when different philosophical problems come to the fore. I defend talk in terms of authenticity in section V.

4. See Harvey Yunis, *Taming Democracy: Models of Political Rhetoric in Classical Athens* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 49, for the link between free political speech and democratic ideology for the ancient Greeks.

5. For the theme’s prevalence in French writers of the time (including Voltaire), see Jean Starobinski’s treatment in “Eloquence and Liberty,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 38(2), (1977), 195-210. For the British milieu, see Adam Potkay, *The Fate of Eloquence in the Age of Hume* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 30ff.

6. His point is that Helen is wrongly blamed, even if she returned to Troy, because “speech persuaded and deluded her mind.” In that case, “The persuader, then, is the wrongdoer, because he compelled her. . . . She was compelled by the speech” (Gorgias, in *Early Greek Political Thought from Homer to the Sophists*, ed. M. Gagarin & P. Woodruff, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 192-93).

7. See *Republic* 412e-412c and 429a-430d.

8. Cf. Plato's characterization of oratory as a "knack" that flatters the base passions (*Gorgias* 462b-465c).
9. Quentin Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 49.
10. See Geneviève Rodis-Lewis, "L'Art de parler et L'Essai sur l'origine des langues," *Revue Internationale de philosophie* (1967): 407-20. On its sources as a whole, see Jean Starobinski's introduction to the *Essai* in the Pléiade edition (5:CLXV-CCIV)
11. Bernard Lamy, *La rhétorique ou l'art de parler*, ed. Benoît Timmermans (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1998), 220 (book 2, chapter 11).
12. Thomas M. Conley, *Rhetoric in the European Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 6.
13. *Ibid.*, 37.
14. "La parole représente la pensée par des signes conventionnels, et l'écriture représente de même la parole" (Fragment, 2:1249). Note that Saussure's *langue/parole* opposition postdates Rousseau; for Rousseau, both speech and writing are categories of language.
15. See Jacques Derrida, *De la grammatologie* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1967), 417.
16. On the relation between theatrical and political representation, see Tracy B. Strong, *Jean Jacques Rousseau: The Politics of the Ordinary* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994), 91-100.
17. Plutarch, *Les Vies des hommes illustres*, ed. Gerard Walter, trans. Jacques Amyot (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, N.D.), 112.
18. Émile's manner is "simple, sans ornement, sans apprêt" (E 4:420).
19. Terence Cave, *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1979), 5-6.
20. Cf. Linda Zerilli, *Signifying Woman: Culture and Chaos in Rousseau, Burke, and Mill* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 41.
21. When asked why Lycurgus had passed so few laws, his nephew responded, "Parce qu'il ne faut pas beaucoup de lois à ceux qui ne parlent pas beaucoup" (Plutarch, *Les Vies des hommes illustres*, 113).
22. The same relation that Rousseau depicts between southern and northern speech he reproduces again between speech as a whole and writing. One might say (with Derrida) that northern speech represents the principle of writing within speech itself. Derrida is right to argue, I think, that the distinction between southern and northern speech is a rationally articulated distinction and not a natural one, which thus "trace un axe de référence à l'intérieur de chaque langue." Ultimately, "Aucune langue n'est du sud ou du nord" (*De la grammatologie*, 310). This implies that the promise of a fully transparent speech is one that Rousseau makes only to doom from the very start and that although I tease out the problems with the *Essai*'s freedom-solution at the political level by comparison with the *Contrat social*, the *Essai* itself indicates an originary problem of difference inherent to language as such. See also Peggy Kamuf, "Origins: Rousseau Writes His *Essai sur l'origine des langues*," *A New History of French Literature*, ed. Denis Hollier (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 455-60.
23. On the political significance of Rousseau's musical theory, see Jean Starobinski, *Le remède dans le mal: Critique et légitimation de l'artifice à l'âge des Lumières* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989), 208-32; John T. Scott, "Rousseau and the Melodious Language of Freedom," *The Journal of Politics* 59(3), (1997), 803-29; John T. Scott, "The Harmony Between Rousseau's Musical Theory and his Philosophy," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 52(2), (1997): 287-308. See also Robert Wokler, *Rousseau on Society, Politics, Music and Language: An Historical Interpretation of His Early Writings* (New York: Garland, 1987).
24. For the notion of supplementarity in Rousseau, see Derrida's now classic analysis in *De la grammatologie*, 206ff.

25.

Il est aisé de convaincre un enfant que ce qu'on lui veut enseigner est utile: mais ce n'est rien de le convaincre, si l'on ne sait le persuader. En vain la tranquille raison nous fait approuver ou blâmer; il n'y a que la passion qui nous fasse agir. (E 4:453)

See also Roland Barthes, "L'ancienne rhétorique," *Communications* 16 (1970): 172-229, and Neil Saccamano, "Rhetoric, Consensus, and the Law in Rousseau's *Social Contract*," *Modern Language Notes* 107(4), (1992), 730-51, 742.

26. Saccamano, "Rhetoric, Consensus, and the Law," 744.

27. Cf. *ibid.*, 743.

28. For Rousseau, the rational structure of legitimate political rule, that is, the universal principles of political right, flows directly from the nature of law itself. See Roger D. Masters, *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), 271-73.

29. Not only the locution "aucune communication" but almost the entirety of chapters 1 and 2 of book 4 of the *Contrat social* stand opposed to the assimilation of Rousseau's use of the word *délibération*, in this context, to discussion. Cf. Bernard Manin, "Volonté général ou délibération? Esquisse d'une théorie de la délibération politique," *Le Débat* 33 (January 1985): 72-93. The other sense of *délibération* is "decision" or "resolution"; the verb *délibérer* can have the sense of *réfléchir* (as can the English verb *to deliberate*).

30. That Rousseau is impressed with the problem of uncertainty at an epistemological level is demonstrated, for example, in the second and third of the *Lettres morales*, which are occupied almost entirely with outlining this problem. His solution in the final letter is, of course, to ground certainty in the inner voice of nature, the infallible conscience. See also the third of his *Rêveries*, where Rousseau characterizes his project of moral reform as an attempt to re-establish, via the universal truths written on human beings' hearts, the moral certainty that modern philosophers had shaken in him.

31. Cf. Jan Marejko, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau et la dérive totalitaire* (Lausanne, Switzerland: L'Age d'Homme, 1984), 125.

32. For example, A. M. Melzer, *The Natural Goodness of Man: On the System of Rousseau's Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990). A relevant exception is Zerilli, *Signifying Woman*, 18.

33. Jean Starobinski, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau, la transparence et l'obstacle; suivi de Sept essais sur Rousseau* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 32, 59.

34. It is true that Rousseau puts this in the mouth of the Savoyard Vicar. But the passage is simply a minor revision of an almost identical passage in his own voice in his *Lettres morales* (4:1111).

35. *Lettres morales*, 4:1112. Rousseau advises Sophie that without the insulation that solitude affords from social relations, "Vous n'entendrez jamais la voix de la nature" (4:1113).

36. *Discours de la méthode*, in *Oeuvres de Descartes*, ed. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery, rev. ed., vol. 6 (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1965), 1-2.

37. *Ibid.*, 77.38. *Ibid.*, 12-13.39. *Ibid.*, 10.40. *Ibid.*, 68-69.

41. On the military metaphors, see Peter France, *Rhetoric and Truth in France: Descartes to Diderot* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1972), 43, and chapter 2 in general for Descartes's attitude toward debate and rhetoric.

42. *Discours de la méthode*, 11.

43. René Descartes, *Méditations*, in *Oeuvres de Descartes*, ed. Charles Adam & Paul Tannery, rev. ed., vol. 9 (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1964), 7.
44. Third Meditation.
45. Genevieve Lloyd, *The Man of Reason: "Male" and "Female" in Western Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 43.
46. See also Julie's letter 15, part 2, where she also equates solitude with the tête-à-tête of lovers in a paradigm case of transparency of hearts.
47. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 359.
48. *Ibid.*, 362.
49. See Masters, *Political Philosophy of Rousseau*, 274-78, and Melzer, *Natural Goodness of Man*, for the view that politics is the realm of strict unsentimental reason. Ernst Cassirer goes even further in *The Question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, trans. Peter Gay, 2d ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989). While he acknowledges that in the *Nouvelle Héloïse* Rousseau depicts "all human sentiment and passion as if enveloped in the atmosphere of pure sensitivity to nature" (p. 86), and that in his personal life, which he immortalized in literature, Rousseau "not only represented the elemental power of feeling" but "embodied it with unprecedented impressiveness" (p. 90), Cassirer concludes with "the remarkable fact" that "Rousseau—in opposition to the predominant opinion of the century—eliminated feeling from the foundation of ethics" (p. 99) and not just politics.
50. See the editor's note to *Émile*, 4:1561-62, as well as Robert Derathé, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau et la science politique de son temps*, 2d ed. (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1970), 236-37.
51. Ruth Weissbourd Grant, *Hypocrisy and Integrity: Machiavelli, Rousseau, and the Ethics of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 58-59.
52. Grant practically concedes this point herself when, having identified integrity as Rousseau's ideal, she then goes on to make authenticity one of its components! "Like unity, autonomy and authenticity are also elements of Rousseau's ideal, but only because these qualities are inseparable from the moral components of integrity" (*Hypocrisy and Integrity*, 84-85). Grant's parallel concern, that a focus on authenticity "conceals the moral content" of Rousseau's thought, is problematic insofar as it presupposes that any concept attributed to Rousseau must necessarily capture everything relevant in his oeuvre.
53. Christopher Kelly rightly calls the *Législateur* a "musical legislator" ("'To Persuade without Convincing': The Language of Rousseau's Legislator," *American Journal of Political Science* 31[2], [1987], 329).
54. On the *Législateur*-like role of the magistracy, see Melzer, *Natural Goodness of Man*, chapter 12, Masters, *Political Philosophy of Rousseau*, and Lester G. Crocker, "Julie, ou La Nouvelle Duplicité," *Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau* 36 (1963-65): 105-52.
55. And which he puts to use in his role as quasi-*Législateur* among the slaves in *Émile et Sophie*. See Jean Starobinski, "Rousseau et l'éloquence," in *Rousseau After Two Hundred Years*, ed. R. A. Leigh (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 185-205. The "raison sublime" (CS 3:383) of the *Législateur*'s eloquence combines the force of the passionate, melodious southern tongue with the rational constancy of the cold, articulated speech of the north, without succumbing to the latter's artificiality or frigidity. "Il faut que le feu de l'enthousiasme se joigne aux profondeurs de la sagesse et la constance de la vertu." (GM 3:317).
56. This division of labor, between the silent assembly where the citizens gather as sovereign and speech-filled sites where men, women, and children gather as subjects of the *patrie*, mirrors in surprising detail the Roman model that inspires Rousseau: unlike the Greeks, whose assemblies united the functions of *speaking* and *voting*, the Romans sharply distinguished the *comitia*,

where they gathered sorted as citizens in order to vote but where there was no speaking, from the *contio*, an antecedently held public meeting of unsorted Romans, gathered for speaking but not voting (Lily Ross Taylor, *Roman Voting Assemblies: From the Hannibalic War to the Dictatorship of Caesar*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1966, 2-3). After 139 BCE, the voting itself was silent, cast via small wooden tablets covered with wax (pp. 34-35). I am grateful to Richard Tuck for pressing me on the importance of the Roman precedent.

57. In GP, he says, "L'argent est tout au plus le supplément des hommes, et le supplément ne vaudra jamais la chose" (3:1004-5).

58. See Grace G. Roosevelt, *Reading Rousseau in the Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 142.

59. In *Émile*, Rousseau laments the fate of modern European peoples who have lost their tight link to a particular soil:

les anciens peuples, se regardant la plupart comme autochtones ou originaires de leur propre pays, l'occupaient depuis assez longtemps pour avoir . . . laissé le temps au climat de faire sur eux des impressions durables: au lieu que, parmi nous . . . les récentes émigrations des barbares *ont tout mêlé, tout confondu* . . . les Européens ne sont plus . . . que des Scythes diversement *dégénérés* quant à la figure, et encore plus quant aux *mœurs* . . . les antiques distinctions des races, les qualités de l'air et du *terroir* marquaient plus fortement de peuple à peuple les tempéraments, les figures, les moeurs, les caractères, que tout cela ne peut se marquer de nos jours, où l'inconstance européenne ne laisse à nulle *cause naturelle* le temps de faire ses impressions, et où les forêts abattues, les marais desséchés, la terre plus uniformément, quoique plus mal, cultivée, ne laisse plus, même au physique, la même différence de terre à terre et de pays à pays. (E 4:830)

No longer anchored in a particular territory, modern European peoples have lost their anchor in nature, which turns out not only to be the natural cause of difference but its stabilizer as well. Anchor dislodged, nothing but confusion.

60. See his *État de guerre*.

61. "la volonté de l'Etat, quoique générale par rapport à ses membres, ne l'est plus par rapport aux autres Etats et à leurs membres, mais devient pour eux une volonté particulière et individuelle" (EP 3:245). See also Rousseau's footnote in CS (3:371).

62. The expression "verbe fondateur" is Bronislaw Baczko's, in "La Cité et ses langages" in *Rousseau After Two Hundred Years*, ed. R. A. Leigh (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

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