Article

EJPT

European Journal of Political Theory
2014, Vol. 13(3) 341–361
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DOI: 10.1177/1474885113492504
ept.sagepub.com
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Rousseau and the minimal self: A solution to the problem of *amour-propre*

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Abstract
Over the past few decades, scholars have reassessed the role of *amour-propre* in Rousseau's thought. While it was once believed that he had an entirely negative valuation of the emotion, it is now widely held that he finds it useful and employs it to strengthen moral attachments, conjugal love, civic virtue and moral heroism. At the same time, scholars are divided as to whether this positive *amour-propre* is an antidote to the negative or dangerous form. Some scholars are confident that 'inflamed' *amour-propre* can be overcome while others adopt a more fatalistic view. While mindful of Rousseau's pessimism in his most famous works, this essay seeks to identify a middle position. By contending Rousseau's discussion of *amour-propre* is largely concerned with the problems surrounding identity construction in commercial, urban societies, it will be argued that *amour-propre* can be lessened to manageable levels in more rural societies, that is, agrarian provincial life.

Keywords
Rousseau, *amour-propre*, provinces, capitalism, moral psychology

Introduction

Over the last 25 years, there has been a revolution in Rousseau scholarship. Traditionally, it has been held that Rousseau's view of *amour-propre* is almost entirely negative. As the argument runs, it gives rise to zero-sum competitions in which people aspire to be proclaimed the best and hence most socially valuable. According to Rousseau, no one really wins these competitions, as everyone's moral personality is corrupted. The winners become vain and arrogant while the losers envious and spiteful. And, for good measure, society is subsumed by an unspoken civil war. Rousseau's first sustained analysis of *amour-propre*, from the *Second*

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Discourse, is a secularized Garden of Eden parable in which *amour-propre* is responsible for casting people out of paradise. It is akin to the sin of pride. Beginning with Dent's groundbreaking work in the late 1980s,[1] however, a new Rousseau has emerged. This Rousseau believes *amour-propre* to be fundamentally neutral. It can be either good or bad. Scholars leading this reassessment are particularly impressed by a line from the *Second Discourse*: 'I would show that it is this ardor to be talked about, to this frenzy to achieve distinction . . . that we owe what is *best* and what is worst among men' [italics mine].[2] In a text that is overwhelmingly critical of *amour-propre*, Rousseau asserts that it is responsible for what is best in the species. Through careful textual analysis of Rousseau's major works, especially *Emile*, several scholars have had considerable success in identifying positive benefits of the emotion. Cooper, for example, argues that *amour-propre* 'is a necessary condition for many good things',[3] including familial and conjugal love, civic virtue, compassion, moral heroism, etc. Neuhouser more ambitiously contends that 'rationality, morality, and freedom—subjectivity itself—would be impossible for humans if it were not for *amour-propre* . . . '.[4] There is a lot of confidence in this new interpretation. Neuhouser boasts that the textual evidence for this more nuanced understanding of *amour-propre* is overwhelming and decisive'.[5] There is little point in contesting Neuhouser's seemingly brash claim. Even a casual perusal of book IV of *Emile* confirms his certainty. Rousseau's analysis of *amour-propre* goes well-beyond noxious vanity.

That said, it is important to be cognizant of exactly what is being claimed here. The argument is not that positive *amour-propre* cancels out the bad or 'inflamed' sort.[6] Indeed, in *Emile*, Rousseau asserts that the negative form of *amour-propre* is still the most common, and that 'it rarely does good without evil'.[7] Rather, it is argued only that it is possible to create a rational, moral being out of the inclination to be admired by others. The prospect of avoiding or transcending 'inflamed' *amour-propre* is still an open question of which many of the new 'Rousseauists' disagree. Dent is largely confident that negative *amour-propre* can be overcome (though he concedes that Rousseau 'was sharply aware of the potential for damage . . . '),[8] while Cooper and Neuhouser less so. Cooper correctly notes that '*amour-propre* never stops being dangerous—indeed, potentially calamitous—and hence needs to be sternly and thoroughly governed',[9] and suggests that Rousseau's own attempt to transcend it is not plausible for an overwhelming portion of the population. Neuhouser agrees, asserting that 'the highly unusual and demanding conditions that these solutions to the problem of evil presuppose—not merely a godlike legislator and an improbably wise tutor but also a complete wiping of the historical slate (in the case of politics) and total seclusion from the particular bonds of family (in the case of education)—must make us wonder exactly what kind of possibility Rousseau takes himself to be demonstrating'.[10]

While there is no doubting Rousseau's apparent fatalism, there is a mid-level critique concerning *amour-propre* that stands between Dent's unjustifiable optimism and Neuhouser's pessimism that may be of more practical interest. Lawgivers and governors aside, at the core of Rousseau's discussions of both the negative and positive forms of *amour-propre* is a forceful cultural critique.

For Rousseau, *amour-propre* is fundamentally about the construction of individual identity. He wants to know how a person becomes a self. The process of identity formation or becoming a self is not merely a social process, that is, identities are formed in relation to other individuals, but a cultural one. The criterion by which a person is defined, and indeed the importance of individuality itself, is determined by cultural mores.

In Rousseau's works, it is easy enough to discern the cultural mores that he found so troubling. He repeatedly attacks the urban, Enlightenment centers in eighteenth-century Europe. He believed they were factories for *amour-propre*. His own experiences taught him that in cities the importance of the individual was elevated to dangerous levels. Everyone was to be defined and rewarded according to their talents and achievements. The individual became bigger and bigger while collective identities such as religion and nationality were ridiculed as superstitious and old-fashioned. This unrelenting attention on the individual made it such that people could not stop thinking about themselves and how they stacked up against their neighbors.

In identifying the urban mores as one of the primary factors inflaming *amour-propre*, Rousseau at the same time suggests a possible remedy: leave the city. If *amour-propre* cannot be eliminated, it can be moderated or even re-channeled into a healthier collective form, for example, patriotism. As Cooper remarks, people 'can retreat into the rustic simplicity of country life and so liberate themselves from a good part of their feverish *amour-propre'*.[11] Unfortunately, he never follows up on this one sentence, and does not develop the argument. This essay contends that this partial solution is a good deal more effective than he or even Rousseau imagines, and should be considered the best practical advice that can be found in Rousseau's works.

Amour-propre and the self

Rousseau's first in-depth description of *amour-propre* comes from the 'competition for esteem' passage in the *Second Discourse*:

> It became customary to assemble in front of the Cabins or around a large Tree: song and dance, true children of leisure, became the amusement or rather the occupation of idle men and women gathered in a crowd. Everyone began to look at everyone else and to wish to be looked at himself, and public esteem acquired a price. The one who sang or danced best; the handsomest, the strongest, the most skillful, or the most eloquent came to be the most highly regarded, and this was the first step at once toward inequality and vice: from these first preferences on one side were born vanity and contempt, on the other shame and envy; and the fermentation caused by these new leavens at last produced compounds fatal to happiness and innocence.[12]

This passage is complicated, and there will be no attempt trying to unpack all of it. Rather, I would like to draw attention to the process of identity formation implied in it. According to Rousseau's narrative, when people began to live in close

proximity with one another, they become a condition of each other's existence. They become cognizant of how others look to them and they imagine how they might appear to others, and begin to judge one another and themselves on the basis of their observations. Importantly, this constant social interaction paves the way for the development of individual identities. The judgments that people make of one another solidify, and everyone comes to have a public reputation – they develop social selves that form the core of their identity and self-conception.[13] To take two of Rousseau's examples, people are not merely singing and dancing. They are becoming singers and dancers. More accurately, they are becoming good or bad singers and dancers.

This is a remarkable cognitive step in human history. A distinction from *Emile* helps clarify Rousseau's point. Before the advent of social living, people experienced life as a 'sentiment of existence', which is merely an awareness that one exists. Recall from the text that savage man had no language, reason, imagination and foresight. Their limited cognitive capacities could sustain only a limited form of consciousness. Upon engaging in social living, people develop a variety of cognitive capacities and hence a much more robust form of consciousness that Rousseau terms the 'sentiment of identity'. The 'sentiment of identity' refers to the process by which a person becomes a self-aware individual. It is at this stage 'that he [a person] gains consciousness of himself'.[14] Self-consciousness is linked to memory, Rousseau contends, as there is a temporal aspect to identity. Through memory, humans are able to unite their entire life into single narrative: 'Memory extends the sentiment of identity to all the moments of his existence'.[15] A person's habits, traits and activities become part of their history and define them. While public reputations are not entirely static, they tend to be durable and difficult to alter once established. Many of a person's most visible traits and habits do not change, and people tend to unwittingly play the roles assigned to them. Identities can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.[16] Notably, for Rousseau, natural inequalities take center stage in this new social existence, and come to have meanings they did not have in the previous era. In the nomadic period of human existence, humans had developed few of their faculties and the ones they did went unnoticed. Not only did people almost never see the same person twice, but they lacked the reason, language and imagination to construct abstract judgments of one another.

Scholars have been impressed with Rousseau's social psychology or, perhaps more accurately given the direction of modern psychology, social philosophy.[17] He has given expression to a fundamentally important part of conscious life and provides a compelling social ontology that sheds light on how all of us experience life. Dent offers a concise summation: 'Rousseau's fundamental insight is that our engagement with others necessarily involves transformation in our self-constitution and self-characterization'.[18] Thus, *amour-propre* is not fundamentally about envy, jealousy, spite, etc. These are merely emotional symptoms that result from individuality and identity-formation. It is the rise of individuality and self-consciousness that prompts *amour-propre*.[19]

From a historical perspective, however, the 'competition for esteem' parable raises a few troubling issues. Scholars have long debated whether or not

Rousseau is attempting authentic natural history. While it must be conceded that he has some interest in constructing a credible parable – he does utilize the most compelling scientific sources of his day, that is, Buffon's *Natural History* and travel literature – the structure of his parable contains some obvious historical errors that indicate he is more interested in playing the role of social critic rather than natural historian.[20] In particular, he gets ahead of himself by referencing cognitive and social developments that could not have occurred in human history both when and how he claimed they did. These errors reveal the political nature of Rousseau's critique – to criticize the *salonistes* for fetishizing individual talent and achievement, that is, their attempts to make individual identity supreme and define people in terms favorable to their own personal strengths.[21]

Neuhouser identifies one such error in Rousseau's narrative. In the paragraph immediately following the competition for esteem, Rousseau claims that once people became aware of social esteem 'everyone claimed a right to it' and 'duties of civility' were established, 'even among savages'.[22] As Neuhouser rightly argues, notions of right and duty also had yet to develop and Rousseau gives no account as to why they would develop simply because people desire to be the best: '... the practices of respect presuppose not only the moral idea of what a person is entitled to demand from others but also the ability to conceive of oneself abstract, as a 'person' who shares a fundamental nature and identical rights with all other individuals despite the many particular qualities that differentiate them'.[23] Historically, of course, the idea of individual rights does not become widespread until the seventeenth century, and the 'duties of civility' as a social requirement does not become especially important until *doux-commerce* theorists such as Hume argue for it in the eighteenth century.

More importantly, Rousseau's excessive focus on individuality also betrays his political agenda. While people may have become cognizant of their individuality at the dawn of society, as Rousseau suggests, individual identity did not become significant feature of conscious life until modernity. The great classical sociologists – Weber, Durkheim, Tönnies, Simmel, etc – all persuasively defend this argument.[24] They all contend that for much of human history, people were defined by their group membership and there was little room to develop individual identity.[25] Much of conscious thought came straight from the social group, and the individual has only recently been freed from collectivist self-consciousness. To take Durkheim's language, early or primitive societies exhibited a 'mechanical solidarity' in which the collective group 'completely envelopes our total consciousness, coinciding at every point'.[26] As society developed and social organization became more differentiated, people eventually assumed individual social roles. This social differentiation results in 'organic solidarity', and opens the door for the development of an individual personality: 'When people have their own space, they are free to make their own choices about how they use that space; social differentiation ... is the formative condition of individual liberty'.[27] Durkheim thinks that division of labor is the driving force in social differentiation, and hence the material condition necessary for individuality and hence individual freedom. Granted, many of these nineteenth-century thinkers did not reduce individuality to ability and

physical appearance, as Rousseau does in the 'competition for esteem' parable. Durkheim is mostly interested in the ability to choose one's lifestyle and make one's own value judgments. Nonetheless, the problem of group identity remains. Even if it is granted that Durkheim, Tönnies, et al. overstate the distinction between earlier forms of communities and later ones,[28] it is unremarkable to claim that the rise of individuality is a relatively recent phenomenon.

Rousseau's own views of division of labor, which are similar to Durkheim's, confirm this point. As with Durkheim, he concedes that division of labor hardly existed in early human societies, and only considerably alters individual consciousness with the advent of agriculture and metallurgy. And, even these two developments do not lead to the sort of specialization and cognitive inequalities that bothered Rousseau. Emile's choice set for professions, for example, farmer, carpenter and blacksmith, are of the sort that depend upon these advances. In any case, without a more mature division of labor, it seems implausible that individual identities would take on significant importance. Individuals working in solitary professions would have little incentive or opportunity to pay attention to each other. If survival could be ensured through individual effort, there is little reason to gaze at one's neighbors. And, when people work separately and have little economic interaction, it is difficult to judge the social value of a person's talents. Division of labor, however, promotes economic integration and makes people dependent upon each other. It creates a system in which everyone has a specific and publicized role. As such, observing and ranking others is an unavoidable and relatively easy task. Thus, as Rousseau puts it, the advent of division of labor makes it so '... all natural qualities [are] set in action, every man's rank and fate are set ...'.[29] Moreover, Rousseau appears to inadvertently question whether leisurely activities – the ones described in the 'competition for esteem' passage – could trigger high levels of *amour-propre*: 'inequality of prestige and authority becomes inevitable among private individuals as soon as, united in one society, they are forced to compare themselves one with the other and, in *the continual use they have to make of one another* [italics mine], to take into account the differences they find'.[30] Leisurely activities do not require that people make continual use of each other. It is not necessary for singers and dancers to engage each other; it is for bankers and lawyers. Finally, although Rousseau paints a nasty picture in the 'competition for esteem', he still refers to such periods as golden eras. Soon after describing the psychological fall of man in the 'competition for esteem' passage, he quickly turns around and claims that this early phase of social development is 'our most happiest epoch'[31] because it occupies 'a just mean between the indolence of the primitive state and the petulant activity of our amour propre ...'.[32] *Amour-propre* in small doses is good, and can function as an important emotional ingredient in a well-developed moral personality. While there are elements of early social living that portend badly for the future, *amour-propre* only becomes dangerous when combined with certain socio-economic developments that spring from advanced division of labor, that is, improved methods of production, establishment of private property, and the emergence of a distinct social class structure.[33] Thus, there is a clear linkage in the text between *amour-propre* and the rise of

commercial society. Pierre Force correctly notes that 'one of Rousseau's main points in the *Second Discourse* is that in modern commercial society, there is a contamination between material needs . . . and symbolic needs (the desire to be approved of)'.[34]

There is other evidence in Rousseau's texts that cast doubt that early humans considered themselves first and foremost as individuals who competed for favorable recognition. In the *First Discourse*, he complains that communal identities of religion and nationality have been supplanted by individual identities based on talent: 'we have Physicists, Geometricians, Chemists, Astronomers, Poets, Musicians, Painters; we no longer have citizens'.[35] He likewise fumes that the new men of letters 'smile disdainfully at old-fashioned words as Fatherland and religion'.[36] So, before writing word one of the *Second Discourse*, Rousseau pines for an earlier age in which individual identity and individual achievement were less socially important – an age that occurs well after the 'competition for esteem' is supposed to have taken place.

That Rousseau introduces too many cognitive and cultural developments in his anthropology of the earliest moments of organized social living suggests that his concern is not only describing the psychological processes of the mind but a specific form of consciousness he observed in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. The rise of commerce was accompanied by the rise of individuality. People had more specialized roles in society, and had cognitively developed to the point that allowed natural inequality to both develop and become socially important. These changes compelled people to care exclusively about their role in the group, and not the group itself. For Rousseau, however, making the individual the center of conscious life had considerable psychic costs. People turned their back on their most endearing relationships such as family and community, and suffered from a whole new set of painful emotions. Individuality, he recognizes, can be a tremendous burden.

The minimal self in *Emile* and *The Social Contract*

Rousseau's uneasiness with excessive individuality is also reflected in his solutions to the problem of *amour-propre*. Both Emile's education and the general will are designed to diminish the social importance of individual identity and elevate communal identities. With regard to Emile, when his sexual desires develop and he must enter the world of men, Rousseau outlines means by which his tutor can steer him away from appetites for superiority and celebrity. Sexuality, he argues, can be redirected into healthier outlets, that is, friendship and love of humanity itself. Thankfully, by nature, sexual desire first encourages humans to seek out tenderness rather than lust. Such affection, Rousseau argues, can be extended to the whole of humanity through the power of empathy. Emile will identify with his species through shared vulnerabilities and misery: 'it is man's weakness which makes him sociable; it is our common miseries which turn our hearts to humanity'.[37] When people witness someone happier or superior, they become envious and jealous. Upon seeing someone suffer, they empathize, that is, they put themselves in the other person's shoes. So, through contemplating his own vulnerabilities, Emile will

develop something resembling a species-consciousness. The motive here is still selfish – it is *amour-propre* or self-love. But it is *amour-propre* in an extended sense. Emile privately reasons: 'I am interested in him for love of myself'.[38] So, through self-love, Emile paradoxically develops a collective consciousness and concern for his fellow humans.

Importantly, there is a limit to this group identity. Emile never stops being an individual, and Rousseau is eager to point out that his first duty is always to himself. He is to be a man, not a citizen.[39] He even experiences a sort of perverse pleasure in pity upon witnessing someone suffer. He 'feels the pleasure of not suffering as he does'.[40] Moreover, he is not to be some crusader for social justice and the common good, and does not take any pride in his moral superiority or try to define himself as the embodiment of justice. As with all moral men, he is 'too sensible to be vain about a gift [he] did not give [himself]'.[41] He is very much a simple man who thinks of his own needs and feelings. Additionally, Emile cares about succeeding in his profession for selfish reasons. He still covets praise from his peers.

At the same time, however, Rousseau identifies means and attitudes to prevent Emile's selfishness from developing into 'inflamed' *amour-propre*. Although he will be eager for praise, Rousseau follows Hutcheson and Smith in arguing that he will only accept it for truly praiseworthy acts.[42] He measures himself not against other individuals so much as an external standard of excellence.[43] While Emile will be pleased at a job well done, Rousseau is clear that he is to value good work but not the individual worker. If a pupil seems overly pleased with praise or says 'I made that', Rousseau counsels the tutor to retort: 'you or another, it makes no difference; in any event it is well-done'.[44] Emile is to work hard and be competent but he is not to define himself by his deeds. He wants to do a good job, but not for the sake of vanity. He also is devoid of ambition and does not want to get ahead. As Rousseau states in the *Dialogues*, 'one of the things on which he congratulates himself is that in his old age he finds himself in just about the same rank as the one into which he was born . . . '.[45] Thus, it bears repeating, despite Rousseau's refusal to let Emile get swallowed up by his human identity, he is eager to minimize the individual self and puncture any puffed-up individualistic pretensions. Individuality persists but is never allowed to become the primary basis of Emile's identity. He knows himself first and foremost as a human.[46]

Rousseau's tact in *The Social Contract* is similar. Collective identity still trumps individual identity, though in this case collective identity is based on patriotism rather than humanity.[47] Nationalism replaces cosmopolitanism. Rousseau's basic argument is that the great human interest in freedom is realized only by privileging one's collective identity as citizen to private interest. Rousseau maintains that each person has two wills: 'a private will contrary to, or different from the general will that he has as a citizen'.[48] Throughout the text, Rousseau's 'constant aim is to generalize will'.[49] Anyone who smuggles in private interest into sovereign deliberations turns his or her fellow citizens into extensions of their will, thereby robbing them of their freedom. So, as long as one promises to abide by the social contract, they must act from their general will. If not, they will be forced to be free. Rousseau rejects the idea that private wills can regularly coincide with the general will.

Again, however, Rousseau does not seek to annihilate individuality.[50] In his system, only the public self is alienated to the sovereign: 'We have agreed that each man alienates by the social pact only that part of his power, his goods and his liberty which is the concern of the community'.[51] As private persons, people have natural rights and freedoms that are independent of the sovereign. Each citizen has a zone of privacy that is out of reach of the sovereign, and 'can do what he pleases with such goods and such freedom as is left to him by these covenants'.[52] Granted, the sovereign is responsible for determining exactly what counts as a community concern. Still, since everyone is both sovereign and subject, it is unlikely they would define the public concern too broadly as they too would suffer from an overly intrusive state. Nonetheless, the right to cultivate one's own garden is strictly a private matter and whatever one does in private life is subordinate to the general will, and is only acknowledged if it undermines collective political life. Excessive wealth or anything else that draws undue attention to an individual will not be tolerated.

Interestingly, Rousseau does afford individual talent and natural inequality a public role. The best and the brightest are expected to populate government – they are to be heavily involved in administration, which is responsible for executing the directives formulated by the sovereign. As he puts it in the *First Discourse*, the learned and talented ought to 'find honorable asylum in the courts'.[53] Rousseau knows that there are inequalities in abilities and they should be exploited when they are of social value. It is better to be ruled by genius than by stupidity. Yet, Rousseau is careful to hide this fact from the public. Once again, he does not want geniuses to be publicly praised and celebrated for their talents and social value. This would only inflame *amour-propre*, as everyone wants to claim such superiority. So, the talented are bracketed away from the citizenry; they are to be socially invisible.[54] They produce more harm than good unless they are unseen.

Back to the provinces

It is crucial to recognize that both of these solutions to *amour-propre* rest upon an underappreciated premise: that minimizing individuality can only be achieved in rural life. If Pierre Force is right that the discussion of *amour-propre* in the *Second Discourse* is 'contaminated' by the emerging commercial economy, then it would seem that one way to lessen *amour-propre* is to avoid the new commerce and the cities that housed it. In his texts, Rousseau repeatedly encourages people to do this very thing. He praises country simplicity and disparages city-life as corrupt. He writes of 'the black morals of cities',[55] and claims they 'are the abyss of the human species'.[56] They are places of vice, crime and 'inflamed' *amour-propre*. Rousseau insists that Emile be raised in the country and champions peasants as the most suitable citizens for a society governed by the general will, that is, 'when we see among the happiest people in the world bands of peasants regulating the affairs of state under an oak tree, and always acting wisely . . . '.[57] Rousseau's early critics recognized his taste for provincial life, for example, Voltaire's smarmy accusation that he wants humanity to return to walking around on all fours and Constant's

charge that he naively thinks he can recreate Sparta. Both criticisms are wide of the mark. It is not difficult to locate textual evidence with which to defend Rousseau against both indictments. Two passages should suffice: 'human nature does not go backward'[58] and 'ancient peoples are no longer a model for modern ones; they are too alien to them in every respect'.[59] Nonetheless, Voltaire and Constant do touch upon something true about Rousseau. He rejects progress as defined by the intellectuals of his day, and is nostalgic for a simpler age. If it is impossible to literally go back in time, Rousseau realizes that the past still lives in much of modern life, especially in the provinces. By being behind the times, they manage to escape modern corruptions. Thus, by leaving the city, one can effectively return to a simpler age in which individuality counts for less and there are fewer temptations that 'inflame' *amour-propre*.

Much of Rousseau's argument rests upon economics. In the provinces, there is much less wealth. Most are engaged in the mechanical arts and low-level commerce, and do not amass great fortunes. The provincial political economy is primarily a medieval one in that it is dominated by agriculture and skilled craftsmen. While there are hierarchies, few think of climbing the social ladder and most, like Emile and Rousseau from the *Dialogues*, are content with their lot in life. As a result, people are more focused on survival or *amour de soi* than superiority. To repeat some earlier points, division of labor is less mature, and people's economic lives are less integrated. People mostly work out of view of their neighbors, and are less dependent upon them in their day to day tasks. Farmers, for example, have few professional relationships and often work alone. Not having the same economic function (except farmers), most have neither the expertise nor the inclination to judge one another. In short, they are less immersed in society and have the space to be self-referential. Moreover, when people do engage socially, they tend to be drawn together by their collective identities, which are far stronger in the country than in the city. Provincial men are more likely to define themselves through their religion and nationality rather than their achievements.[60] *Amour-propre*, then, takes a qualitatively different form in the provinces.

Rousseau also thinks that provincial division of labor is ennobling. Everyone becomes a craftsman and can perform challenging and socially useful work that everyone recognizes – yet at the same time does not swell *amour-propre*. Since most people live modestly and work with their hands, few have the time and inclination to make great contributions to the arts and sciences. There is, therefore, less cognitive inequality than in the cities, as natural inequalities have much less space in which to develop. There are still intellectuals and artists, but they exist in fewer numbers and have much less social status. At bottom, the economic and social conditions in the provinces are unfavorable to individual distinction. In the *Letter to M. D'Alembert on the Theatre*, Rousseau draws a compelling picture of provincial economic life. Rural artisans possess '... the simplicity of true genius. It is neither scheming or busybodyish; it knows not the path of honors and fortune nor dreams of seeking it; it compares itself to no one; all its resources are within itself; indifferent to insult and hardly conscious of praise, it if it is are of itself, it does not

assign itself a place and enjoys itself without appraising itself'.[61] This is the reason why Emile is to be a farmer, or short of that, a carpenter.

Thus, while living in the country does not eliminate *amour-propre*, there is much less chance it will come to dominate conscious life. It bears repeating that in the provinces, individuality is less important and the limited economic progress leaves very little room for financial and cognitive inequalities to emerge. Moreover, rural professions tend to be performed in solitary and there is less opportunity for people to compare themselves with their neighbors. In provincial life, the self is minimized, and, as such, there is room for collective forms of *amour-propre* to develop. When Rousseau sounds more fatalistic, that is, 'when I see each of us ceaselessly occupied by public opinion . . . ,'[62] there is good reason to think he overstates his case. Even people who live in the cities may not be as obsessed with social status as Rousseau at times asserts. Not everyone is as sensitive as Rousseau, nor are they as consumed with attaining celebrity.[63] Perhaps his decade spent in the Parisian salons had jaded him too much. Furthermore, Rousseau downplays the psychological defenses that allow people to cope with disappointment and failure. It need not consume people. Of course, it is impossible to empirically prove Rousseau wrong on these points. Internal subjective states are not amenable to empirical analysis. Still, his more pessimistic comments are less persuasive.

Wrong turns

Although the three positive *amour-propre* theorists – Dent, Cooper and Neuhouser – hold differing views as to how the negative form of *amour-propre* can be overcome, they all believe that the problem is solvable. Dent, to repeat, is the most optimistic, believing that the problem of *amour-propre* comes from *amour-propre* itself. Cooper and Neuhouser, on the other hand, are more skeptical that *amour-propre* contains its own cure, and seek solutions elsewhere. Cooper looks to the sentiment of existence while Neuhouser abandons Rousseau altogether and finds a solution in Hegel. All three attempts, it shall be argued, are unconvincing.

To begin, Dent argues that *amour-propre* need not result in jealousies and rivalries and only requires that people treat others 'as a morally significant being, a bearer of certain rightful titles and immunities'.[64] The interpretation here is Kantian and Hegelian, as is the solution. One can only be treated as a morally significant being if one treats others as such. 'Inflamed *amour-propre'*, conversely, 'devises significance for others which directly denies the possibility of achieving its own inherent goal, that of securing categorically recognized standing'.[65] As such, Dent thinks it is self-defeating. His move here is straight out of Kant's third formulation of the categorical imperative, that is, one's freedom to choose one's own ends must be consistent with other's attempts to do the same, and Hegel's contention in the master/slave passage that one can only be free and recognized as such by recognizing other individuals as free and equal beings. The claim rests upon a fundamental equality – everyone has equal dignity as a moral person. Furthermore, Dent argues that so long as this baseline recognition is provided to all the members of the community, inequalities in talent are tolerable, even

welcome, if they can be shown to either assist an individual in achieving his freedom or benefit the community. Writes Dent: 'All he requires is that those attributes in which one person exceeds another, for his superiority in which he may be honoured and esteemed, be ones that disclose excellences in the person that are inherently enlarging to the quality and fullness of his substantial life, and/or benefit to others'.[66]

Both of Dent's claims are highly questionable. To begin, as Neuhouser contends, Dent confuses respect and esteem, [67] a distinction first made by Axel Honneth (this debt is acknowledged in a footnote). According to Honneth, recognition is about one's general humanity while esteem emphasizes one's individuality and uniqueness: recognition 'is a matter of the general feature that makes them persons at all, whereas [esteem] . . . is a matter of the particular characteristics that distinguish them from other persons'.[68] While Rousseau does not explicitly make this distinction, Neuhouser claims that both can be readily identified throughout his writings, and that the problems of esteem are too complex to be resolved by recognition.[69] As a consequence of failing to appreciate this distinction, Dent is far more comfortable with interpersonal inequalities than is Rousseau. Dent is correct that Rousseau accepts inequalities and allows them expression, especially when they benefit society. However, as previously argued, Rousseau is also careful to manage the public expression of talent. While the talented are welcome in administration, their job is to work behind the scenes and be largely invisible to the population at large. They are not to be honored and esteemed, as talents are not to be linked to public identity. Rousseau under no circumstances wants people to compare themselves with genius, or even think of themselves in such terms. He does not want great clothiers to be shamed into becoming 'a bad versifier or an inferior Geometer . . . '.[70] If there is to be room for private fulfillment, as Dent contends, Rousseau is adamant that it remain private.[71] Even if the talented perform public acts of obvious social value, it might only further inflame *amour-propre* as they can legitimately claim to be more valuable. A beneficial and deserved hierarchy is still a hierarchy, and may actually further demoralize those on the bottom rungs of society. To be at the bottom of the society is painful enough, deserving to be there is even more so.

Additionally, it might be argued that when rights and honors are evenly distributed, they become taken for granted as people care little for them. If everyone has something, it ceases to become special. Hence, moral recognition may not provide the dignity that Dent supposes. Finally, as Tocqueville effectively demonstrates, equality may actually exacerbate *amour-propre* (though he is careful never to use the word): 'when each sees a million others around him all with the same or similar claims to be proud, pride becomes exacting and jealous'.[72] In short, the expectation of equality makes democrats much more sensitive to inequality. Thus, there is little reason to believe that Dent's Kantianism resolves the problems of *amour-propre*.

Second, Cooper's measured treatment for a second solution to *amour-propre* found in *The Reveries of the Solitary Walker* suggests that it does not represent a meaningful possibility. In the text, Rousseau recalls that during his time on the Île

de Saint-Pierre, he was capable of wiping away his self-consciousness while lying in a boat or on the banks of the water in complete solitude. This period, he claims, was the happiest in his life because he was able to confine his consciousness to the 'sentiment of existence'. Writes Rousseau: 'As long as this state lasts, we are sufficient unto ourselves, like God'.[73] Elsewhere in the text, he fondly recalls an incident in which he was knocked out by a Great Dane and suffered temporary amnesia.[74] His description of his mental state is nothing short of remarkable:

> Entirely absorbed in the present moment, I remembered nothing; I had no distinct notion of my person nor the least idea of what had just happened to me; I knew neither who I was nor where I was; I felt neither injury, fear, nor worry. I watched my blood flow as I would have watched a brook flow; without even suspecting that his blood belong to me in any way. I felt a rapturous calm in my whole being; and each time I remember it, I find nothing comparable to it in all the activity of known pleasures. [75]

Whether on a boat or admiring his head injuries, Rousseau is clear about his goal – to utterly forget his individual self and experience life from nowhere. In these reveries, bliss results from being completely drained of self-consciousness.[76] Rousseau makes a similar statement in *Emile*: 'A truly happy being is a solitary being. God alone enjoys an absolute happiness'.[77] And, from *Julie*, 'in seclusion, one has other ways of seeing and feeling than in involvement with the world . . . '.[78] Cooper celebrates Rousseau's reveries on the Île de Saint-Pierre (though he ignores the vignette about the Great Dane knocking him senseless), claiming that he 'has added new dimensions or even wholly new capacities to the ordinary complement of mental powers'.[79] He views Rousseau's conscious state as a form of mysticism that allows him to adopt the consciousness of the savages from the *Second Discourse* without losing his self-awareness.

In one respect, Rousseau's reminiscing confirms one of the central theses of this essay – that he is mostly concerned with the psychological problems associated with individual identity and self-consciousness. At the same time, Cooper concedes that this is not a widely available option. Only a few special souls are capable of it, and even Rousseau only attained it in old age. He likewise acknowledges that it contradicts the positive *amour-propre* thesis and undermines his more measured treatments of the problem in both *Emile* and *The Social Contract*. As previously argued, in those texts he argues that allowing individual space to develop ability and make one's own decisions is a good thing both for the individual and society. By transcending individuality all the positive effects of *amour-propre* are lost. Less positive *amour-propre* means less of what is best in humans.

The problems, however, may be worse than Cooper imagines. Rousseau's claim that he is able to avoid *amour-propre* through a solitary lifestyle may be either too ordinary or too fantastic. If Rousseau only means that he is able to escape from the competitive social grind, then it would seem his ability is not all that unique. It is not uncommon for people retreat to their private gardens, so to speak, and successfully turn off the noise of society and their relationships in the course of

their lives. He is hardly the only person who has retreated to nature to flee the pressures of society. On the other hand, if he has, as Cooper contends, managed to experience a wholly new form of consciousness, then there is reason not to believe him. Of course, no one can verify subjective states, so it is impossible to disprove Rousseau. However, Rousseau's claims of transcendence seem less persuasive than other attempts to argue for the presence of a subjective state. With *amour-propre*, Rousseau can, like a good phenomenologist, appeal to his readers' experiences. We can verify his claims because his descriptions match up with our experiences. The same cannot be said of transcending *amour-propre*, for almost no one has achieved it. This is akin to Nagel's claim that no human no know what it is like to be a bat – one can only imagine what it is like being a human imagining what it is like to be a bat.[80] Similarly, it could be argued that Rousseau does not really know what it is like to transcend *amour-propre* – he only is a person with *amour-propre* imagining what it is like not to have it. And, unsympathetic critics might very well argue that his contention that he has transcended *amour-propre* is itself proof that he suffers from it. His claims amount to little more than assertions of moral superiority. This is not Rousseau at his best.

Finally, Neuhouser attempts to remedy the problems of esteem by widening the available avenues by which one may earn esteem. He suggests that Rousseau might develop his theory in a manner similar to Hegel by allowing individuals to find esteem in other spheres of society, such as the family or civil society.[81] A good parent might not compare himself or herself to a surgeon. Or, someone with low socio-economic status might find respect in a non-economic activity, for example, singing in the church choir or playing in a pick-up basketball league. This argument can take another form. Mead, for example, argues that division of labor can be expanded to allow everyone a socially valuable productive role. This would allow people to gain recognition in an activity in which they are superior, that is, they are better than the general population.[82] The idea is simple: the more socially valuable economic roles that exist, the more people who will perform those roles and hence gain sought after esteem. His model is lawyers and surgeons – 'one is a good surgeon, a good lawyer, and he can pride himself on his superiority . . . '.[83]

Both of these claims are plausible, and probably help alleviate some of the problems of *amour-propre*. However, there are still reasons to remain skeptical. Taking Mead first, division of labor increases both financial and cognitive inequalities, and again overemphasizes individual identities. Moreover, he makes no effort to qualitatively transform *amour-propre* into healthier forms, that is, collective ones. There is no reason to think these problems will disappear with extreme division of labor. Indeed, societies that maintain advanced division of labor tend to create a small cadre of powerful leaders and a large majority of workers engaged in monotonous and tedious labor. Many jobs in such societies are mind-numbing and are less cognitively demanding than the medieval trades they replaced. This critique is ubiquitous in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,[84] and includes some of the preeminent capitalist theorists themselves. Smith, for example, worries that the average worker 'naturally loses . . . the habit of exertion, and generally becomes as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human creature to become'.[85] In the

twentieth century, Schumpeter argues that lack of meaningful work will lead to an 'electoral' revolution that will put an end to the dominance of the entrepreneurs.[86] Capitalists tend to dislike skilled labor – it requires high wages and makes the owners too dependent upon the workers. They want perfectly replaceable cogs in their highly differentiated wheels. There is an incentive to chop up an activity into so many parts that few occupations require ability. Thus, capitalists do not want to create new professions akin to surgeons and lawyers.[87] They want to make work as simple and meaningless as possible. And, it should be remembered, Emile is not to participate in mind-numbing or stupid professions.[88] In any event, in advanced capitalist societies, there is still a premium on individual talent and an ever-decreasing pool of challenging jobs.

Neuhouser's suggestion is more compelling but also not entirely persuasive. It is far from certain that success in family life or another civil sphere will make up for deficiencies in the areas of life that reap most of society's social and economic rewards. *Amour-propre* is a cultural problem, and is most problematic in cultures that put too much value on individual achievement. A cultural overhaul is necessary, as Rousseau makes clear time and time again. It is probably not enough to find dignity in other spheres of life. Moreover, without such an overhaul, his solution requires people to reject the primary values of society, which cannot be good for either social cohesion or political legitimacy.

Conclusion

There is no doubting that Rousseau believes that rural life is a necessary condition for curing inflamed *amour-propre*. And, in some of his minor writings such as *The Plan for Corsica*, *Julie* and the *Letter to D'Alembert on the Theatre*, he seems to suggest that it is sufficient as well. The provinces not only maintain modest economies that limit *amour-propre* but establish social institutions designed to promote collective identities of patriotism. The Saint Gervais Festival from *Letter to D'Alembert* serves as one such example; the athletic competitions form *Government of Poland* that re-channel self-esteem to promote physical vigor and love of country can be counted as another.[89]

Even in these more optimistic or practical works, Rousseau knows there are still threats to the dignity of provincial life. The Enlightenment, he worries, is much too imperialistic to be confined to the cities. Culturally, the *philosophes* wanted the world – they wanted to define social mores for everyone. As Melzer observes, 'in Rousseau's time, France, above all, acted as a cultural magnet drawing the rest of Europe to imitate its splendid vices'.[90] With all eyes fixated on the city. Rousseau plainly fears that provincial inhabitants will be much too tempted by wealth and the promise of celebrity to want to be farmers, smiths, abbeys, etc.[91] Notably, these concerns show up in both *Julie* and *Corsica*. Melzer is impressed by a line from *Julie* in which Claire warns Julie that France 'has more than one manner of making conquests, and its armies are less to be feared than its mores'.[92] Elsewhere in *Julie*, Rousseau laments that rural men and women almost slavishly consume the novels, plays and tales of the city, despite the fact they 'all heap derision on the simplicity

of rustic morality' and 'preach the manners and pleasures of high society'.[93] Similar worries are expressed *The Plan for Corsica*: 'a cultivating people must not look covetously at residence in cities and envy the fate of the sluggards who live there'.[94] If they do, good clothiers will insist upon becoming bad geometers, and virtuous cities like Geneva will want to import features of urban culture such as theaters. Thus, despite the fact that the 'leavens' that inflame *amour-propre* cannot be found in the provinces, dangers loom on the horizon.

Nonetheless, Rousseau's pessimism does not rise to the level of fatalism. It seems plausible to suggest that a provincial population – especially if they are made aware of their special virtues – may very well remain uninterested in their urban neighbors or might even embrace a cultural populism of the sort found in the contemporary American Republican Party that pushes back against urban superiority. Even if they take in a play or two, it is doubtful rural inhabitants could be induced to internalize values that demean them. At the very least, it is unlikely that there would be a monolithic positive response to pressures to adopt urban attitudes.

On the other hand, Rousseau's major writings, including *Emile* and *The Social Contract*, are far more fatalistic. Melzer plausibly attributes Rousseau's fatalism here to his philosophy of history outlined in the *Second Discourse*. According to the *Second Discourse*, social living puts humanity on a course of irreversible degeneration. By the time of the Enlightenment, Rousseau believed that Europe was so hopelessly corrupt that some sort of moral salvation could only be had in a few isolated areas of the continent, such as Corsica. If this fatalism is accepted, then clearly rural life can only serve as a necessary but not sufficient condition for minimizing or transforming *amour-propre*. Tutors or lawgivers are needed.

Thus, Rousseau's readers are presented with two visions of modern degeneration. The first is concerned with the emergence of urban commercial life and Enlightenment, and adopts a more local approach to eighteenth-century corruption. The second is far more radical, blaming social existence itself for humanity's psychological woes. Which vision should we choose? Despite the fact that Rousseau's fatalism comes from his greatest works, there is no compelling reason to follow him down such a dark path. It represents the least attractive part of his theory. As Melzer contends, Rousseau's views are so radically pessimistic that they are wholly 'opposed to the prevailing views of his time and ours'.[95] As Dent, Cooper, and Neuhouser all demonstrate, Rousseau knows that social living can be a benefit and that *amour-propre* is only a problem when it is 'inflamed'. The key to resolving the 'inflammation' problem is identifying the conditions in which this happens. Arguably, the conditions of rural life do lots of work for Rousseau – they lessen the importance of the mainspring of *amour-propre*, individual identity, and provide a compliment of collective identities that unite people. The modern self, then, need not be re-made via lawgiver or totalizing education – only minimized. The provinces themselves very well might be 'a just mean between the indolence of the primitive state and the petulant activity of our amour propre . . . '.[96]

Notes

1. N.J.H. Dent, *Rousseau: An Introduction to his Psychological, Social and Political Theory* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988. See also N.J.H. Dent and Timothy O'Hagan, Rousseau on *Amour-Propre*, *The Aristotelian Society* 72 (1): 57–73; Timothy O'Hagan, *Rousseau* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 171–73. Granted, older scholars were cognizant of Rousseau's claim of positive *amour-propre*. For example, see Judith N. Shklar, *Men and Citizens: A Study of Rousseau's Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 19, 21, 28. However, Dent is the first to make the idea the centerpiece of his interpretation of *amour-propre*.
2. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origins and Foundations of Inequality Among Men*, in *The Discourses and Other Early Writings*, ed. and transl. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 184/ *O.C.* III, p. 189.
3. See Laurence D. Cooper, *Rousseau, Nature, and the Problem of the Good Life* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1999), p. 123.
4. Frederick Neuhouser, *Rousseau's Theodicy of Self-Love: Evil, Rationality, and the Drive for Recognition* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2008), p. 2.
5. Ibid, p. 15.
6. As Neuhouser notes, Rousseau uses the term 'inflamed' to describe the negative form of *amour-propre* once in the text. Dent takes over the term and labels all bad *amour-propre* as inflamed. See Neuhouser, *Rousseau's Theodicy of Self-Love*, 58n.
7. Jean-Jacques, Rousseau, *Emile or On Education*, transl. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 245/ *O.C.* IV, 536.
8. Dent, *Rousseau*, p. 114.
9. Cooper, *Rousseau, Nature, and the Problem of the Good Life*, p. 118.
10. Neuhouser, *Rousseau's Theodicy of Self-Love*, 5. See also p. 157.
11. Cooper, *Rousseau, Nature, and the Problem of the Good Life*, pp. 179–80.
12. Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origins and Foundations of Inequality Among Men*, in *The Discourses and Other Early Writings*, 166/ *O.C.* III, pp. 169–70.
13. Charvet and Shklar both emphasize the identity aspect of Rousseau's analysis. See John Charvet, *The Social Problem in the Philosophy of Rousseau* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 2 and Shklar, *Men and Citizens*, pp. 88–90.
14. Rousseau, *Emile*, 78/ *O.C.* IV, p. 301.
15. Ibid.
16. For example, Jean-Paul Sartre observed that the poet Jean Genet became a thief after people thought of him as one. A more contemporary example is girls doing poorly in math because they have internalized that boys are better at it.
17. Honneth calls Rousseau 'the founder of social philosophy'. See Axel Honneth, *Disrespect: The Normative Foundations of Critical Theory*, transl. Joseph Ganahl (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2007), p. 10.
18. Dent, *Rousseau*, p. 22.
19. See Cooper, *Rousseau, Nature, and the Problem of the Good Life*, p. 174.
20. In the 'Exordium', Rousseau concedes that 'the Inquiries that may be pursued regarding this subject ought not to be taken for historical truths . . .' See Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origins and Foundations of Inequality Among Men*, in *The Discourses and Other Early Writings*, 132/ *O.C.* III, p. 133. I would grant, of course, that Rousseau makes a larger philosophical point that natural humans are nothing like social ones. As such, his political theory assumes that *amour-propre* is inevitable.

21. For a developed account of this thesis, see Michael Locke McLendon, Rousseau, *Amour Propre*, and Intellectual Celebrity, *The Journal of Politics*, 2009; 71 (2): 506–19.
22. Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origins and Foundations of Inequality Among Men*, in *The Discourses and Other Early Writings*, 166/ *O.C.* III, p. 170.
23. Neuhouser, *Rousseau's Theodicy of Self-Love*, p. 66.
24. Other thinkers outside of European classical social theory held similar views. For example, George Herbert Mead states that: '. . . primitive human society offers much less scope for individuality—for original, unique, or creative thinking and behavior on the part of the individual self within it or belonging to it—than does civilized human society. . .'. See George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society*, ed. Charles W. Morris (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 221.
25. Interestingly, in his own consideration of Rousseau, Durkheim does not make this point and makes no mention of his own theory. His only claim is that Rousseau understood that society cannot be reduced to an aggregate of individual transactions: 'society is nothing if not a single definite body distinct from its parts'. See Emile Durkheim, *Montesquieu and Rousseau: Forerunners of Sociology* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1965), p. 83. In general, see pp. 76–91.
26. Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, transl. W.D. Halls (New York: The Free Press, 1984), p. 84.
27. Raymond Aron, *Main Currents in Sociological Thought II: Durkheim, Pareto, Weber*, transl. Richard Howard and Helen Weaver (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1970), p. 24.
28. See Bernard Yack, *Nationalism and the Moral Psychology of Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), p. 3–4.
29. Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origins and Foundations of Inequality Among Men*, in *The Discourses and Other Early Writings*, 170/ *O. C.* III, p. 174.
30. Ibid, 183/ *O.C.* III, pp. 188–89.
31. Ibid, 167/ *O.C.* III, p. 171.
32. Ibid.
33. See Neuhouser, *Rousseau's Theodicy of Self-Love*, p. 119–28.
34. Pierre Force, *Self Interest Before Adam Smith: A Genealogy of Economic Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 129–30.
35. Rousseau, *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*, in *The Discourses and Other Early Writings*, 24/ *O.C.* III, p. 26.
36. Ibid, 17/ *O.C.* III, p. 19
37. Rousseau, *Emile*, 221/ *O.C.* IV, p. 503.
38. Ibid, 235fn/ *O.C.* IV, p. 523.
39. Ibid, 41–42/ *O.C.* IV, pp. 251–52.
40. Ibid, 221 *O.C.* IV, p. 504.
41. Ibid, 245/ *O.C.* IV, p. 537.
42. Hutcheson argues against Mandeville's rigorism by claiming that people have a moral sense that overrides considerations of vanity: 'But shall any Man ever really love the Publick, or study the good of others in his heart, if Self-love be the only spring of his actions? No: that is impossible. Or shall we really love Men who appear to love the Publick, without a moral sense? No. . .we should hate them as Hypocrites, and our Rivals in Fame'. See Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*. Revised Edition, ed. Wolfgang Leidhold (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2008), p. 154. Smith adopts this critique of Mandeville in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, asserting that 'the desire of doing what is honorable and noble. . .cannot

with any propriety be called vanity'. See Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. Ryan Patrick Hanley (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), p. 363. Neuhouser is good on this point as well. See Neuhouser, *Rousseau's Theodicy of Self-Love*, p. 241.

43. In the *Plan for A Constitution for Corsica*, Rousseau claims 'esteeming oneself based on truly estimable goods' is appropriately considered pride, and not vanity. According to this distinction, then, Emile will experience pride rather than the bad form of *amour-propre*. See Jean-Jacque Rousseau, *Plan for A Constitution for Corsica*, in *Collected Writings*, vol. 11, transl. Christopher Kelly (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2005), 154/ *O.C.* III, p. 938.
44. Rousseau, *Emile*, 202/ *O.C.* IV, p. 479.
45. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Rousseau, Judge of Jean-Jacques: Dialogues, in Collected Works*, vol. I. Transl. Christopher Kelly (Hanover: University of New England Press, 1990), 147/ *O.C.* I, p. 850. See also Rousseau, *Plan for A Constitution for Corsica*, in *Collected Writings*, vol. 11, 126/ *O.C.* III, p. 905.
46. Cohen rightly criticizes Durkheim, Cassirer, and Bloom for failing to recognize Rousseau's commitment to individuality. See Joshua Cohen, *Rousseau: A Free Community of Equals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 35–40. However, he understates Rousseau's concern of the dangers of individuality.
47. In the *Discourse on Political Economy*, Rousseau that patriotism is a combination of *amour-propre* and virtue, and hence is sublimated self-love. See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Political Economy*, in *The Discourses and Other Later Political Writings,* ed. and transl. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 16/ *O.C.* III, p. 255.
48. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, transl. Maurice Cranston (New York: Penguin Books, 1968), 63/ *O.C.* III, p. 363.
49. Patrick Riley, *The General Will Before Rousseau: The Transformation of the Divine into the Civic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 243.
50. Marks has a helpful discussion of this issue. See Jonathan Marks*, Perfection and Disharmony in the Thought of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 79–80.
51. Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, 74/ *O.C.* III, p. 373.
52. Ibid, 77/ *O.C.* III, p. 375.
53. Rousseau, *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*, in *The Discourses and Other Early Writings*, 27/ *O.C.* III, pp. 29–30. See also *Letters Written from the Mountain*, in which Rousseau claims that 'the best of Governments is aristocratic; the worst of sovereignties is the aristocratic'. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Letters Written from the Mountain*, in *Collected Works*, vol. 9, transl. Judith R. Bush and Christopher Kelly (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2001), 233/ *O.C.* III, p. 809.
54. This is the opposite position of d'Alembert, who argues that learned and gifted should shun political life but informally govern society by arbitrating values and monopolizing public esteem. See Jean le Rond d'Alembert, 'Essai sur la Société des Gens de Lettres et des Grands', in *Oeuvres Complètes*, vol. IV(Geneva, Slatkine Reprints, 1967), p. 356.
55. Rousseau, *Emile*, 95/ *O.C.* IV, p. 326.
56. Ibid, 59/ *O.C.* IV, p. 277.
57. Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, 149/ *O.C.* III, p. 437. Granted, in *Emile*, he does belittle peasants as being too thoughtless and attached to habit. See Rousseau, *Emile*, 118/ *O.C.* IV, p. 360.

58. Rousseau, *Rousseau, Judge of Jean-Jacques: Dialogues, in Collected Works*, vol. I, 213/ *O.C.* I, p. 935. This argument was put to rest by Arthur Lovejoy. See Arthur Lovejoy, 'The Supposed Primitivism of Rousseau's 'Second Discourse', in *Essays in the History of Ideas* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1948), pp. 14–37.
59. Rousseau, *Letters Written from the Mountain*, in *Collected Works*, vol. 9, 292/ *O.C.* III, p. 881. In fact, Rousseau argues that compare oneself to such an illustrious past is an expression of *amour-propre*.
60. Rousseau's description of the patriotism of the Saint Gervais Festival is evidence for this claim. See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Letter to M. D'Alembert on the Theatre*, transl. Allan Bloom (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1960), 135 fn/ *O.C.* V, pp. 123–24.
61. Ibid, 60/ *O.C.* V, p. 55.
62. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Moral Letters* in *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, vol. 12, transl. and ed. Christopher Kelly (Lebanon, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2007), 198/ *O.C.* IV, p. 1112.
63. Christopher Kelly, *Rousseau's Exemplary Life:* The Confessions *as Political Philosophy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), p. 191.
64. Dent, *Rousseau*, 23. Cohen makes virtually the same claim. See Cohen, *Rousseau: A Free Community of Equals*, pp. 101–4.
65. Dent, *Rousseau*, p. 119. In general, see pp. 117–19.
66. Ibid, p. 67.
67. See Neuhouser, *Rousseau's Theodicy of Self-Love*, p. 62.
68. Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*, transl. Joel Anderson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), p. 113.
69. Neuhouser, *Rousseau's Theodicy of Self-Love*, pp. 63–7.
70. Rousseau, *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*, in *The Discourses and Other Early Writings*, 26/ *O. C.* III, p. 29.
71. Hulliung correctly observes that 'Rousseau rejected their [the *philosophes*] yearnings for a social order dedicated to the fostering the development of individual talent, which to him would be nothing better than the triumph of *amour propre* in its most virulent form'. See Mark Hulliung, *The Autocritique of the Enlightenment: Rousseau and the Philosophes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 133.
72. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, transl. George Lawrence (New York: Harper Collins, 1969), p. 613.
73. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, transl. Charles E. Butterworth (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1992), 67–70/ *O.C.* I, pp. 1045–48.
74. For a good discussion, see David Lay Williams, The Platonic Soul of the *Reveries*: the Role of Solitude in Rousseau's Democratic Politics, *History of Political Thought*, 2012; 34 (1): 111–14.
75. Rousseau, *The Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, 16/ *O.C.* I, p. 1005.
76. Rousseau elsewhere claims that solitude is a defense against *amour-propre*: 'A proof that I have less amour propre than other men, or that mine is made in another manner is the facility that I have at living alone'. See Rousseau, *My Portraits*, in *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, vol. 12, 40/ *O.C.* I, p. 1124.
77. Rousseau, *Emile*, 221/ *O.C.* IV, p. 503.
78. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie or the New Heloise: Letters of Two Lovers Who Live in a Small Town at the Foot of the Alps,* in *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, vol. 6, transl. Philip Stewart and Jean Vaché (Hanover, NH: University of New England Press, 1997), 9/ *O.C.* II, p. 14.
79. Cooper, *Rousseau, Nature, and the Problem of the Good Life*, p. 178.

80. Thomas Nagel, What Is it Like to Be a Bat? *Philosophical Review*, 1974; LXXXIII (4): 435–50.
81. Neuhouser, *Rousseau's Theodicy of Self-Love*, p. 169.
82. See Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society*, p. 208 and Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, p. 88.
83. Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society*, p. 208
84. To name a few, Ferguson, Goethe, Sismondi, Marx, Tocqueville and Simmel. Indeed, by the time Simmel addresses the topic in 1900, he opens his discussion by commenting that '*. . .it has been emphasized often enough* that the product is completed at the expense of the development of the producer' [italics mine]. See Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, transl. Tom Bottomore, David Frisby, and Keethe Mengelberg (New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 492.
85. Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, ed. Edward Cannan (New York: Random House/ The Modern Library, 2000), p. 840.
86. See Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, Third Edition (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950), Part II, chapters XII–XIV.
87. Interestingly, Schumpeter's argument has recently been applied to doctors and surgeons. See Eric Topol, *The Creative Destruction of Medicine: How the Digital Revolution Will Create Better Health Care* (New York: Basic Books, 2012).
88. Rousseau, *Emile*, 200–201/ *O.C.* IV, p. 477.
89. Rousseau, *Considerations on the Government of Poland and On Its Planned Reform*, in *Collected Writings*, vol. 11, 173/*O.C.*III, pp. 958–59.
90. Arthur M. Melzer, *The Natural Goodness of Man: On the System of Rousseau's Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 275.
91. There is a famous story in which Rousseau gets into a fight with an Abbé from Normandy who read a tragedy at d'Holbach's Salon. The Abbé's work was atrocious, and the d'Holbach coterie sarcastically mocked his work. Rousseau was aghast at his friends' behavior, and politely informed the Abbé of the humiliating truth of the situation and encouraged him to value his work as an Abbé rather than trying to be a writer. As a reward for his good deed, Rousseau was physically assaulted by the poor Abbé. See Maurice Cranston, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The Early Life and Work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1712–54* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 313–14, and Leo Damrosch, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Restless Genius* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2005), pp. 251–52.
92. Rousseau, *Julie or the New Heloise: Letters of Two Lovers Who Live in a Small Town at the Foot of the Alps,* in *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, vol. 6, 9/ *O.C.*
93. Rousseau, *Julie or the New Heloise,* in *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, vol. 6, 14/ *O.C.* II, p. 20. Or, from *Corsica*: 'The stupid pride of bourgeois does nothing but debase and discourage the plowman'. See Rousseau, *Plan for A Constitution for Corsica*, in *Collected Writings*, vol. 11, 131/ *O.C.* III, p. 911.
94. Rousseau, *Plan for A Constitution for Corsica*, in *Collected Writings*, vol. 11, 132/ *O.C.* III, p. 911.
95. Melzer, *The Natural Goodness of Man*, p. 266.
96. Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origins and Foundations of Inequality Among Men*, in *The Discourses and Other Early Writings*, 167/ *O.C.* III, p. 171.