ABSTRACT

Good for Self and Good for Others:
Rousseau's Construction of International Politics

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My dissertation situates Rousseau's international thought within the generally accepted categories of IR Scholarship. Was he a realist, a liberal, a constructivist, or something else? I argue that he does indeed exhibit tendencies of realism as well as modern constructivism but, ultimately, transcends both of these categories. Like realists, Rousseau is deeply aware that the struggle for power permeates social life. Awareness of and participation in this struggle conditions the behavior of individuals and states. Rousseau also shares with Constructivism the belief that state interests and political structures are the result of ongoing social and historic processes that continue to be constructed, interpreted, and revised. The ongoing construction of identities, interests, and institutions, means that change is possible, even in the international realm.

Rousseau, however, is neither Realist nor Constructivist in the way he appeals to nature as the basis for his socio-political criticism. Rousseau's arguments do not issue in a call for modern man to return to a state of nature, but they do affect the kind of "constructs" Rousseau is willing to entertain as legitimate. In order to improve political

constructions, we must more nearly approximate psychological unity and strive to better correlate physical ability with psychological need. Social and political structures, including hierarchies of power, are necessary features of human life, but Rousseau also sees that such structures have a profoundly humanizing role to play in cultivating civic virtue, forming individual identity, and constraining *amour-propre.* Rousseau articulates a responsibility to pursue international justice and suggests ways to do so through domestic politics, while acknowledging the intrinsic limitations bound up in humanity's social existence.

Good for Self and Good for Others:
Rousseau's Construction of International Politics

by

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DEDICATION

To the memories of Ethel Caro, Julian King, and Ron Scales, the beloved grandparents we lost while in graduate school:

The models of family devotion and citizenship that each of you provide do much to bring *country* and *homeland* closer together.

"A Government should move toward its true goal as directly, as surely, and for as long as possible; without, however, losing sight of the fact that all the works of men are imperfect, transitory and perishable, as they themselves are."

- Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Considerations on the Government of Poland*

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Thesis

Rousseau's writings in the area of international relations have only recently begun to attract the attention they deserve. This is due in part to the fact that he did not present himself as a theorist of international relations. It is due also to the fact that many of his best writings in this area were not published during his lifetime. But today, we have a considerable body of Rousseau's writings that touch on international relations, and the question has naturally arisen how best to situate him within the generally accepted "approaches" or "schools" of thought. Was he a realist, a liberal, a constructivist, or something else? By and large, scholars who have asked this question have cast Rousseau as a Realist of a sort. Kenneth Waltz, for instance, interprets him as a "structural realist," someone who admits (however reluctantly) that international cooperation is basically impossible, that tensions between the goods of particular communities are intractable, that self-interest will determine policy, and that war is an ever-present possibility.[1] But in casting Rousseau in this way, Waltz unwittingly obscures aspects of Rousseau's thought that do not fit neatly into the Realist category. This is a pattern that recurs with others who attempt to categorize Rousseau. Whatever category he is deemed to fit, the category tends to function like a mold into which Rousseau's wide-ranging ideas are made to conform.

[1] Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State, and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 167-174.

I shall review some of the attempts to categorize Rousseau in what follows. But before I do, I want to set out the thesis that will animate my own account of Rousseau's thought in international relations. I argue that he does indeed exhibit tendencies of realist thought, but that he also exhibits tendencies of modern constructivism and, ultimately, transcends both of these schools in a manner that requires us to place him in his own unique category. As realists point out, Rousseau is deeply aware that the struggle for power permeates social life. Awareness of and participation in this struggle conditions the behavior of individuals as well as states.

What he shares with Constructivism is the belief that state interests and political structures are the result of ongoing social and historic processes that continue to be constructed, interpreted, and revised. The ongoing construction of identities, interests, institutions, and structures means that political change is possible, even in the international realm. Rousseau is open to the possibility of change in the direction of increased order, gradually mitigating the ill effects of international anarchy. At the same time, though, Rousseau is neither Realist nor Constructivist in the way he appeals to nature as the basis for his socio-political criticism. Rousseau, for instance, criticizes socio-political norms and institutions when they contravene biological needs, or increase the tension between physical capabilities and psychological needs.

While Rousseau's criticisms do not issue in a call for modern man to return to a state of nature, they do affect the kind of "constructs" Rousseau is willing to entertain as legitimate. In order to improve political constructions, we must more nearly approximate psychological unity and strive to better correlate physical ability with psychological need. Social and political structures, including hierarchies of power, are necessary features of

human life—as the Realists claim—but Rousseau also sees that such structures have a profoundly humanizing role to play in cultivating civic virtue, forming individual identity, and constraining *amour-propre.*

Thus from a standpoint that comprehends and transcends both realist and constructivist insights, Rousseau articulates a politics of limits for the sake of self-sufficiency and self-rule. Rousseau expresses the need for limits when he identifies *amour-propre* as the fundamentally political dimension of human nature. Within the individual, *amour-propre* not only produces necessary social attachments, it also yields unhealthy social vices like egoistic behavior, greed, and the endless search for status over others. States take on their own form of *amour-propre*; and it produces vices on a larger scale. National *amour-propre* compels states to regard international politics as a zero sum game in which national identity and even survival depend on relative gains over other states. The problem of social life, including international politics, consists in limiting *amour-propre* so that states might approach self-sufficiency and develop understandings of their own interests that are not framed explicitly against the interests of other states. Herein lies Rousseau's constructivism. In developing these constructs Rousseau offers principled limits on the use of force and proposes ways of considering national identity that support a pluralistic international realm. The majority of his thought emphasizes the ways domestic political institutions might constrain foreign policy, but Rousseau also identifies occasions when international political institutions can create or support these limits. Politics, for Rousseau, is not a story of progress; the institutions that limit *amour-propre* and constrain the use of force are born with the seeds of their own destruction. Political solutions are necessarily temporary solutions that must be maintained through

the work of dedicated citizens and eventually rebuilt under the guidance of an insightful statesman. Herein we find Rousseau's realism.

Existing Scholarship

Kenneth Waltz's book, *Man, the State, and War* presents Jean Jacques Rousseau as an intellectual forbearer of structural realism. Waltz's innovative reading and his eminent stature in the field compel all subsequent interpretations to engage this argument. Subsequent scholars have often refined certain elements of Waltz's argument, but they have rarely departed from his overarching conclusion that Rousseau despairs of international cooperation because of the anarchy of international structure. In this section, I summarize Waltz's use of Rousseau and point to key revisions to his understanding of Rousseau made by subsequent authors.

Rousseau, Waltz argues, offers two distinct accounts of the formation of political society: a philosophic one in the *Social Contract,* and a hypothetical one in the "Second Discourse." In the first, political life emerges through deliberation, choice, and will. In the second, politics is the product of evolution, tradition, and necessity.[2] Regardless of which explanation one chooses, the fundamental social problem remains the same: how can a social institution compel individuals to value the collective good over their own? Social activity requires one to trust that the other members of the community will equitably contribute to the common cause, and then distribute benefits in the agreed upon fashion. Without an agreed upon authority to enforce compliance, each member of society would be better served by defecting from the group and satisfying his or her needs individually. This is the case not because the benefits of individual action are

[2] Ibid., 167.

greater, but because the other members are also likely to defect.[3] Even with a central authority, one cannot fully escape the uncertainty of collective action. Any attempt to pursue a collective goal is vulnerable to conflict between the interests of individual members, not because of a defect in any one member, but because of the structural uncertainties bound up in the situation.[4] This problem of interdependent relationships translates into the realm of international politics where the sovereignty of independent states means that anarchy must prevail.

Waltz interprets Rousseau to argue that the pursuit of national self-interest is the highest duty of the state. On the international level, egoistic ambitions condition all behavior. Regime type and domestic political ideals are negligible factors in determining international behavior. This means that states may be studied as "acting units." To describe states as "acting units" is to claim that each state operates as a whole, whose actions are coordinated by an egoistic understanding of self-interest. This is not to say that national action perfectly reflects egoistic interest, but that states *attempt* to operate in such a way. Rousseau posits his understanding of this idea in the term, "general will."[5] Because the general will of any one state remains particular to that state, the international realm is permanently divided among competing expressions of the political good. Without an international sovereign to impose a hierarchy on these wills or generate a universal will, this structure will necessarily generate conflict, regardless of the internal perfection of individual states.[6]

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[3] Ibid., 168, 169.

[4] Ibid., 171.

[5] Ibid., 175-177.

[6] Ibid., 181.

Anarchy, Waltz argues, admits of only two solutions: either impose hegemonic control on separate states and coerce them into behaving peaceably, or impose a universal state that perfects and extends the general will to all human beings. Rousseau rejects the latter, but Waltz believes that he holds on to the possibility of an international confederation as a tenuous resolution to the problem of war. In the meantime, anarchy prevails; conflict is inevitable.[7] Anarchy, therefore, is the defining characteristic of the international structure.[8] By characterizing Rousseau as a structural critic of international cooperation, Waltz associates him with the broader claims of structural realism, namely, that ideational and domestic features of states have little bearing on the conduct of international politics. State's actions are determined by their relative power among other states. International structure constrains a rational foreign policy to a material calculation.

F.H. Hinsley's chapter on Rousseau in *Power and the Pursuit of Peace* also characterizes Rousseau as a prisoner within an unalterable international structure. Hinsley argues that for Rousseau, war cannot take place without states; by the same token, states cannot exist apart from the phenomenon of war.[9] The conclusion is similar to that of Waltz, but Hinsley's reasoning is different. Hinsley believes that Rousseau's thought is torn between moral and historical insights. The moral insights, as expressed in the "Discourse on Inequality" or the "Abstract" of the Abbé Saint Pierre's work, underscore the natural goodness of human beings, as well as the goodness of a cosmopolitan community. These writings hold out a standard for the moral life of an individual or even

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[7] Ibid., 185, 186.

[8] Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 2010), 80, 88, 93.

[9] F.H. Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 50-52.

a utopian society. On the other hand, the historical dimension of Rousseau's thought appears lucidly in the "Discourse on Inequality." Here Rousseau shows that society, far from being based on natural right or individual dignity, is produced by historic conditions. These conditions undermine natural rights and make a voluntary social contract nearly impossible. Nevertheless, Rousseau's *Social Contract* upholds the possibility of a voluntary contract that balances the freedom of the individual with the good of the community—a utopian vision for politics that has no basis in the history of society Rousseau describes. Hinsley argues that the division between moral and historical writings also appears in Rousseau's international thought. The "Abstract" and its endorsement of an international sovereign present the ideal vision for international politics; the "Judgement" of the Abbé's work concedes the historic impossibility of the ideal.[10] In both domestic and international politics the conflict between Rousseau's moral position and his sense of history cancel each other out.[11] Hinsley therefore infers that Rousseau's international theory is inconclusive and defeatist.[12]

Stanley Hoffmann's essay, "Rousseau on War and Peace," proceeds in a more systematic fashion than Waltz's discussion of Rousseau. Hoffmann agrees with Waltz on most points: Rousseau sees the problems of international politics as deriving from anarchy. There may be brief interludes of peace, but in the long run the state of war is inescapable.[13] Hoffmann improves upon Waltz's treatment in some important ways. In

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[10] Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace,* 59, 60. Patrick Riley seems to agree with Hinsley's assessment. Patrick Riley, "Rousseau as a Theorist of National and International Federalism," *Publius* 3, no 1(Spring, 1973): 5-17, esp 12.

[11] Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace,* 60.

[12] Ibid., 55.

[13] Hoffmann, "Rousseau on War and Peace," 36.

general, Hoffmann has a better understanding of the relationship between the state of nature theories and Rousseau's practical political writings. He also notes that Rousseau does not even tentatively support a European or world federation to resolve the problem of war, a conclusion Waltz reached by failing to differentiate Rousseau's position from that of the Abbé.[14] Based on his own analysis, Hoffmann reaches an even more dismal conclusion than Waltz, arguing that Rousseau sees only two possibilities for peace: either among individuals who achieve the isolated autonomy described in *Emile,* or in communities that create small isolationist republics as described in the *Social Contract.*[15] In either case, Hoffmann presents Rousseau's solutions to the evils of international relations as a rejection of politics, either partially by the state's withdrawal from international affairs, or fully, as an isolated and virtuous individual.

Hinsley and Hoffmann, while refining the details of Waltz's argument, have not produced substantively different conclusions. Rousseau is consistently accepted as a begrudging realist, who acknowledges war as the inevitable result of international anarchy, and accepts the contentious state system as preferable to a single world state.[16] The permanence of power politics *is* as feature of Rousseau's thought, but it is only one aspect of Rousseau's contribution to the pursuit of international peace.

Two scholars have challenged this view. Torbjorn Knutsen and Michael Williams look for a reason why Rousseau might incorporate deliberate tensions in his own work.

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[14] Stanley Hoffmann, "Rousseau on War and Peace," *Janus and Minerva: Essays in the Theory and Practice of International Politics,* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 37.

[15] Ibid., 41, 46.

[16]See also, Ian Clark, *Reform and Resistance in the International Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). Arthur Linklater, *Men and Citizens in the Theory of International Relations* (Hong Kong: MacMillan Press, 1982).

They interpret Rousseau's discussion of international politics as a measured response to the exigencies of international politics that creates room for deliberation and choice. Rousseau's thought includes a respect for power politics, not because he despairs of order in the face of anarchy, but because the solutions that power politics can offer are the best response to the challenges of the international realm.

Torbjorn Knutsen's brief article "Re-Reading Rousseau in the Post-Cold War World" makes three important observations about Rousseau's contributions to IR theory. First, Knutsen shows that while Rousseau has some similarities with contemporary realists, his assumptions are different from those of realism because Rousseau denies that human egoism is intrinsic to human nature, and he holds that rationality only comes into being through socialization. The notion of human beings as egoistic rational actors is, therefore, an oversimplification of Rousseau's actual view.[17] Second, Knutsen emphasizes the ways Rousseau transcends categories of international thought in ways that affirm the problems and potential of social life.[18] Finally, and closely related to the second point, Knutsen observes that Rousseau conveys his understanding of politics by making use of paradoxical pairs—individual vs. state, liberty vs. slavery, and reason vs. passion—to illustrate ways in which human society necessarily places goods in competition with one another.[19] Knutsen argues that Rousseau's approach is useful

[17] Torbjorn L. Knutsen, "Re-Reading Rousseau in the Post-Cold War World," *Journal of Peace Research* 31 No 3, (1994): 248, 249.

[18] Ibid., 250, 251.

[19] Ibid. 253.

because it transcends the categories of international theorizing, tempering ideological optimism and resisting the mechanistic tendencies of structural realism.[20]

Michael Williams' book *The Realist Tradition and the Limits of International Relations* is a brilliant departure from the Waltzian interpretation of Rousseau's international thought. Because Williams' treatment of Rousseau occupies only one chapter of his book, it is helpful to consider the broader argument before examining Rousseau's place in it.

The book as a whole resists the notion that politics can be reduced to a materialistic social science as posited by structural realists. Any description of the realist position that reduces it to a scientific study of clashing material interests is grossly insufficient. Realism is better understood as a longstanding tradition of political thought. The hallmarks of realism are its reliance upon power and fear as central causes in the formation of states. Realism attempts to translate the immaterial impulses caused by the desire for power or the fear of death into actionable principles and stabilizing institutions. Williams calls this tradition "willful realism." It is "willful" because thinkers within this tradition understand that states and norms are not naturally occurring, but must be deliberately created. The tradition is realist because it attempts to convert ideas into material interests that can be rationally pursued and defended, and because it accepts the centrality of power in the study of international relations.[21]

By describing "willful realism" as a tradition, Williams highlights the continuity in a long line of political thinkers that recognizes the force of material interests in

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[20] Ibid., 256.

[21] Michael Williams, *The Realist Tradition and the Limits of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 66-67.

international politics without obliterating the diversity of thought within the tradition. Williams presents his understanding of "willful realism" by engaging the writings of Thomas Hobbes, Jean Jacques Rousseau, and Hans Morgenthau.

Williams emphasizes the constructive elements within the work of each of these thinkers, but he refuses to characterize any of them as constructivists. There are two reasons for his refusing to do so. One is that Williams' version of realism appeals to an historic tradition ranging from Thucydides up to the twenty-first century. Because realism claims to be a tradition, it can accept disparate accounts of ethics or the structure of international society as long as power remains at the focal point of an author's perspective. Thus, there is less need to minimize contradictions between these authors by placing them in more precise categories.[22] Another reason is that Williams wants to avoid associating his argument with critical theory and the impetus towards postmodern deconstruction that often accompanies it.[23] "Willful Realism" as Williams describes it, allows for the critical study of the origins of social institutions, but also affirms that these structures must be evaluated by their "ethical aims and practical consequences."[24] This contrasts with the constructivists' insistence that their position is a method of understanding the international realm rather than a prescriptive theory from which to evaluate political institutions. To the degree that constructivism conceals or minimizes its own standards of judgment, Williams argues, constructivism shirks the responsibility for judgment.[25]

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[22] Ibid. 2-6; 209-210.

[23] Ibid.,142.

[24]Ibid.,152.

[25] Ibid., 152.

Williams' book focuses on excavating the foundations of the realist tradition, to demonstrate that fundamental elements of realism are profoundly critical of the social scientific approach to the study of politics.[26] According to Williams, the "acting unit" to which Waltz refers is a value assertion rather than an observed mode of action. The supposedly egoistic behavior of an "acting unit" is a social construction aspiring to make politics more responsible by projecting a uniform rationality onto all political actors studying them as if they all behave in the same way.[27]

Williams' argument directly contradicts Waltz's reading of Rousseau as a structural theorist. Williams points out that the "stag hunt" is not an illustration of an insurmountable political problem, but an example of the very type of problem that political life resolves for individual people.[28] Williams also argues against the claim that Rousseau sees states as "acting units." Rousseau rejects the Abbé's peace project, not because of permanent structural obstacles, but because it attempted to generate cooperation on the basis of universal rational interest. States are founded in the passions as well as in reason. Reason and passion mutually inform one another, and both influence state behavior.[29] Williams writes, "The ideal and the real are not severed: Rousseau seeks to bring them together in a mutual relationship of comprehension and transformation."[30]

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[26] Ibid., 10-12; 142-145.

[27] Ibid., 145.

[28] Ibid., 65. For the "stag hunt" see Jean Jacques Rousseau, "Second Discourse," in *The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings,* ed. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) , 163; and Waltz, *Man, the State, and War,* 167, 168.

[29] Williams, *Realist Tradition,* 69, 70.

[30] Ibid., 72.

Williams' account of Rousseau presents him as a theorist of moral freedom and responsibility, even in international politics. Rousseau is not overcome by the international structure, nor does he deny the problems of power, conflict, and insecurity. These problems are products of human activity, and therefore, open to revision.[31]

Thesis in Relation to the Literature

My own work is an attempt to reconcile, or at least preserve a deliberate tension in Rousseau's political thought. Waltz and his followers correctly perceive a tension between Rousseau's theory of nature and his description of the practical conduct of politics. The problem with their ensuing analyses is that they attempt to remove the tension by giving the upper hand to practical politics. Rousseau, in their estimation, collapses into realism out of sheer frustration and is forced to pay homage to realpolitik.

For two reasons of my own, I concur with Michael Williams in rejecting this position. First, Waltz's school of thought creates too neat a distinction between Rousseau's ideals and his practical observations. Rousseau deliberately incorporates this tension in his political writings because the tension exists in reality. A serious theory of politics preserves and reflects the competing goods of human life. By illuminating competing goods, Rousseau creates a dialectical relationship between the theory and the practice of politics that could improve the political condition. Second, as long as one accepts Waltz's three levels of analysis as the only way to discuss international politics, the tyranny of the international structure is inescapable. Material considerations become the only considerations, and in the materialist paradigm, the largest material considerations—international anarchy and states' relative capabilities—must surely

[31] Ibid., 76.

prevail. Ideas drop out of the calculus as negligible factors. As Michael Williams so compellingly argues, this is an inaccurate and impoverished way to study politics. Materials have no political significance apart from the ideas that impart meaning or purpose to them.

I find Michael Williams' work to be excellent and am building on his argument. Williams acknowledges the flexibility of institutional identity and interests, as well as the responsibility for a concept of political right in both domestic and international politics.[32] Williams however, offers little discussion of *how* Rousseau understood the transformation of identity or interest, and he does not provide an account of Rousseau's understanding of international right. Furthermore, there are problems with characterizing Rousseau primarily as a realist (as Williams does); placing Rousseau in conversation with constructivism helps to illuminate these problems (which Williams refuses to do). Williams' book places Rousseau alongside Hobbes and Morgenthau as a fellow representative of the realist tradition. While some features of Rousseau's thought are justly described as realist, to classify Rousseau primarily as a realist is to group him among thinkers with whom he has fundamental disagreements. Rousseau attacks Hobbes and Grotius because they describe political power as natural, and the basis for international right. Hans Morgenthau, while concerned with international morality, articulates a similar position in which the concern for justice is secondary to the concern for order.[33] Placing Rousseau alongside Hobbes and Morgenthau as expositors of the

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[32] Williams, *The Realist Tradition,* 8, 77.

[33] "So that in the first place, I put for a generall inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restlesse desire for Power after power, that ceaseth only in Death." Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan,* ed. Richard Tuck (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 70; see also pp, 88, 91. Hans Morgenthau also pays homage to the role of power in international politics. He writes, "Power, however limited and qualified, is the value which international politics recognizes as supreme. The test to which political decisions in the

same tradition obscures some of the significant differences between these thinkers, especially their understandings of statesmanship and the possibility for international society. Rousseau has a much more limited view of the statesman's role than Morgenthau, and this limited role tends to preclude the notion of an international society that exists between state leaders. Furthermore, and also a departure from Morgenthau, Rousseau does not view power structures as natural in the Hobbesian sense. Hierarchies in power are not intrinsic to the human condition, but are innovations that can be subjected to critique and reformulation in ways that move away from an understanding of right based on power.

For Hobbes, Morgenthau, and Waltz the pursuit of power does not require a moral justification. It is sufficient to understand that human nature is driven towards acquisition. There may be constraints on the *use* of power (prudence, popular expectations, external political considerations), but the desire for power over other human beings is inherently part of the human condition. For Rousseau the *pursuit* of power over another human is not natural. It is an acquired feature of social life that may be beneficial and necessary, but must be justified. The chains imposed by power structures cannot be dissolved, but they can and must be rendered legitimate. The ideational dimensions of political life, even international politics, are extremely important for Rousseau. Reading Rousseau from the perspective of constructivism moves these ideational considerations to the center of analysis. For Rousseau, ideational constructs are the key to legitimizing power structures and influencing the conduct of international affairs.

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international sphere must be subject refers, therefore, to the measure in which those decisions affect the distribution of power in the international sphere." Hans Morgenthau, *Scientific Man versus Power Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), 101.

By preserving the tension between the particular and the general in Rousseau's thought, I show that Rousseau affirms the dignity and importance of individual people and states. Simultaneously, he understands that the common good, whether of the state or the society of states, is also essential. The two must be kept in tension in order for the sake of the whole. There must be both particular communities and recognition of universal human dignity, as evidenced by Rousseau's advocacy for collective security and his defense of the "religion of man."

Chapter Overview

Chapter Two: Emile's *Invitation to Study International Politics*

Rousseau does not offer a complete study of international politics; he readily admits that he lacks the strength to make a full inquiry into the subject.[34] At the same time, Rousseau affirms the importance of such a study and makes a beginning into these inquiries. My broader project involves piecing together Rousseau's international thought in the hope of finding an outline of a whole.

I will argue that the emergence of international politics in *Emile* book V sheds light on this problem in three ways: first, the text turns to the study of international politics as a matter closely associated with consideration of the individual good; second, the text points to defects in existing accounts of international right; third, these passages offer some suggestions on what can be done to correct these defects.

One effect of turning to international politics in a book devoted to the cultivation of an individual is to indicate a relationship between the good of the individual and the

[34] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Social Contract," in *The Social Contract and other Later Political Writings,* ed. and trans Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 152.

conditions of the international realm. I will argue that Emile studies international relations because of his concern for his own wellbeing. International security, as Rousseau presents it in *Emile,* is not an end in itself; the state is does not appear as the ultimate political good to be defended by any necessary means. Rousseau personalizes national security; the wellbeing of the citizens constrains the ideas that give shape to national security.[35] Emile considers international politics as he decides where he will live and what his occupation will be.[36] Emile's study begins in a comparative fashion as he seeks to find a homeland to whose government he can submit.[37] To this end, Emile travels among the regimes of Europe and considers the internal workings of their governments. Emile's analysis is largely selfish; he must choose a homeland carefully because his choice of homeland ties his own wellbeing to the decisions of others. Above all, Emile hopes to avoid the life of a professional soldier.[38] Emile therefore seeks a country that is stable internally and peaceful externally.[39] His travels will either lead him to a proper homeland, or they will shatter his aspirations for a good political community, and resign Emile to "inevitable unhappiness" wherever he chooses to live. [40]

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[35] "The greatest difficulty in clarifying these important matters is to interest an individual in discussing them by answering these two questions: What importance does it have for me? and, What can I do about it? We have put our Emile in a position to answer both questions for himself." Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile or On Education* trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979) 458. Robert Jackson, *Global Covenant: Human Conduct in a World of States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 210-215.

[36] Rousseau, *Emile,* 456.

[37] Ibid., 455.

[38] Ibid., 456.

[39] "Do you believe that it is so easy to find the country where one is always permitted to be a decent man?...Before choosing this happy land, be well assured that you will find there the peace you seek. Be careful that a violent government, a persecuting religion, or perverse morals do not come to disturb you there." Ibid., 457.

[40] Ibid., 458.

Second, travel compels Emile to apply the principles of his education to the search for a homeland, and affords him the opportunity to apply his education to international politics, perhaps reaching more accurate conclusions than those offered by either Grotius or Hobbes.[41] This suggests that Rousseau is concerned with the implications that his domestic political thought have for the international realm. Political right may be learned through the education of an individual (like Emile) or the education of a community, but both individuals and citizens must consider their relationship to others. The question of right does not end at the door of the home or at the border of the state. There may not be a clear answer to this problem, but one effect of the *Emile* is to reject existing accounts of international right and re-open debate over the a state and its citizens with those outside of its boundaries.

Rousseau has developed the ideas of social and political right based on the historic development of human nature. He develops standards for living that are primarily based on the human passions, but also recognize the capacity for reason and moral choice. These principles may also serve as the standard for evaluating international politics.[42] Emile, or a reader who follows his efforts, might employ these standards to question the foundations of sovereignty, inquire into the duties owed to illegitimate powers, examine the nature of authority in voluntary society, and explore the possibility of international coalitions for restraining the threat of war.[43] I argue that through the text

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[41] "The Science of political right is yet to be born, and it is to be presumed that it will never be born. Grotius, the master of all our learned men in this matter, is only a child and, what is worse, a child of bad faith. When I hear Grotius praised to the skies and Hobbes covered with execration, I see how few sensible men read or understand these two authors. The truth is that their principles are exactly alike." Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

[43] "Finally, we shall examine the kind of remedies for these disadvantages provided by leagues and confederations, which leave each state its own master within but arm it against every unjust aggressor

of the *Emile*, Rousseau invites his readers to participate in the study of international politics.

Chapter Three: Rousseau on the Origins of International Politics

*Emil*e issues an invitation to study international politics, but readers must take a somewhat different path from Emile himself. Readers do not have an isolated childhood carefully orchestrated by a tutor and our study of politics follows rather than precedes the experience of political life. If we wish to apply Rousseau's ideas to the study of international politics, we need a course of study that helps us to recognize our presuppositions and then pursue institutions that support being good for ourselves and for others.

As people who already exist in the context of politics, an important step in our political education is to recognize that political life derives, at least in part, from historical processes. The *Second Discourse* and Rousseau's fragmentary manuscript the "State of War" present Rousseau's hypothetical history of political development. This history illuminates Rousseau's understanding of the relationship between human nature and political life and in so doing, demonstrates a connection between human nature and the problems of international politics.

The "Second Discourse" is significant to my project in two ways. First, Rousseau depicts power and the egoistic effects of *amour-propre* as social constructions rather than

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from without. We shall investigate how a good federative association can be established, what can make it durable, and how far the right of confederation can be extended without jeopardizing that of sovereignty….Finally, we shall lay down the true principles of the right of war, and we shall examine why Grotius and the others presented only false ones…'Keep in mind that right is not bent by men's passions, and that our first concern was to establish the true principles of political right. Now that our foundations are laid, come and examine what men have built on them; and you will see some fine things!'" Ibid. , 466, 467.

static features of the human condition.[44] *Amour-propre* develops in response to social experiences; it can be critiqued and explained by studying the experiences that cause it to expand. Second, Rousseau argues that studying *amour-propre* reveals the ways society institutionalizes it through the formation of power structures and hierarchies. Rousseau does not argue that the study of *amour-propre* can eliminate these structures, but these studies may reveal how to design social institutions that constrain *amour-propre,* and by this constraining, gain stability and legitimacy. Human life might be improved through the study and restriction of *amour-propre.* Existing conceptions of identity and power fall into the realm of changeable things. Rousseau makes a case that life can be improved by gaining an understanding of the interdependent relationship between the construction of society and the construction of human identity.[45] Because society and identity develop together, constraining one has implications for constraining the other.[46]

I turn to the "State of War" to illustrate that war is not a characteristic of nature, but follows after the formation of societies, and reaches its full potential in the context of states. By this logic, it is erroneous to characterize international politics as a state of nature. My interpretation of this essay advances my argument by showing three important similarities between Rousseau and constructivism. First, war is not a natural condition; the international realm derives from the formation of states. International conflict stems from states' political decisions and *amour-propre*.[47] Anarchy may characterize

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[44] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Second Discourse," in *The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings* ed. and trans. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 138, 158.

[45] Rousseau, "Second Discourse," 179-80,

[46] Ibid., 186-87

[47] "Fragments on War," *Rousseau on International Relations,* eds. Stanley Hoffmann and David P. Fidler (New York: Oxford university Press, 1991) 48.

international politics, but does not validate the Hobbesian claim that international politics is a war of all against all.[48] Second, states interpret and respond to anarchy through their leaders and domestic political institutions. Political theory can attempt to cultivate statesmanship and refine political institutions.[49] Third, Rousseau does not claim to eliminate the problem of war, but holds out the possibility of incremental improvements to the relationships between states that would have the effect of limiting war. This is possible because states have discretion over the definition and pursuit of national security.

These features of Rousseau's thought resemble aspects of the constructivist school of IR theory. The strongest similarity is that both understand power and interest to be the product of ideational constructs rather than material necessity. National power and self-interest often represent the ill effects of *amour-propre* writ large. The effects of *amour-propre*—the need for social approval, vanity, lust for dominion—are not based on material necessity, but are abstractions contingent upon social relationships. Social institutions that derive from *amour-propre* (including states and expressions of national interests) are not ossified, and can change as the ideational elements of these relationships change.

Chapter Four: The Foreign Policy of the Social Contract

Rousseau believes that for good and ill, politics stems from *amour-propre*. Much of what Rousseau describes in his explanation of *amour-propre* is exploitative. The

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[48] Rousseau, "State of War," in *The Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings* ed. and trans. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 163-165.

[49] Ibid., 168-170.

effects of this sentiment cause social life to be characterized by the egoistic pursuit of status and the fragmentation of the self. *Amour-propre* leads actors (individuals and states) to understand their accomplishments in terms of relative gains; it tempts both individuals and states to understand their own identity and purposes in terms of what they assume others (individuals and states) value.

Rousseau does not claim to abolish this sentiment; he does, however, attempt to limit its ill effects. In this chapter I focus on the principles that Rousseau invokes to constrain national *amour-propre*. I argue that he draws his models of restraint from two other passions in human nature—self-preservation and pity. These sentiments form the basis of what Rousseau calls natural law. His account of natural law is different from many of his contemporaries especially because it is rooted in sentiment rather than reason. In the context of social life, sentiments are not enough to restrain human behavior; institutions must supplement them. This chapter proposes an analogous relationship between the sentiments of self-preservation and pity, on the one hand, and some of the political institutions proposed by the *Social Contract*, on the other. I see Rousseau's teaching on political authority and the role of war as institutions stemming from his discussion of self-preservation. I also develop Rousseau's discussion of national religion as a manifestation of pity.

Taken together, I argue that these sentiments and institutions affirming two paradoxical principles, the one involving our obligations to our community, the other our obligations to humanity more broadly. The first principle claims that human beings have a right to self-rule and that this entails both choice about membership in a particular

community and devotion to that community above all others.[50] The second, and paradoxical, principle is that communal rights are not a license to exploit others. Human beings have basic obligations to other human beings, even those outside of their community, because of their shared sentience and capacity for moral reason. Shared sentience and moral reason endow human beings with the ability to sympathize with others' suffering and the obligation to avoid causing harm to others. Human obligation exists prior to and outside of the state. Shared humanity and the duties it entails can provide limits to the foreign policy of Rousseau's sovereign.[51]

The "religion of man" fleshes out Rousseau's understanding of the twin obligations to community and humanity. In the *Social Contract* Rousseau explains the "religion of man" by distinguishing it from both civic religion and the "religion of the Priest."[52] The ancients best exemplify civic religion; these cities united the political and the theological. Among the ancients, to serve the gods was to serve the king; all outsiders were to be viewed simultaneously as infidel and enemy. This religious understanding is useful for the individual community, but denies any obligation to those outside the community. The "religion of the Priest" teaches that there are two kingdoms and two sorts of law, one heavenly and eternal, and the other temporal and finite. This teaching produces division within the human mind that prevents people from being both devout and citizens. Rousseau dismisses it as a worthless institution that forces people into self-

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[50] Rousseau, *Emile,* 455.

[51] This stands in sharp contrast with Hobbes' description of the place of reason in natural man. Far from guiding human beings toward a notion of obligation, reason foments the violent struggle of all against all as each searches for a faster way to subdue those around him. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan,* ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 91.

[52] Rousseau, *Social Contract,* 146, 147.

contradiction. The "religion of man," unlike both these forms, is focused on the internal worship of God and the external duties of morality. Because the "religion of man" allows diversity of individual worship and affirms the universal dignity of human beings, this religious expression serves as the basis for the religion authorized by the social contract.[53] This form of religious devotion, as Rousseau discusses in the *Social Contract,* moderates the nationalistic elements of his thought, and directs its adherents to the obligations they bear to humanity. Religious citizens may be loyal subjects and engage those outside their community with compassion.

Chapter Five: Rousseau and the National Interest

The *Social Contract*'s argument illustrates constraining principles that contribute to legitimate authority within a state and just interactions with those outside of it. The question remains as to whether these domestic political principles have any bearing on political reality, especially the realities of international politics. In the *Considerations on the Government of Poland*, Rousseau speaks explicitly about international political problems and, as in the *Social Contract*, addresses these problems by promoting institutions of self-governance and constraining national *amour-propre*. To be sure, this is not a direct transfer of ideas from one text into another; rather it is the application of principles to a specific problem. Rousseau illustrates the process of political reform by working through Poland's existing institutions, showing how they might constrain the unhealthy dimensions of national *amour-propre* and how Poles might use this limited *amour-propre* in ways that are consistent with their nation's identity and objectives.

[53] Ibid., 146-151.

Rousseau provides an example of how a deliberately constructed national identity could modify international politics in the *Government of Poland*.

Not only does the *Government of Poland* illustrate a consistency in Rousseau's thought, it is important with respect to international relations theory because it illustrates the complex relationship between Rousseau's thought, constructivism, and realism. I highlight ways in which Rousseau would alter dynamics of the international realm by closely defining Polish identity and national interests. I also discuss how the clear threat from Poland's enemies limited the menu of options for Polish foreign policy. Rousseau's argument brings together concern for the exigencies of power politics with the determination to develop a moral and sustainable national policy. The *Government of Poland* suggests that national identity and security can be changed by deliberate ideational shifts and that these changes can lead to greater levels of peace and security.

Rousseau's argument depends on the judicious narrowing of national identity and interests.[54] Poland must come to terms with its genuine interests: the freedom to govern itself and the ability to preserve its identity if conquered. In order to satisfy these goals, Rousseau argues that Poland must be willing to give up existing territory and develop a national identity that stems from shared laws and customs rather than international prestige.[55]

Re-defining national identity requires a new policy on national security. Because of its troubled position, Poland must change its understanding of what it means to be self-maximizing. Poland cannot pursue great power status; instead, it must hone its ability to

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[54] Ibid., 183-189

[55] Ibid., 189-193, 224-232.

fight asymmetric wars.[56] International power and the good of the Polish community are not directly related. Rousseau understands that total security is never a possibility; he develops a foreign policy designed to maintain an internally vibrant community despite international insecurity.

Chapter Six: The Limits of International Cooperation

Relationships between states can be made more peaceful by modifying domestic identity and interests, but Rousseau also mentions solutions to international relations that come into being between states themselves. Peace is possible through the cooperation of states. What forms of international cooperation does Rousseau emphasize, and are these forms durable solutions to the problems of international politics? Some of Rousseau's writings point to the feasibility of international federations or smaller alliances as partial solutions to the anarchy of international politics.

To discuss these questions I rely primarily on Rousseau's "Abstract" and "Judgment" of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre's plan for perpetual peace. In 1754 the Comte de St. Pierre (the Abbé's nephew) commissioned Rousseau to edit the Abbé Saint-Pierre's extensive works on the peace of Europe.[57] The "Abstract" is the fruit of these labors.[58] It condenses the Abbé's arguments, and offers some analysis of their possibility. The "Judgment" is a separate document, and contains Rousseau's concluding critiques of the

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[56] Ibid., 232-239.

[57] Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Confessions,* in *The Collected Writings of Rousseau,* vol 5. eds. Christopher Kelly, Roger Masters, and Peter G. Stillman. trans. Christopher Kelly (Hanover: Dartmouth College Press, 1995), 354-356.

[58] Yuichi Aiko, "Rousseau and Saint-Pierré's Peace Project," in *Classical Theory in International Relations.* Eds. Beate Jahn, Steve Smith, Thomas Kiersteker, et. al. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 104.

Abbé's proposal.[59] The two must be read together in order to understand Rousseau's nuanced opinion on the proposal. On the one hand, Rousseau shows a favorable disposition towards the idea of security communities.[60] On the other, it shows that Rousseau realizes that solutions to political problems are temporary remedies; no political institution can be permanently successful. Rousseau, therefore, emphasizes the importance of using appropriate mechanisms for political change. The development of coalitions is subject to several caveats: political change is neither inevitable, nor can it be forced; states remain the essential actors of the international realm; all political solutions are temporary palliatives.[61] Even at its best, politics leads to communities with competing understanding of justice that will inevitably come into conflict.

This argument illustrates how Rousseau transcends constructivism. Wendt argues that self-interested states are unlikely to move from a higher level of order to a lower. He argues that the benefits of international cooperation are so great that self-interested states would modify their identities and interests to preserve this order. Rousseau has a less favorable opinion about the entrenchment of political progress. Politics remain in the realm of uncertainty; states are not purely rational actors. International peace is contingent on domestic political institutions, international leadership, and the vicissitudes of history.

It is in this chapter that the realist elements of Rousseau's thought appear most clearly. A realist interpretation of Rousseau on these points is valid, but to accept the

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[59]Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace*, 46.

[60] Rousseau, "Judgment," *The Plan for Perpetual Peace, on the Government of Poland, and Other Writings on History and Politics,* trans. Christopher Kelly and Judith Bush. ed. Christopher Kelly (Hanover: Dartmouth College Press, 2005), 56. Rousseau, *Emile,* 466-477 and 466, 467n.

[61] Rousseau, *Social Contract,* 109.

realist interpretation as Rousseau's complete position is to overlook his critical perspective on power politics. The egoistic abuse of state power may pose a constant threat to international peace, but Rousseau never accepts power as the only measure of international right, and he holds out to the possibility of cooperation through incremental changes to the international realm. Furthermore, Rousseau's argument denies the possibility for an international society or a sort of political community that exists among state leaders. The statesman is one who can engage the international realm when the good of his or her nation requires it, but who keeps his own attention and the energies of his or her people focused on the domestic political good.

CHAPTER TWO

Emile's Invitation to Study International Politics

Rousseau's International Writings

Studying Rousseau and international relations is something like putting together a jigsaw puzzle, with the proviso that the pieces may not all be from the same puzzle, and there is no box illustrating how they fit together. Rousseau's international reflections appear sporadically, sometimes in essay format like the "Judgment" on the writings of the Abbé St. Pierre. At other times they occur in the context of larger discussions like the *Second Discourse* or the *Social Contract* and take the form of jabs against Grotius, Hobbes, or other theorists who have dealt with questions of international right or justice. Some of the most explicit treatments of international politics were unpublished or fragmentary writings; "The State of War," "Fragments on War," and "Considerations on the Government of Poland," fall into one or both of these categories. The incompleteness and apparent discontinuity between these texts make it impossible to say that Rousseau has a systematic theory of international relations. But the absence of systemization does not preclude a certain continuity of themes. One of these themes is a severe criticism of the existing study and practice of international politics. Condemnation of the Hobbesian account of international right as the right of the strongest appears in almost all these texts; the problem transcends Hobbes's theoretical defense of power politics and, according to Rousseau, is endorsed by Grotius, one of Europe's foremost scholars of international law.

If both the study and the practice of international politics are so corrupt, then why does Rousseau offer criticism without a clear alternative?

Scholars (myself included) are drawn to the notion that thinkers have cohesive doctrines that can and should be identified and explained through scholarly analysis. As Quentin Skinner notes, the desire to establish doctrines often produces erroneous anachronisms. One form of anachronism occurs if we attribute a later idea to an earlier author because of similarities in terminology. This error assumes that debates are always the same in all times and all places; it draws authors into controversies of which they had no direct knowledge.[1] Scholars commit a similar error when seeking to highlight the evolution of a single idea or term through centuries of culture and intellectual history. Shared ideas may exist across time and space, but an overwhelming desire to identify and preserve doctrine(s) can lead to obscuring important differences between authors and ideas.

Without claiming that Rousseau should be regarded primarily as a theorist of international politics, or that he offers a comprehensive teaching on international relations, this chapter (and, indeed, this project as a whole) searches for a way to think about why Rousseau even bothers to consider international politics. Developing a plausible answer to the "why" question may help contextualize the pieces of his international writings. My analysis may not solve the puzzle of how all the pieces fit together, but it reveals whether the pieces contribute to a single picture.

Emile, Rousseau's treatise on education, helps to resolve the "why." Indeed it raises the very question of why one should study international politics—what such a

[1] Quentin Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," *History and Theory* (1969), 8.

study is good for. The text raises this question by presenting its audience with the character of Emile, an average person educated according to nature. The drama of the narrative then leads Emile into an examination of politics, including international politics. The text, in prompting its own character to study international politics, sheds light on problems of "why study international politics?" and "what is it good for?"

There are several steps to my argument. I begin by making a case for *Emile's* significance as a work that contextualizes Rousseau's other writing. After this I examine three aspects of the dramatic narrative surrounding Emile's character as he begins his study of politics. First, I discuss Emile's motives for study. Second, I point out the obstacles that the tutor puts in Emile's way. Finally, I provide an overview of the international questions that Emile investigates and take up the tutor's invitation to consider what such studies might offer to readers.

Beginning with Emile

Emile holds a special place in Rousseau's evaluation of his own work. In his *Confessions*, Rousseau depicts its publication process as an agonizing period when he feared for his own safety and even more for the successful publication of his book. The publisher was in Paris but Rousseau had been compelled to flee France. Despite multiple attempts to communicate with his publisher, he received no news. Overwhelmed by fear and frustration, Rousseau's imagination amplified his concerns. He writes:

> Behold my imagination, having been kindled by this long silence, occupied by tracing out phantoms for me. The more I had the publication of my last and best work at heart, the more I tormented myself by seeking what might be holding it

> up, and always carrying everything to the extreme, during the suspension of the printing of the Book I believed I saw suppression in it.[2]

His anxieties were not purely imagined. A member of the Jesuit Order with tremendous influence over the publishing industry was tasked with reviewing a large portion of the manuscript. Learning about this hostile reviewer pushed Rousseau into despair over the way his writings might be turned against him. He describes his mental condition in this way: "I felt that I was dying; I have trouble understanding why this extravagance did not finish me off: the idea of my memory being dishonored after me in my worthiest and best book was so frightening to me."[3] These anecdotes provide a window into the dangers surrounding *Emile's* publication, but they also show the significance that Rousseau attributed to *Emile.* He regarded it as his "worthiest and best book."

No seemingly definitive statement from Rousseau is complete without a qualification. In a letter to M. de Malesherbes (January 12, 1762), Rousseau describes a critical juncture in his own intellectual life. He was travelling to Vincennes to visit Denis Diderot in prison when he was suddenly overwhelmed by contradictions within his own life and the internal conflict he experienced in wanting relationships with other people but simultaneously knowing that he hated those around him. Overpowered by these sentiments, Rousseau sat beneath a tree and experienced a moment of overwhelming intellectual clarity. In these moments on the side of the road, he recognizes that his deepest conviction is the natural goodness of human beings; this is the truth he most wants to persuade others to accept. This half-hour of incredible lucidity passes; Rousseau

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[2] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Confessions and Correspondence, Including the Letters to Malesherbes* in *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, vol 5 ed. Christopher Kelly, Roger D. Masters, and Peter G. Stillman, trans. Christopher Kelly, (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1995), 473.

[3] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 475.

laments that none of his writings accurately capture the depth of what he experienced and desired to articulate. He writes,

> Oh Sir, if I had ever been able to write a quarter of what I saw and felt under that tree, how clearly would I have made all the contradictions of the social system seen, with what strength I would have exposed all the abuses of our institutions, with what simplicity I would have demonstrated that man is naturally good and that it is from these institutions alone that men become wicked. Everything that I was able to retain of these crowds of great truths which illuminated me under that tree in a quarter of an hour has been weakly scattered about in my three principal writings, namely that first discourse, the one on inequality, and the treatise on education, which three works are inseparable and together form the same whole.[4]

This explanation of the unity of Rousseau's thought is further complicated by the significant relationship between *Emile* and *On the Social Contract*. In the dramatic narrative of the story, as the character Emile studies political life, his tutor outlines a course of study that is remarkably similar to the contents of the *Social Contract*.[5] Rousseau's letter to his publisher Nicolas-Bonaventure Duchesne, shows that the similarity is not coincidental: "[*On the Social Contract]*, having been cited several times and even summarized in the treatise on education [*Emile*] should be considered as a kind of appendix to it." Rousseau even went so far as to say that the two made a "single whole."[6] Putting these various statements together results in a collection of writings—*First* and *Second Discourses*, *Emile*, and *On the Social Contract*—that Rousseau claims are a unified whole, demonstrating the natural goodness of man as well as the corrupting

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[4] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Letter to M. de Malesherbes" (January 12, 1762), *The Confessions and Correspondence, including the Letters to Malesherbes*, Collected Writings of Rousseau, vol 5. Ed. Christopher Kelly, Roger D Masters, and Peter G. Stillman, trans. Christopher Kelly (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1995) 575.

[5] I say remarkably similar because there are two notable discrepancies between what Emile studies and the contents of the *Social Contract*. The list of subjects the tutor provides Emile omits any mention of the Legislator or civil religion. Allan Bloom also makes note of this discrepancy. I find it very interesting, but this is not the place to attempt an explanation for it.

[6] Quoted by Roger D. Masters, *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), xiii.

effects of social institutions. Of course, establishing a central theme is not the same as establishing a doctrine, but it does provide authorial support for placing texts in conversation with one another and examining how they elaborate on and refine the implications of this theme.

This textual unity raises another question; namely, what do the natural goodness of man and the unity between Rousseau's writings have to do with international relations? *Emile* is a potential key to resolve this difficulty. *Emile* presents Rousseau's natural man, but it identifies him as someone who cannot avoid the study of politics, even international politics. Furthermore, the text invites readers to participate in the same study, suggesting that the pursuit of natural goodness, for both Emile and readers, cannot be wholly severed from the study of politics. The fact remains, however, that this is a paradoxical teaching. Rousseau claims that the natural goodness of man stands in tension with the abuses of our institutions.[7] For most people, to be educated in the sciences and in politics is to be complicit in these abusive institutions;[8] the politics between states reify both social institutions and the corrupt sciences that attempt to control them. One might attempt to resolve this problem by pointing out the uniqueness of Emile's education. Perhaps because he is educated in ways intended to preserve his natural goodness, he can study politics without being corrupted or contributing to the injustice of political institutions. To argue that Emile is somehow inoculated against the corrupting influence

[7] Masters, *Political Philosophy*, xi-xii.

[8] "But if the progress of the sciences and the arts has added nothing to our genuine felicity; if it has corrupted our morals, and if the corruption of morals has injured purity of taste, what are we to think of that crowd of Popularizers who have removed the difficulties which guarded the access to the Temple of the Muses, and which nature had placed there as a trial of the strength of those who might be tempted to know?" Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "First Discourse," "First Discourse," *The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings,* ed. and trans. Victor Gourevitch, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 26.

of social life is not wholly satisfactory. The very need to study politics suggests that even one educated according to nature remains dependent on others. Dependency itself produces occasions for exploitation and injustice; thus, Emile cannot avoid the dangers of corruption; the best he could do is to learn how to limit or cultivate these dependencies.[9] To accomplish this, Emile must study political life, including international politics.

By revealing Emile's dependencies, the text also illuminates why even readers aspiring to natural goodness must also be concerned with political life. If Rousseau's best version of a natural man still has need of political community, surely it is inescapable for those readers who do not have the advantages of Emile's education. By witnessing Emile, with his limited dependencies, find himself in need of studying international politics, readers may also identify similar (if not more compelling) needs to study their own states' external relations. Thus, the pursuit of natural goodness, for both Emile and readers, is a call to thoughtfully engage the political realm.

Before directly engaging *Emile* let me clarify how I approach Rousseau's texts. Rousseau writes his texts so that the reader must interact with them. Rousseau, for example, often speaks directly to the reader, even addressing his readers. He is trying to pull them in, so that they can become participants in what he is trying to teach. This interaction between author and reader occurs as the author uses the text's structure and content to challenge readers' existing perspectives and assumptions. A central purpose of the novel genre, and texts such as *Emile* that are styled as novels, as John Scott observes

[9] Mary Nichols, "Rousseau's Novel Education in the Emile," *Political Theory* 13 no 4 (Nov. 1985), 547.

in his work on Rousseau, is "to challenge the reader to examine his or her own world in light of an alternative world presented in the novel."[10]

Rousseau makes an important statement in *Emile* about his manner of writing that seems to necessitate this interpretive approach. He admits, "I proposed to say in this book all that can be done and to leave to the reader the choice—among the good things I may have said—of those that are within his reach."[11] This statement has several valuable implications for readers. In the first place, Rousseau draws the reader into the broader argument by inviting him or her to examine the text for the supposedly "good things." Searching for the "good things" requires a level of agreement and familiarity with the author's work; it asks the reader to admit that there are at least some good things in the text and accept them as such. Second, this statement invites the reader to consider his or her own reach. It raises questions in the reader's mind about what Rousseau means by "reach" and what limits the reach. Furthermore, if it is limited, are there ways that the reader might extend it?

In this way, Rousseau uses the action of the *Emile* to teach his audience about the process of education. The book itself is a treatise on education; by engaging the narrative, readers may develop an understanding of how the characters represent natural education. At the same time as the tutor educates Emile, Rousseau (as author) addresses his readers and educates them. Education, then, takes place on at least two levels: for the pupil within the text and the pupil holding the text. As Rousseau's invitation to consider our own

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[10] John T. Scott, "Do You See What I See? The Education of the Reader in Rousseau's *Emile*," *The Review of Politics* 74 (2012), 445.

[11] Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, trans. Alan Bloom (New York, Basic Books, 1979), 406. Another example may be found on p. 401 where Rousseau suggests a comparison but leaves to the reader the act of drawing out its implications for pupils different from Emile, particularly female students: " Readers, I do not know what effect a similar speech would have on girls raised in your way."

reach indicates, readers themselves are pupils. The text is in some sense the teacher, and it demonstrates its pedagogical role by requesting participation as well as clarifying the forms this participation should take.[12] It is important to recognize that this reading does not collapse the lessons the tutor gives to Emile into the lessons that Rousseau offers the reader. Some of the possibilities that exist for the characters in the text may not exist for us as readers, and also vice versa. In the process of considering what is accessible to our own grasp, we as readers open ourselves to education.

Emile's *Overarching Narrative*

My study of *Emile* focuses on the fifth and final book. To appreciate the role of book five, one needs at least an outline of the book's overarching narrative. *Emile or On Education* claims to demonstrate education and life according to the principles of natural goodness. While the book may not fully capture the identity of a natural man, the text illustrates the labor required to perhaps discover an approximation of natural man and then preserve what is good in this natural person as he moves into political society.[13] "Natural man" is a rhetorical device; it teaches us something about ourselves but does not exist in historic reality. This device shows us what we might be like apart from the corrupting influence of our institutions, but it is not a position that we can recover. For example, at the beginning of the book, the tutor criticizes modern education for placing human beings in tension with themselves. Internal conflict deprives human beings of their wholeness and diminishes their goodness: "in conflict and floating during the whole

[12] John T. Scott, "The Illustrative Education of Rousseau's *Emile*," *American Political Science Review* 108 no. 3 (August 2014), 534.

[13] In Denise Schaeffer's words "*Emile* is not a description of natural man, but is rather an inquiry into what it would take to *know* natural man." Denise Schaeffer, "The Utility of Ink: Rousseau and Robinson Crusoe," *The Review of Politics* 64 no. 1 (Winter, 2002), 148.

course of our life, we end it…without having been good either for ourselves or for others."[14] The tutor offers the education of nature as the alternative necessary to avoid this internal conflict. Natural education avoids internal conflict by teaching people how to understand themselves and relate the outside world to the self without making comparisons with others. The tutor acknowledges the self-centeredness of the education by posing the following question: "But what will a man raised uniquely for himself become for others?"[15] This task becomes the "double object" of the book. The tutor hopes to present a student whose natural education preserves his psychological unity and prepares him for the "double object" of being good for himself and good for others.[16]

Rousseau divides the text into five books. Book I introduces the idea of natural education and describes the way the infant Emile is to be cared for. Book II begins with the "second period of life" when the child begins to speak and can no longer be called an infant; book II terminates at the very beginning of adolescence. Book III starts at about age twelve or thirteen and describes education up to the age of fifteen. At this time, Emile is beginning to reach puberty. Any sexual inclinations he has, however, are instinctual rather than passionate. He may begin to feel the desire for sex, but the ideas of beauty and love (comparisons between objects of desire) are still foreign to him. Emile is "satisfied, happy, and free insofar as nature has permitted."[17] During Books IV and V Emile begins to be concerned with his relationships with others. His sexual passions have developed and he begins to long for companionship. Sexual desire compels even one educated

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[14] Rousseau, *Emile*, 41.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid., 208.

according to nature to consider his relationships with other people; Emile begins to recognize that he is no longer complete by himself.[18] Emile seeks out social relationships in Book IV, but the tutor's lessons on friendship come to light more through principled observations than relationships between Emile and another character in the text.[19] Near the end of Book IV the tutor directs Emile's attention toward sexual love but only insofar as he proposes a search for a hypothetical beloved named Sophie.[20] Emile is eager to find this woman and the tutor prepares him for this search by describing what Sophie will be like, but the search does not begin in earnest until book V.

In book V Emile has reached the age of manhood. His final lessons are on his relationship with other human beings, and the tutor has said that these lessons will continue for the rest of Emile's life. With respect to the "double object" that Rousseau declared, book V directly engages the question of what Emile will become for others by leading Emile to consider the implications of his relationship with Sophie. Book V begins by introducing the education of women and outlining Sophie's education. Emile, to say the least, is an unusual student; if he is to be good for another person, this person must be prepared for him in particular. The narrative raises several questions, including what natural education looks like for women, how each pupil's education prepares one for the other, and how they will change one another in the context of a relationship. The concept of Sophie has transfixed Emile; the tutor must help him to recognize and then consider the challenges and possibilities that a spouse will bring into his life. The prospect of attaching himself to one person raises the question of why this *particular* person. If Emile

[18] Ibid., 214.

[19] Ibid., 220-235.

[20] Ibid., 329.

is to realize and preserve his natural freedom, he must be conscious of the weight of the obligations that he assumes. The search for Sophie, then, is more than a quest for a friend and spouse; it is an opportunity for Emile to apply his natural education to a social relationship. Rousseau conveys that the quest for Sophie will prove Emile's ability for self-rule and virtue:

> Who, then, is the virtuous man? It is he who knows how to conquer his affections; for then he follows his reason and his conscience…Up to now you were only apparently free. You had only the precarious freedom of a slave to whom nothing has been commanded. Now be really free. Learn to become your own master. Command your heart, Emile, and you will be virtuous.[21]

For Emile to master himself, he must learn to cultivate this passion and follow it appropriately. The tutor cautions Emile against entering marriage too quickly and before he has tested the basis for his attachment: "You want to marry Sophie, and yet you have known her for less than five months! You want to marry her not because she suits you but because she pleases you."[22] Emile is not is a position to choose a particular person until he knows what sets her apart from others. Choosing a spouse is a long-term—even permanent—attachment that will produce more attachments to additional people like children and neighbors.[23] Sexual love, then, opens the door to broader social commitments and provides a compelling reason for Emile to undertake both his travels and his study of politics.

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[21] Ibid., 444-445.

[22] Ibid., 447.

[23] Ibid., 448.

Persuading Emile to Study Politics

With the declared intention of allowing Emile's relationship to mature and using distance to test his relationship with Sophie, the tutor insists that they must leave Sophie and travel. They are not to travel forever, and are not in search of another woman, but they must complete his education by taking up the study of other human beings. Travel, the tutor points out, may be a common topic in literature and frequently employed by other educators, but it rarely teaches people to understand others. Most travel is superficial tourism; it teaches people to engage other peoples or cultures in very limited ways and then complacently to "babble about what one does not know."[24] Emile's travel is not a grand tour of Europe; it is an opportunity for him to investigate human nature and develop an understanding of the species by examining the ways of life in other nations. His travel is distinguished from that of his contemporaries in that Emile searches for that which is truly useful. He is not amassing experiences for the sake of being cultured; he is studying government, morals, and public order to discover their purposes and his own relationship to them. Travel and study are expressly intentioned to help Emile evaluate political communities and increase his understanding of human nature.[25] The tutor summarizes their objectives in this way:

> Now that Emile has considered himself in his physical relations with other beings and in his moral relations with other men, it remains for him to consider himself in his civil relations with his fellow citizens. To do that, he must begin by studying the nature of government in general…and finally the particular government under which he was born so that he may find out whether it suits him to live there.[26]

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[24] Ibid., 451.

[25] Ibid., 452.

[26] Ibid., 455.

These statements are consistent with the earlier idea that Emile first learns to be good for himself and then considers what he might be for others. To develop more fully what this naturally educated man might gain from the study of politics, it is helpful to search for themes that categorize the types of political questions and obligations that Emile encounters through his journey. I see three categories that the tutor raises for Emile: erotic, material, and communal. In other words, what are the social implications of love and marriage? What dangers emanate from an aspiration for property and material possessions? And what is the relationship between Emile's family and the community in which they will live?

Sex appears as the point of departure for the study of politics in that Emile does not consider these questions until he finds Sophie. Pairing Emile's sexual desire with his study of politics has the effect of indicating a relationship between the sort of attachment that stems from sexual longing and the attachment that comes through other forms of obligation. Even before the tutor finalizes their journey, he asks Emile a series of questions that underscore a connection between sexual longing and political identity. Thus, in some sense the obligations that emanate from sexual longing are foundational to politics. They are also foundational to the life of the family, which, for Emile is an intermediate step between his life as a pupil and his life as a member of a political community.[27] To persuade Emile of the importance of travel, the tutor asks, "In aspiring to the status of husband and father, have you meditated enough upon its duties? When you become the head of a family, you are going to become a member of the state, and do

[27] Mary Nichols's study of Rousseau's cosmopolitanism supports this reading of sexual longings as a basis for political attachment. See Mary Nichols, "Kant's Teaching of Historical Progress and Its Cosmopolitan Goal," *Cosmopolitanism in the Age of Globalization: Citizens without States*, ed. Lee Trepanier and Khalil M. Habib (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2011), 125.

you know what it is to be a member of the state?"[28] Emile's desire for Sophie is more than biological; he wants to be a husband and a father. These aspirations reflect more than an instinctive need for sex and reproduction; to be a husband and a father is a deliberate and rational commitment to another person and the children produced together with that person. It is a consciously made attachment to particular people. It is a departure from the self-sufficiency that Emile's education taught him to value because the marital commitment leads to dependence.[29] In loving Sophie, Emile finds himself attached to the affections and approbation of another person. Denise Schaeffer helps to illuminate the broader implications of attachment to the *particular* for political life. Love for the particular, understood as a specific person or community, creates a type of need that exists outside of biological necessity and takes shape in emotional attachments and in the opinion of others. It produces the desire for loyalty and engenders competition to preserve this loyalty.[30] Love expands the self to include the beloved. This type of extended attachment is similar to that which holds people together in a political community; to call another person a fellow citizen is to acknowledge a shared commitment to a political end and mutual obligations under shared laws. Like marital commitments, political identity is not wholly rational; love and loyalty both can be transformed into patriotism and civic pride. Just as Emile's love for Sophie transcends purely biological needs, the type of attachments that citizens feel for their community surpasses utilitarian aims.

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[28] *Emile*, 448.

[29] Nichols, "Emile's Novel Education," 543, 554.

[30] Denise Schaeffer, "Reconsidering the Role of Sophie," *Polity* 30 no. 4 (Summer, 1998), 611.

Emile's love for one person opens the door to an extending network of attachments to other people. Confined at first to the smallest probable number (Sophie alone), this attachment will expand further to include their children. The tutor's question, therefore, points to the very real possibility that this first erotic attachment will lead Emile into society. He will need work to provide for his family and perhaps neighbors to help protect them. Marriage closes off the possibility for isolated self-sufficiency. Emile must recognize this and consider how he will engage this broader community: "Do you know what government, laws, and fatherland are? Do you know what the price is of your being permitted to live and for whom you ought to die?"[31] Political life brings with it an even more extensive series of obligations. Travel provides Emile with the opportunity to consider the natures of governments. It may be possible for him to choose the regime that most suits him, and he may even find a community that he can call a fatherland. Before he takes on this initial obligation to another person, Emile must look into the future and consider his place in the civil order.

Property and material possessions appear as a second and related form of obligation and dependence. Emile himself raises the subject of property as a way of opposing the tutor's insistence on studying politics and social life. He points out that he is not trained for the life of a citizen or a warrior. His childhood lessons have prepared him for peaceful life and hard work. Emile proclaims his lack of interest in this way: "I know no other glory than being beneficent and just. I know no other happiness than living in

[31] *Emile*, 448.

independence with the one I love, earning my appetite and my health every day by my work…Give me Sophie and my field—and I shall be rich."[32]

The tutor points out Emile's simplicity and ignorance at calling a farm his source of independence. Emile has found a treasure in Sophie, but he does not fully understand what he requests when he asks for a field: "A field which is yours, dear Emile! And in what place will you choose it? In what corner of the earth will you be able to say, 'Here I am master of myself and of the land which belongs to me?' Who knows where one can live independent and free, without needing to harm anyone and without fear of being harmed?"[33] At first glance, owning a field seems like a basis for self-sufficiency. Emile could cultivate the land to provide for himself and his family. Farming would be a way of avoiding dependence on others and, if his fields are bountiful, he might even be able to share his crops with others. But property introduces vulnerabilities that Emile does not yet recognize. The earth is already divided among its inhabitants; Emile will likely have to buy a plot of ground. Buying and selling indicates contract; in pursuing his own field, Emile will also be establishing a legal relationship with other human beings. The desire for self-sufficiency draws Emile into social relationship. Emile, must, therefore be concerned with what these existing communities are like and carefully choose the people with whom he associates.[34]

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[32] Ibid., 457.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Emile has already experienced the difficulty of finding unoccupied property. As a child, he planted a garden only to discover that the plot of land he cultivated belonged to someone else, and that in planting his own garden he destroyed his friend's crops. *Emile*, 98-100. See also, Nichols, "Rousseau's Novel Education," 539 for additional discussion of the vulnerability that accompanies property ownership.

The third reason that the tutor insists that Emile travel presents a combination of the first two reasons. Because family life produces community (indeed, may even need an existing community) and depends upon property, Emile must consider the relationship between his family and the broader political community. The tutor raises this question as follows: "You plan to settle down. This plan is laudable; it is one of man's duties. But before marrying, you must know what kind of man you want to be, what you want to spend your life doing, and what measures you want to take to assure yourself and your family of bread."[35] While Emile declares his preference for an agrarian way of life, not only are there other vocations from which he might choose, but the community in which he lives may persuade or compel him to live differently. The tutor points outs that property ownership brings social attachments and a danger for exploitation that one cannot always avoid:

> Then I shall describe to him all the possible means of taking advantage of his property, whether in commerce or public office or finance, and I shall show him that every one of them will leave him risks to run, put him in a precarious and dependent state, and force him to adjust his morals, his sentiments, and his conduct to the example and prejudices of others.[36]

The tutor's concern goes beyond the possibility that Emile or his family might be exploited. He warns Emile that political life may actually pit him against other human beings. Professional soldiers, particularly mercenaries, had become common in Rousseau's time. Emile must know himself and the state in which he dwells if he is to avoid being exploited or being drawn into a manner of life that requires him to harm others for profit. Emile accepts travel and the study of politics as the final stage of his

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[35] *Emile*, 456.

[36] Ibid.

education, because he longs for a place where he can live happily with his family. If he finds it, Emile has made preparations for true happiness and community. If such a place does not exist, Emile will have "cured himself of a chimera" and can prepare to resign himself to the unhappiness that necessity forces upon him.[37]

Obstacles to the Study of Politics

After Emile acknowledges the importance of politics for his family, the tutor (in an aside to the reader) sets out three difficulties in guiding Emile's studies as they travel. In this section, I contend that the way in which Rousseau presents these obstacles draws the reader into the study of politics and may show readers how Rousseau would like his audience to participate in these studies on their own.

The tutor begins these remarks to readers in a peculiar way: "I do not know whether all my readers will perceive where this proposed research is going to lead us. But I do know that if Emile, at the conclusion of his travels begun and continued with this intention, does not come back versed in all matters of government, in public morals, and in maxims of state…either he or I must be quite poorly endowed—he with intelligence and I with judgment."[38] This remark has the effect of compelling readers to reconsider the ultimate objectives of Emile's travels. Such an evaluation practically requires one to mentally exchange places with Emile and consider the possible ends as they might relate to the outcomes that the tutor is confident they will achieve: being versed in "all matters of government, public morals, and maxims of state." It does not require much reflection to realize that these are not modest goals; indeed, comprehensively satisfying these goals

[37] Ibid., 456-458.

[38] Ibid., 458.

is likely beyond the scope of many well-educated readers. If Emile, as a supposedly average student, is capable of mastering these topics, readers may find themselves questioning their own intellectual abilities. If this is the case, the aside is not introducing concerns about Emile so much as preparing the reader to question his or her own judgment in political matters.

Discovering the Proper Motives

This possibility seems to be substantiated as the tutor immediately describes three difficulties that cloud political judgment. The first and greatest difficulty relates to finding motives for studying government. He proposes that Emile must come to raise questions about the utility of politics by asking "What importance does it have for me? and, What can I do about it?" The tutor quickly points out that he has resolved these questions for Emile, saying, "We have put our Emile in a position to answer both questions for himself."[39] Emile studies politics because where he lives has important implications for the wellbeing of his family and the preservation of his own goodness. He can choose where he lives and accept the fact that he faces dependence on others and the possibility of loss regardless of his choice.

These realizations are already established in Emile's mind. Raising these questions again, particularly after the tutor has invited readers to exchange places with his student, hints that something else might be taking place. Perhaps readers also stand in need of putting these questions to themselves. It is possible that readers may offer the same answers as Emile, but this is not necessarily the case. Until one consciously articulates why the study of politics has personal relevance and what his or her study

[39] *Ibid*.

might do to improve the political community, readers are in danger of being the sort of complacent travelers that Rousseau warns against. This is not to suggest that readers have fewer reasons to study politics, but that without a tutor, readers must intentionally and critically evaluate their roles in their communities and consider the obligations drawing them into political life. Conscious awareness of these matters prepares one to be an engaged participant rather than a complacent observer.

The second difficulty consists in avoiding the prejudices one has grown up with and that are commonly taught. Rousseau describes the problem in this way: "The second difficulty comes from the prejudices of childhood, from the maxims on which one has been raised, and above all from the partiality of authors who always speak of the truth—which they scarcely care about—but think only of their interest, which they are silent about."[40] At first glance it might appear that the tutor is concerned that Emile avoid others' teachings on politics. The tutor is warning against "other authors who always speak of the truth" but in reality are masking their own interest under the guise of political wisdom. Three paragraphs before this statement, the tutor criticizes Grotius and Hobbes. He calls Grotius a "child of bad faith" whose work employs poetry to persuade others of his erroneous teachings on political right.[41]

Transcending Common Opinion

While Hobbes and Grotius supply a likely target for the tutor's warning, it is unlikely that this warning can be intended for Emile. Emile has lived in isolation.

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[40] *Ibid*.

[41] *Ibid*.

Robinson Crusoe is the only book that the tutor gave him to read in his childhood.[42] Unless Emile has read Grotius and Hobbes in secret, it is improbable that he is in danger of being corrupted by them as he travels. The tutor also accompanies Emile to direct his studies. Readers, however, are likely to be aware of or have read both of these authors. This suggests that to study politics as Emile does, one must purge oneself of the corrupting influence of these false teachers. One must be willing to be educated anew in order to understand properly.

Cultivating Sufficient Intelligence

The third obstacle is ambiguous; Rousseau acknowledges that he is deliberately obscuring his meaning. Because the passage is so strange, it is worth presenting in its entirety:

> There remains a third difficulty which is more specious than solid and which I want neither to resolve nor to pose. It is enough for me that it does not daunt my zeal, since I am certain that in researches of this kind great talents are less necessary than a sincere love of justice and a true respect for the truth. If matters of government can be equitably treated, then I believe that the occasion for it is now or never.[43]

This passage raises an issue and then sets it aside as though there were something wrong with even mentioning it. This provokes both questions about what the tutor may intend as this obstacle and then who faces the difficulty in overcoming it. As to the first, it is plausible that the obstacle is related to intelligence of a certain kind. The "great talents" that are unnecessary would then be read as intellectual ability, and the tutor would regard these as less important than a genuine love for justice. This reading of "talents" is

[42] Ibid., 184.

[43] Ibid., 458.

supported by being consistent with the tutor's earlier statement on who is suited for travel: "[Travel] is suitable for only very few people. It is suitable only for men sure enough about themselves to hear the lessons of error without letting themselves be seduced and to see that example of vice without letting themselves be carried away."[44] Travel, then, is suitable for those who are already in possession of self-knowledge and are capable of exercising prudence.

For whom, however, is this concern expressed? At the outset of the book, Emile is presented as one having only a "common mind."[45] He is, at best, of average intelligence. While he has come to know many things about himself, his isolated youth has not provided many opportunities for exercising moral prudence. Indeed, these travels are the opportunity for Emile to determine the worthiness of his choice of Sophie and to apply his knowledge of self in choosing a place to live. The obstacle could be one that Emile faces, but it is important to recall that Emile is not traveling alone. The tutor remains as his guide, helping him to preserve the self that Emile has come to know and directing both the political content of their study and the geographic route of their journey. Emile may be in danger, but it is mitigated by the presence of one who possesses both self-knowledge and prudence. The reader, however, would lack the tutor's physical presence and possibly the sort of self-knowledge requisite to preserve his or her own goodness. If the reader is the one in the gravest danger, then he or she may take comfort in the hope that "love of justice" and "respect for truth" may be sufficient guides for the journey.

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[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., 52.

Instead of closely following Emile on his Journey, the text presents an outline of the studies that the tutor intends for Emile. As in the *Social Contract*, many of these topics concern the relationship between individuals and the state. Their study begins with the state of nature and the formation of the first societies with the hope of constructing a standard of political right. This standard provides the criteria by which they evaluate the laws of each country they visit.[46] Emile is searching for a country or perhaps a fatherland; there is therefore a comparative element is this curriculum. Emile compares each country to the standard of right he has constructed and compares countries to one another in order to find the one that is most suitable for him to live in. He also examines topics that fall into what may be regarded as international relations: causes of war, rights of war, and institutional remedies to international strife.[47]

As to the causes of war, Emile examines the way that states' internal characteristics shape its foreign affairs as well as the effects that international anarchy has on foreign policy regardless of a state's form. Strong or weak, large or small, Emile sees that states are continually acting and reacting against one another and the effects of this international wrangling produce "more misery and loss of life" than could ever exist among individuals in the state of nature. Thus, the questions at the heart of this analysis are largely critical:

> We shall examine whether the establishment of society accomplished too much or too little; whether individuals—who are subject to laws and to men, while societies among themselves maintain the independence of nature—remain exposed to the ill of both conditions without having their advantages; and whether it would be better to have no civil society in the world than to have many…Is it

[46] Ibid., 458.

[47] Ibid., 466-467.

> not this partial and imperfect association which produces tyranny and war; and are not tyranny and war the greatest plagues of humanity?[48]

These lessons are designed in a way that suggests states are responsible for their behavior towards one another, but indicates that war remains a threat so long as states retain their independence from one another.

This critical outlook is tempered with a hope in political institutions. The tutor does not suggest that political institutions offer an ultimate escape from the problems and hardships of international politics but institutions may limit the evil effects of war. An essential step, the tutor suggests, is to understand principles that limit warfare: "Finally, we shall law down the true principles of the right of war, and we shall examine why Grotius and the others presented only false ones."[49] Improving the laws of war may protect non-combatants and limit what are regarded as the just causes of war. It may also be possible to prepare against wars in general through the formation of confederations. States may be able to bind themselves to one another with the intention of enforcing these rights: 'Finally, we shall examine the kind of remedies for these disadvantages provided by leagues and confederations, which leave each state its own master within but arm it against every unjust aggressor from without."[50] Even the confederative solution must have limits. Part of Emile's education takes up the problem of balancing the force of what is now called a collective security community with the sovereignty of individual states.[51] Emile's engagement with international politics indicates that it is a subject that is relevant

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[48] Ibid., 466.

[49] Ibid., 467. For my analysis of Rousseau's critique of Grotius, see Chapter 3.

[50] Ibid., 466.

[51] Ibid.

to himself and that there may be ways in which individual action can ameliorate its problems.

After setting out the content of these lessons, the tutor interjects the following piece of instruction to readers: "But let us leave the readers to imagine our travels—or to make them in our stead with *Telemachus*[52] in hand; and let us not suggest to them invidious comparisons that the author himself dismisses or makes in spite of himself."[53] This makes explicit the notion that readers are to put themselves in Emile's place and conduct a similar investigation on their own. The role *Telemachus* plays for the reader is unclear because Rousseau immediately qualifies its utility in Emile's study: "Emile is not a king and I am not a god, we do not fret about not being able to imitate Telemachus and Mentor in the good that they did for men."[54] The limited explanation that the tutor provides for the book is this: on their way, they will encounter regimes led by rulers who resemble characters from the book. In Judith Shklar's words, "Fénelon prepares Emile to recognize the evils that he will meet on his travels."[55] The book is useful to Emile in that it presents a model of how to evaluate regimes by judging the actual in light of what is perfect.[56] Telemachus is successful because his guide is none other than Athena in

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[52] At the outset of their journey the tutor doubled the content of Emile's library by giving him Fenelon's *Telemachus* to read along their way. This book is the account of Telemachus' search for his father Odysseus. An elderly man named Mentor guides Telemachus on this search, and when it is complete, the old man reveals that he actually Athena in disguise.

[53] *Emile*, 467.

[54] Ibid., 467.

[55] Judith N. Shklar, *Men and Citizens: A Study of Rousseau's Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 4.

[56] Shklar, *Men and Citizens*, 4. Fenelon's own experience substantiates reading *Telemachus* as a critique of European monarchies intended to inform Emile's judgments. Louis XIV regarded the work as a personal critique of his own administration and the life of excess in the French court. While the book was immensely popular, it contributed to Fenelon's alienation from court. Francois de Fenelon, *Telemachus, Son of Ulysses*, ed. and trans. Patrick Riley, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), xviii-xix.

disguise. Because of Mentor's divinity the tutor regards the book as a chimerical device with limited instructional value. Telemachus' success is contingent on the role of the goddess. Only a human tutor leads Emile; it would be unreasonable for Emile to hope to accomplish the same political goods as Telemachus does.

The problem of guidance from *Telemachus*, or even *Emile*, is doubly compounded for readers. On one level, *Telemachus* is also chimerical for us. *Telemachus* brings to light the difficulties of finding a suitable guide for our own political inquiry. Most readers are not kings and Athena guides no one; the book is no better a guide for us than it is for Emile. *Telemachus* points out the difficulties of attaining the guidance we need rather than to providing the guidance itself. On a second level, the journey that readers observe in the *Emile* and are invited to engage is also inaccessible: we do not have the benefits of Emile's natural education and we lack the insights of the tutor to guide us on our way. The invitation to participate in the study of politics is seemingly qualified by concerns about the possibility that both Emile and the readers who follow after him are not capable of acquiring certain knowledge or positively influencing political life at all.[57]

Rousseau's *Confessions* also indicate that the kings Telemachus meets on his journey correspond with rulers of Europe; For example, King Adrastus whom Fenelon describes as despising the gods and seeking to deceive mankind, represents Frederick the Great of Prussia. Rousseau, *Confessions*, 496. Fenelon, *Telemachus*, 214.

[57] For a very different interpretation of the role of *Telemachus*, see the *Odyssey of Political Theory: The Politics of Departure and Return* by Patrick J. Deneen. Despite this professed distance between Emile and Telemachus, Patrick Deneen contends that Telemachus's life as well as his ability to exercise judgment is an object of emulation for Emile. Deneen argues that this emulation consists in the ability to detach himself from all forms of obligation to particular things. Deneen believes that Telemachus travels to gain the ability to exercise stoic detachment. From this perspective, Emile's travel is not a search for a home, but a way of preparing Emile to avoid becoming overly attached to Sophie. At the conclusion of his journey, Emile is prepared to detatch himself from fellow citizens, neighbors, and even Sophie herself. Patrick J. Deneen, *The Odyssey of Political Theory: The Politics of Departure and Return* (Lanham: Roman and Littlefield Publishers, 2003) 148-149. While interesting, this reading goes well beyond the role that Rousseau describes for the *Telemachus* in Emile and it suggests that Emile is closer to

Emile's Conclusions and their Implications for Readers

The hope for what readers might learn about politics and improving relationships between states diminishes even as Rousseau extends the invitation that they participate in these studies. Two significant things happen at the end of the journey that complicate the sorts of conclusions that readers might draw: first, the tutor asks Emile to reflect on what he has learned from his travels. But instead of permitting Emile to respond in his own words, the tutor himself provides what he expects will be Emile's answer, which is an insightful critique of the futility of all political life. Second, and immediately after this critique, the tutor provides an aside to the reader that qualifies Emile's conclusions and indicates that Emile's perspective should not be the final one. The tutor's words do more than question whether or not Emile's conclusions are satisfactory; they point vehemently to a particular answer: the tutor is the one speaking the entire time, and he insists this education does not justify withdrawal from social life.

To raise and then answer a question in this way underscores its importance, but is also suggests that the tutor is looking for a particular reaction. By questioning Emile's condemnation of politics, in this way the tutor again draws the reader into the discussion. Readers must judge if Emile's purported rejection of politics flows from his education. Then, readers must also ask themselves if they themselves participate in Emile's condemnation of social life or if they face a different set of political possibilities. Because the action of the narrative is subtle and complicated, it is important to examine each character's remarks in detail, beginning with the close of their journey, then looking at

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a philosopher than a natural man, and Rousseau explicitly states the Emile is not to be a truth-teller who exists above the fray of social life. Rousseau, *Emile*, 474.

Emile's rejection of politics, and finally considering why the tutor insists on qualifying this rejection.

The Tutor brings their journey to a close by asking Emile to reflect upon what he has learned. The tutor begins this reflection as follows: "After having employed almost two years in roaming some of the great states of Europe and more of the small ones, after having learned Europe's two or three principal languages, and after having seen what is truly worthy of curiosity—whether in natural history, or in government, or in arts, or in men—Emile is devoured by impatience and warns me that the end is approaching."[58] Emile has not been distracted by his travels. He has learned of politics and of the arts, but even his curiosity has not distracted him from the longing that he feels for Sophie. Before he permits the journey to end, the tutor insists that Emile reflect on what he has seen and how it relates to the things that he desires—Sophie and a field.

The tutor asks, "Well, my friend, you remember the principal object of our travels. You have seen and observed. What is the final result of your observations? What course have you chosen?"[59] Rousseau then makes a strange authorial decision; Emile does not offer his own response. The tutor says, "Either I am mistaken in my method, or he will answer me pretty nearly as follows…"[60] What follows is an interjection based on the tutor's faith in his "method." "Method" in this context appears to refer to the process of Emile's education; if it is effective, an education according to nature produces a particular kind of response that reflects Emile's growing self-knowledge and the importance he places on creating political limits to protect himself.

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[58] *Emile*, 471.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid.

The response that the tutor places in Emile's mouth is deeply critical of political life as well as indirect forms of social obligations (like property). The tutor fully expects that Emile's answer will begin something like this:

> What course have I chosen! To remain what you have made me and voluntarily to add no other chain to the one with which nature and the laws burden me. The more I examine the work of men in their institutions, the more I see that they make themselves slaves by dint of wanting to be independent and that they use of their freedom in vain efforts to ensure it.[61]

In this way, travel confirms what Emile has been taught about physical needs. The more material attachments he has, the more needy and dependent he becomes; property and wealth increase the dependence he will have on others. Emile has learned that it is impossible to hold onto wealth and freedom at the same time.[62] Political association multiplies layers of dependency on other people and on material objects. Freedom, from this perspective, is largely negative and consists of avoiding all relationships with human beings and minimizing physical wants. Withdrawal from social life is not enough to guarantee freedom: "When you wanted me to be free and without needs at the same time, you wanted two incompatible things, for I could withdraw myself from dependence on man only by returning to dependence on nature."[63] Regardless of where he turns, obligation and dependence follows him. Even in his search for a plot of land to call his own, Emile realizes just how far social obligations extend and, even if he could escape social obligation, he could not escape his dependence on nature:

> I have sought to find some piece of land where I could be absolutely on my own. But in what place among men does one not depend on their passions? All things considered, I have found that my very wish was contradictory; for were I

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid., 472.

[63] Ibid.

> dependent on nothing else, I would at least depend on the land where I had settled…I have found that dominion and liberty are two incompatible words; therefore, I could be master of a cottage only in ceasing to be master of myself.[64]

This corrects Emile's earlier belief that all he needs is Sophie and a plot of land in order to be free. No matter where Emile looks for a home and for a plot of land, he would find communities in which he will be placed at the mercy of others' passions. Even attempting to be a self-sufficient farmer leaves him at the mercy of his land's bounty. Dependence is inescapable regardless of how far one attempts to withdraw from society. It is impossible to be free and without needs. Emile's education cannot form someone who is wholly free; the most it offers is instruction on how to limit one's needs.

One rather obvious implication that Emile might draw from this realization is that he must maintain only a loose grasp on material wealth and possessions. Emile could attempt to limit his attachment to particular things, calling nothing his own, and he begins this by detaching himself from his parents' fortune. He says of his inheritance: "If it is taken from me, I shall not be carried along with it. I shall not worry about holding on to it, but I shall remain firmly in my place. Rich or poor, I shall be free."[65] Emile could also apply this posture to his own political attachments. In abstracting his personal identity from his property, Emile hopes to gain a sort of cosmopolitan freedom: "I shall not be free in this or that land, in this or that region; I shall be free everywhere on earth."[66] Furthermore, Emile justifies this political indifference by pointing out that there is no country that he can call a fatherland; because all political life is corrupt, it makes no

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[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

difference where he lives.[67] To attempt moving into social life would, therefore, make him dependent on others who are not worthy of his allegiance.[68] Emile's education prepares him to offer a repudiation of political life on the grounds that politics deprives people of their freedom and that genuine community is impossible.

It is important to recognize that these are Emile's hypothetical responses; the tutor presents them as reactions that are consistent with Emile's education. Perhaps this is Rousseau's tacit acknowledgement of the notion that withdrawal is a tempting response to the corrupting effects of social life. But there is a strong element of irony in this repudiation of politics and dependence because at its conclusion, Emile still wants to get married. Renunciation of political life is not the choice that the tutor foresees Emile making, because it is not the one that is most consistent with his education. Emile's education has prepared him to be good for himself and for others; the others matter.

The tutor suggests that Emile's education prepares him to choose a life of limited social obligations rather than social withdrawal. If the tutor has not miscalculated, he believes that Emile will choose to accept prudently and carefully certain social obligations. He predicts that Emile will respond in this way: "If I were without passions, I would, in my condition as a man, be independent like God himself; for I would want only what is and therefore would never have to struggle against destiny. At least I have no more than one chain. It is the only one I shall ever bear, and I can glory in it. Come, then, give me Sophie and I am free."[69] The first part of Emile's statement indicates he realizes dependence is unavoidable; the best he can accomplish is to choose carefully the

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid., 473.

[69] Ibid., 472-473.

forms of dependence that bind him. In choosing Sophie, Emile either does not fully recognize the level of dependence to which he exposes himself, or his actions show that freedom is found in consciously choosing ones dependencies. Emile hopes to do this by embracing obligations to his wife, but believing that he can limit attachments to a broader community.

These explanations are both plausible and are not mutually exclusive, but the tutor's words suggest that Emile is naively ignorant of how deeply his obligations to others will grow.

Emile is not yet wise; the tutor has no reason to expect that his observations would be any different from what they are, but he qualifies Emile's response as follows:

> This extravagant disinterestedness does not displease me at your age. It will decrease when you have children, and you will then be precisely what a good father of a family and a wise man ought to be. Before your travels I knew what their effect would be. I knew that when you looked at our institutions from close up, you would hardly gain a confidence in them which they do not merit.[70]

The tutor, therefore, agrees that Emile's suspicion of politics is justified by the glaring imperfections of political life. Conventional law is at best a rough approximation of justice; it is unlikely that anyone can attain genuine freedom by submitting him or herself to the laws of a state. Civil law is marred by special interests and the passions of rulers; it does not represent an account of a common good. Emile's position rightly notes these shortcomings, but the tutor is concerned that it might result in a kind of unhealthy level of disinterestedness or focus on private life as an escape from the problems of civil society.

The tutor suggests two possible paths that avoid this cynicism. The first is a life dedicated to philosophy and governed by natural law. He says, "But the eternal laws of

[70] Ibid., 473.

nature and order do exist. For the wise man, they take the place of positive law. They are written in the depth of his heart by conscience and reason. It is to these that he ought to enslave himself in order to be free."[71] There may, therefore, be a community among the wise that is bound together by a commitment to the true laws of nature. Life according to these laws is the basis for genuine freedom. This freedom is not dependent on any particular government; it exists in the "heart of the free man" and he takes this liberty wherever he goes. Rousseau calls these sorts of people "truth tellers" who are zealously devoted to finding the truth and persuading others of it. The duty of these people is often to live outside of politics, embracing their exile without grumbling. Nothing in Emile's education imposes these "painful sacrifices" on him.[72] Emile is not this sort of wise man and it is unclear if he ever will be. Perhaps this wisdom applies to Rousseau himself, who was often in exile for the sake of his writings, but this is not the direction that Rousseau identifies as Emile's path.

There is another alternative that seems to be more accessible, if not to Emile, then at least to readers. It is the possibilities open to those who have a country. One of Emile's potential criticisms is that he cannot participate in a community because no modern state is a fatherland. The tutor rebukes this stance:

> He who does not have a fatherland at least has a country. In any event, he has lived tranquilly under a government and the simulacra of laws. What difference does it make that the social contract has not been observed if individual interest protected him as the general will would have done, if public violence guaranteed him against individual violence, if the evil he saw done made him love what is good, and if our institutions themselves have made him know and hate their own iniquities? O Emile, where is the good man who owes nothing to his country?[73]

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[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid., 474.

[73] Ibid., 473.

States, even those that fall short of all political ideals, still play a vital role in the formation of a person. Flawed institutions can offer some insights into how law *should* function and protect basic liberties. Even a modern country has a role in teaching its people a sort of virtue by calling its people to support the laws and care for one another. This may be a flawed education, but no one can abstract entirely from what his or her country teaches. All law and every political community is imperfect. This imperfection does not prevent those who desire to live according to nature's standards to follow in Emile's path, to strive for lives that accord with natural obligations, and to discover a limited virtue by fulfilling the obligations of law and serving as an example to others. For someone like Emile the notion of a public good actually takes on meaning because of his education; an education like Emile's makes it possible to transcend a community's flaws and struggle to find a genuinely common good despite the problems of modern politics. Rousseau expresses the idea in this way: "The mere appearance of order brings him to know order and to love it. The public good, which serves others only as a pretext, is a real motive for him alone. He learns to struggle with himself, to conquer himself, to sacrifice his interest to the common interest."[74] Corrupt institutions still provide the opportunity for self-mastery; in this way they admit a type of individual freedom.

Because of this possibility, the tutor insists that Emile has a responsibility to live within a community or at least near enough to one that he might be of service to others. The tutor says: "Your compatriots protected you as a child; you ought to love them as a man. You ought to live amidst them, or at least in a place where you can be useful to

[74] Ibid.

them insofar as you can."[75] Emile is to live as a benefactor and a model to those around him. Although no modern state may deserve the name of fatherland, the tutor urges Emile to be loyal to his country nonetheless: "If the prince or the state calls you to the service of the fatherland, leave everything to go to fulfill the honorable function of citizen in the post assigned to you."[76] Emile's choice of country, therefore, is of tremendous importance. He cannot escape obligation to others or service to the state as an example and perhaps even as a soldier. Emile must, therefore, be knowledgeable about politics and capable of exercising the type of political judgment needed to exercise the civic responsibilities to which he may be called. While his country may not be a genuine fatherland, it is possible that it will ask him to sacrifice himself as though it were; Emile must be prepared to satisfy these duties as honorably as possible.

It is important to remember that these instructions appear as responses to hypothetical statements from Emile. They are issues that Emile's character has not raised, and possibly could not raise on his own. This is significant for the relationship between the text and the reader. Although Emile has not grown up conscious of the role of his country, readers have. These responses can mean very little to a young man whose life has been orchestrated by an omniscient tutor and who can have but very little sense of what his country added to his education. Pointing out all that a country provides is more meaningful to a *reader* who is interested in a life according to nature, that is, to a *reader* interested in being good for self and others. Readers who have made themselves students of Rousseau need to be persuaded of what their country offers them and reconsider their

[75] Ibid., 474.

[76] *Ibid*. For a very different reading of this section of *Emile* that contends Rousseau is advocating a way of life detached from any particular community or country see, Helena Rosenblatt, "Rousseau, the Anticosmopolitan?" *Daedalus* 137 no. 3 (Summer 2008), 65-66.

own obligation to their community. The critical response to Emile's detached political disposition closes off personal isolation as a viable option for Emile and for readers who aspire to be good men and women. Politics, then, is important even for those pursuing a life according to nature. Concern for political affairs must transcend the particular community. Even Emile studies international politics so that he has some knowledge of how his own country engages with other countries and how these relationships might be improved. Emile's own role may be small in the grand scheme of international politics, but it is to accept the responsibilities to which his community calls him and fulfill them with honor and integrity.[77] How can readers be held to anything less?

Conclusion

The study of politics as it takes place in *Emile* leaves readers in a complicated position. On the one hand we are presented with the idea that politics is both important and relevant, even for those educated according to nature. Readers do not, indeed cannot, have the same type of education as Emile. Readers live in the midst of civil society and are often educated in large schools by those who are not and never could be Emile's tutor. Despite these significant differences between readers and Emile, readers share several things in common with the character in the book. Like Emile, many readers are members of families, married and hold property. These social bonds are reminders of the far more extensive ties that readers who have grown up in civil society have to their communities. If these ties are sufficient reasons for Emile to study politics, how much more so are they sufficient causes for readers whose existence is deeply entwined in the lives of their countries? Readers have responsibilities to provide for their families and

[77] *Emile*, 474.

protect their communities. We are equally obliged to consider where we live and the types of laws that we uphold.

On the other hand, *Emile* illustrates that the level of knowledge we can gain about politics and the types of remedies available seem to be at least as limited for readers as they are for the character Emile. Even *Telemachus* is an incomplete model to guide Emile's studies or our own. Readers find themselves in the position of feeling obliged to study politics for the sake of themselves and their families, but dissatisfied with the resources at their disposal to make such an inquiry. The reader may sympathize with Emile himself and feel inclined to condemn politics for the same reasons. The tutor's rebuke of this posture insists that nearly everyone is stuck with politics, broken though it is. We may find no remedies at all, or the ones we do find may be incomplete. These shortcomings do not excuse Emile from his responsibilities to his community, and Rousseau offers no indication that they exempt the reader from similar obligations.

The unavoidability of politics raises the question of where readers might look in search of answers to political problems. Rousseau questions the utility of *Telemachus* but does not rule it out. Emile's proposed course of study may suggest an alternate approach in which a reader focuses more closely on Rousseau's own writings. This is the path through Rousseau's own writings is the one that I attempt to discern in this project. *Emile* suggests the types of questions that Rousseau believes are important to international politics. *Emile's* inclusion of an abbreviated *Social Contract*, a work whose subtitle is *On Principles of Political Right*, suggests this work as a place in which Rousseau address the mistaken accounts of right supplied by Grotius and Hobbes and provide what he regards as the true ones. *Considerations on the Government of Poland* addresses to a people

facing the questions of what they owe to their community and why the preservation of their particular state is important. This may not answer Emile's personal questions about why he should care about politics and what he can do about the problems of international relations, but it does convey that Rousseau is trying to help others answer these questions. Rousseau's analysis of the Abbé St. Pierre's work takes up the question of international confederations and types of remedies they provide for the vicissitudes of international political life. *Emile* does not provide the answers to the questions of international politics, but it does show that Rousseau appreciates the difficulties of international relations and regards their study as an essential part of teaching someone to be good for oneself and for others.

Before turning to these texts, however, we must examine a problem that the *Emile* treats as already in evidence. Namely, we must take up the question of how *amour-propre* contributes to human dependence and how this dependence produces international conflict. Or, to state this problem explicitly in terms of international politics: what does Rousseau understand as the fundamental obstacle to peace and cooperation.

CHAPTER THREE

Rousseau on the Origins of International Politics

This chapter revisits Rousseau's understanding of the central problem of international politics, and what types of responses he suggests might redress this problem. Rousseau describes the development of international politics in the *Second Discourse* and in fragmentary writings known as the "State of War." Comparing these two texts shows that Rousseau identifies *amour-propre* as an important connection between the nature of individual human beings and conditions within the international realm. *Amour-propre*, the source of both individual and national egoism, is a feature of human social life; it evolves through social processes and creates new appetites and ambitions. Approached in this way, the international problem is better examined by a study of *amour-propre* than by a direct study of the causes of war. I contend that by recognizing and theorizing the role of *amour-propre*, Rousseau establishes a connection between the behavior of individuals and conditions of the international realm. Studying this connection reveals ways in which individuals and institutional behavior shape the political conditions that exist between states. In other words, the structure and social dynamics of the international realm are contingent on human experiences, expectations, and institutions. The fact that these relationships exist on the basis of social contingencies opens up the possibility that changes within these experiences, expectations, and institutions may alter and even improve the international structure and the conduct of states within this structure.

The question of what Rousseau understands as the central international problem is not original to this project, but because of its significance it is worth revisiting. The two most thorough accounts appear in Waltz's *Man the State and War*, and Christine Jane Carter's work *Rousseau and the Problem of War*; the first is written from the perspective of IR and the second as a work in the history of political philosophy. While these authors present very different arguments, they reach similar conclusions and they both rule out the possibility for improving the dynamics of international politics. My contention is that Rousseau holds onto the idea that the dynamics of the international realm are not static.

Waltz and the Stag Hunt

Man the State and War offers an answer to the question of what is the fundamental cause of all wars. Waltz evaluates three possible answers suggested in the history of political thought, although he does not claim to provide a systematic evaluation of any one philosopher.[1] His goal is to illustrate three approaches, or images, that describe international conflict, and then evaluate the explanatory power of each perspective. The first approach he presents identifies the evil within human nature as the fundamental cause of war.[2] From this perspective, the causes of war may be diminished through the systematic transformation of human nature through social science or religion. First image thinkers, therefore, establish a direct connection between the characteristics of individuals and the conduct of the international realm. The second image focuses on political ideology; adherents to this position contend that establishing and reifying a particular account of domestic politics (such as liberalism or socialism) will result in

[1] Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 2.

[2] Ibid., 16.

states that have no interest in aggression or war.[3] The final possibility, and the position to which Waltz subscribes, is that wars occur because states exist in an anarchic environment.[4] Without a common authority to mediate disagreements or ensure compliance with international norms, states exist in an anarchic and egoistic structure in which the resort to force is necessary. It is through this argument that the anarchic state system becomes known as the "third image."

The "third image approach" to international anarchy emphasizes the weight of necessity and the compelling force of uncertainty as the driving factors of foreign policy. Anarchy and uncertainty account for why individual leaders, even those who strive to be ethical, find themselves choosing to wage war. Furthermore, these factors explain why all states, even those with constitutionally separated powers and other institutional checks on foreign policy, resort to the use of force despite their commitment to rational negotiation and the rule of law. The "third image" provides the most widely applicable explanation for war, and it shows why war remains a seemingly permanent problem in the international realm. Peace, from Waltz's standpoint, is most likely to appear under the leadership of a global sovereign or when the great powers of the world find a way to hold one another in check.

Waltz's own theory of international relations invokes Rousseau as philosophic evidence for the forcefulness of international anarchy. In some ways, Rousseau is an unlikely advocate for the power of the "third image." Rousseau defends the natural goodness of human beings, condemns force as an unjust basis for authority, and insists on

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[3] Ibid., 81.

[4] Ibid., 159-165.

the goodness of the general will. Given these well-known and seemingly optimistic positions, Rousseau should be one of the least likely supporters of the idea that the international realm requires states to behave aggressively.[5] Waltz, however, presents evidence that Rousseau's apparent optimism for human potential is limited to domestic politics. The centerpiece of Waltz's interpretation is what he refers to as the "stag hunt" illustration that Rousseau provides in the *Second Discourse*.[6] In this illustration, a group of primitive men form a hunting party to track a deer; the success of the project depends on each member of the group remaining committed to the project. As they make their way through the forest, one member of the party spies a rabbit that he can easily capture by himself. The man chases and captures the rabbit, thereby terminating the stag hunt and leaving the other members of the group to fend for themselves on an individual basis. The deer may feed the whole group for several days, but there is no guarantee that the hunting party will be capture the deer, no assurance of equal distribution of the quarry, and no chief to hold the band together. Given the uncertainty surrounding the collective hunting expedition, no one can really blame the man for leaving the group and destroying the group's objective.

Anarchy and the uncertainty that accompanies it present formidable obstacles to social cooperation. The hungry man defected from his group because he was uncertain whether he could depend on the others to satisfy his needs, and he found a way to meet his objectives by himself. For individual human beings, this problem can be resolved by joining a political community. A community governed by a general will and held together

[5] Ibid., 165-169.

[6] Waltz, *Man, the State and War,* 165-169. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Second Discourse," *The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings.* Ed. and Trans. by Victor Gourevitch, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 163.

under the power of a sovereign ruler provides the assurances and coercive force needed to resolve the major obstacles to collective action. The general will and the common good override the interests of individual citizens, but individuals are willing to give up their individual preferences if they are assured of the benefits of communal endeavors. There is, however, no similar solution for states, which continue to exist in a condition of anarchy and uncertainty. The people within each state may be formally unified under the auspices of a general will, but the will of each state remains a particular will in relation to other states. Even if states should wish to cooperate with one another, if they lack an overarching authority that reconciles the wills of the state, states remain in a condition similar to the men in the hunting party. States may recognize a common good, and even attempt to pursue it, but without a sovereign authority that rules over them, there cannot be a durable harmony. War among states, even among ideal states, is inevitable.[7] This may not be due to any fault in the states themselves, but is an intrinsic dynamic of interactions between autonomous units.[8] While Rousseau presents a compelling vision of the obstacles to international harmony, Waltz goes on to point out that Rousseau's political thought does not present a way to overcome these obstacles; the international structure remains the unalterable cause of war.

Carter and the Impossibility of Small Republics

Christine Carter agrees that Rousseau understands war as a permanent political problem, but unlike Waltz she traces the cause of war to *amour-propre* and the

[7] Waltz does not explicitly claim that an "ideal" state would be one that is governed by a general will. Waltz examines and rejects the idea that any domestic constitution can be so effective as to prevent war; his primary targets are socialist and liberal democratic idealists.

[8] Hoffmann and Fidler follow Waltz on this point. Stanley Hoffmann and David Fidler, *Rousseau on International Relations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), xvi.

artificiality of political institutions. Waltz explains social conflict and war as the result of incompatible drives for self-preservation; conflict is not a sign of some human defect, but of inherent obstacles to cooperation (either between individuals or collective like states). Carter's argument, however, traces the problem back to a problem in human nature that political life makes worse.[9] In Rousseau's account of human corruption, it is the process of socialization that undercuts humanity's natural goodness. Human beings are born with a healthy form of self-regard known as *amour de soi*, which is concerned with the essential dynamics of self-preservation. *Amour de soi* leads people to fight over food, flee danger, and pursue a mate; it contains the instincts necessary for survival and self-sufficiency. Repeated interactions and the ensuing dependence that emerges between individuals open the door to *amour-propre*. This form of self-love is concerned with reputation and the self-esteem that depends on the praise of other people. The development of *amour-propre* signals the end of self-sufficiency, the beginning of dependence upon abstract goods like honor or praise, and reliance on material goods that can be produced only in the context of social existence.[10]

Carter's Rousseau Attempts to Perfect States

In relation to Waltz's paradigms, Carter understands Rousseau as a "second image" thinker; the hope for international peace is perfecting the isolated republic. States are the most artificial of human innovations and the princes who rule them are the most extreme examples of human corruption. Monarchical rule is especially dangerous, Carter

[9] Christine Jane Carter, *Rousseau and the Problem of War*, ed. Maurice Cranston (New York: Garland Publishing, 1987), 113. This work originated as a doctoral dissertation. Maurice Cranston edited the volume and brought it to publication.

[10] Ibid., 60.

writes, because Princes have "grossly inflated 'needs,' or more properly desires, which demand immediate and constant satisfaction."[11] At least in part, this is because political power offers the opportunity and the institutions necessary for self-aggrandizement. Princes abuse their power domestically by ruling without respect for the will of their subject. Rulers with such low regard for their own subjects are likely to have even less regard for foreign powers.[12] In contrast to Waltz, Carter interprets Rousseau to blame *amour-propre*, and especially the *amour-propre* of aristocratic rulers, for the prevalence of war. The character of the domestic regime makes a state more or less inclined to war.

In Carter's analysis, "the state's artificiality alone, therefore, is not sufficient to determine its status as a corrupt and destructive institution: this will depend on whether or not it has legitimate foundations."[13] She goes on to argue that governments constructed according to the principles of right found in the *Social Contract* are in the best position to avoid war. The republic Rousseau advocates would "necessarily incline towards peace" because its constitution disposes it against war. Democratic political institutions and national self-sufficiency therefore remain the best hope for a peaceful state as long as the general will guides foreign policy. Carter summarizes her view in this way:

> War would be alien to the republic because its institutions are the guarantee of the liberty of the entire people and represent the expression of the collective will…Were the republic to determine to go to war, then, this would have to be a policy deemed to be in the common interest, likely to further the common good. In what sense could such a policy, unless necessitated by aggression from another power, serve the interests of the citizens of the republic.[14]

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[11] Ibid., 89.

[12] Ibid., 85-86.

[13] Ibid , 101.

[14] Ibid., 180-181.

Carter acknowledges that Rousseau does not present these safeguards as sufficient impediments to war; war is a permanent moral and political problem in Rousseau's philosophy. He accepts that power will continue to be the determining factor in international relations. This is not, however, the result of defects in human nature. Human nature is perfectible under certain circumstances; although these circumstances are rare, this hope suffuses Rousseau's thought with cautious hope for political improvements to the human condition.[15] Rousseau's hope emanates from the idea that states can express a common good, but multiple independent states necessarily limit the shared elements of this good. Each state remains a particular expression of the general will, and each state's unique account of this will may place it at odds with other states. In this sense, Carter as well as Waltz interprets Rousseau to be a structural realist—the final cause of war is the permanent and unalterable anarchy of the international realm. Legitimate foundations, as Carter understands them, place the power over war in the hands of the people rather than princes. This foundation discourages war but it does not harmonize state interests.

Carter's interpretation of Rousseau, therefore, encompasses all three of Waltz's "images—the *amour-propre* of the individual, the constitutional structure of the state, and the persistence of international anarchy. She summarizes her view in this way: "The two variables here which are, in theory at least, amenable to change are the nature of the state and the nature of international society. …Whilst the reform of the state can, in certain cases, halt the drift towards tyranny and hence the disposition towards war, the problem of international society as a 'state of nature' remains intractable."[16] Carter

[15] Ibid., 205-210.

[16] Ibid., 190. See also 210.

devotes much more time than Waltz to developing Rousseau's theory of the state and of how states might be more just as they wage war, but her conclusions are remarkably similar to those found in *Man, the State and War*. There is, however, an alternate possibility that neither scholar explores fully: regarding *amour-propre* as the cause of war means that the international system is itself a construction. As a construction of human will and experience, it is possible to change the dynamics of international anarchy. One may improve the environment in which states act in ways that diminish the proximate causes of war, although this does not eliminate war as a possibility.

My argument builds on Carter's insight into the significance of *amour-propre* for the international realm. I begin with an examination of the differences between *amour de soi* and *amour-propre*. Both occur naturally for human beings, but the latter form of self-love faces no substantive limit. The second part of my argument focuses on the development of war in the *Second Discourse* and the "State of War." Rousseau, in both texts, depicts *amour-propre* as a leading cause of the uncertainty and violence in the international realm. On the one hand, this helps to explain why war is such a difficult problem to overcome. On the other hand, in the *Second Discourse* and in his letters defending it, Rousseau suggests that *amour-propre* can be constrained in ways that improve the human condition. This opens up the possibility that the primary cause of war can be ameliorated. I conclude by showing similarities between Rousseau's account of national *amour-propre* and contemporary constructivist theories about the formation of the international realm. The similarities between the two theories show the malleability of the "third image," and indicate that Rousseau is concerned with addressing the problems of social life by constraining the effects of *amour-propre*. This is consistent with what

Emile learns about himself and how he should approach political obligation, but it also suggests a strategy for understanding more broadly how Rousseau addresses the problems of international politics. His thought attempts to mitigate the dangers of international politics by limiting the *amour-propre* of states and state leaders.

Amour de Soi *and* Amour-propre

The central question of the *Second Discourse* concerns the cause of inequality and whether or not inequality is justified by nature.[17] In examining this question, the *Second Discourse* engages a host of problems—human nature before the innovation of society, procreation before the institution of the family, communication without language, and the evolution of human appetites and ambitions. Although any discussion of the *Second Discourse* must engage in some degree Rousseau's account of human nature, this chapter pays special attention to the changes within human appetite and ego or ambition. Any appetite or ambition is all concerned with the self, but Rousseau distinguishes two different forms of self-regard: *amour de soi* and *amour-propre*. Both are found in all human beings, but the first is an instinctual concern for the self, whereas the second remains dormant until human beings begin to interact with one another.[18]

Amour de Soi

Amour de soi is concerned primarily with the bodily or animal dimensions of human nature. Part I of the *Second Discourse* describes what life might have been like

[17] Rousseau, "Second Discourse," 124, 131.

[18] "It was by a very wise Providence that the faculties he had in potentiality were to develop only when the opportunities to exercise them, so that they might not be superfluous and a burden to him before their time, nor belated and useless in time of need." *Ibid*, 150.

when *amour de soi* prevailed in human psychology. The role of this form of self-love guides every animal to self-preservation, but it is also influenced by reason and pity. Primitive reason guides human beings towards the best mode of self-preservation, but the desire to protect one's own life exists prior to the education of the rational faculties.[19] Because it exists prior to reason, *amour de soi* is a concern for the self that does not understand individual self-interest to exist either in relationship or in conflict with the interest of others. Humankind lived "without industry, without abode, without war, and…without any need of others."[20] Living in the forest among the other animals, human beings learned to apply their creative potential to defending themselves from predators and securing their own food.[21] Humans pursued food, sleep, and sex; and while sex carried with it the implication of need for other people, reason was not sophisticated enough to establish long-term attachments.[22] Appetites and ambitions were limited to satisfying physical needs and, without reason to spark imagination, an individual could meet these needs even without the assistance of others. Thus, while Rousseau's vision of the earliest human condition must be regarded as anarchic, the powerful role of instinct, the absence of cultivated reason, and widespread self-sufficiency resulted in a peaceful condition.

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[19] "In instinct alone he had all he needed to live in the state of Nature, in cultivated reason he has no more than what he needs to live in society. It would at first seem that men in that state of nature having neither moral relations of any sort between them, nor known duties, could be neither good nor wicked, and had neither vices nor virtues, unless these words are taken in a physical sense and the qualities that can harm an individual's self-preservation are called vices, and those that can contribute to it, virtues; in which case he who least resists the simple impulsions of Nature would have to be called the most virtuous." *Ibid*.

[20] *Ibid*, 157.

[21] *Ibid*, 136.

[22] *Ibid,* 142.

Amour-propre

Amour-propre, while an equally natural dimension of human nature, is born through social interactions and holds out the possibility for both noble action and human misery. Its effects are expansive and unstable. *Amour-propre* is expansive in that it influences how human beings understand their social relationships and then creates new types of hierarchy or status within these relationships. These hierarchies are based in the realm of opinion—opinion that one holds about the self, which is in turn, shaped by the opinions of others. Rousseau argues that these relationships are based in how one appears, rather than in what one is. These opinions are therefore inherently unstable. The evolution of *amour-propre* shows that the farther one's identity moves away from an individual's unsocialized understanding of the self (that which is rooted in *amour de soi*) into the realm of others' perceptions, the more precarious and even violent this identity becomes. The *Second Discourse* traces the expansion of *amour-propre* from the individual to society, and the fragments of "On War" continue to describe the extension of *amour-propre* to the state among other states. Examining each text in turn brings to light the formation of the international realm and the dynamics of individuals and institutions within it.

In the *Second Discourse*, Rousseau describes *amour-propre* in the following terms: "Amour-propre is only a relative sentiment, factitious and born in society." By "relative" Rousseau means that it is a sentiment based on the feelings one has towards others, as well as the feelings one has about oneself based on the opinions others express.[23] Human beings, led by a growing concern about the opinions and esteem of

[23]Ibid., n. xv, 218.

others, come to value the intangible goods of honor and reputation. Affronts to honor or reputation become sufficient causes for violence, despite the lack of physical or material harm. This leads human beings out of an existence that is primarily within the self to an existence in abstractions and opinions.[24]

One of the earliest manifestations of *amour-propre* in the *Second Discourse* appears near the end of "Part I" as familial associations come into being. The possibility for sharing the burdens of mutual need have led people to spend more time with one another, and sexual needs evolved into more durable attachment between people. Erotic desire provides the driving force behind the concern for others; Rousseau writes, "The more they see one another, the less they can do without seeing one another more."[25] As the attachments based on sexual attraction became more permanent, people began to live in small communities. Rudimentary families took shape and lived together in small villages as relationships between mates reinforced the desire for companionship.

Community provided the occasion for comparison and rivalry. Rousseau describes this development in the following words: "It became customary to gather in front of the Huts or around a large Tree: song and dance, true children of love and leisure, became the amusement or rather the occupation of idle men and women gathered together. Everyone began to look at everyone else and to wish to be looked at himself, and public esteem acquired a price."[26] From the outset *amour-propre* gives birth to comforting and beautiful innovations like music and dancing, but they are accompanied

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[24] "The Savage lives within himself; sociable man, always outside himself, is capable of living only in the opinion of others and, so to speak, derives the sentiment of his own existence solely from their judgment." Ibid., 187.

[25] Ibid., 165.

[26] Ibid., 166.

by comparisons. It is not enough to sing or to dance for one's own pleasure; human beings desire to surpass others' expressions of beauty and joy. Competition for the favor and esteem of others led people to cultivate a public reputation. Appearance became more important than substance because appearance is the basis on which others conduct their evaluation. Self-worth became separated from the ability to care for oneself. Instead, value attached to abstract goods such as intelligence, beauty, and strength. This development produced several ill effects: "To be and to appear became two entirely different things, and from this distinction there arose ostentatious display, deceitful cunning, and all the vices that follow in their wake."[27]

The Fragmentation of Social Man

Human beings found themselves in a position where their biological self and their social self were radically different beings. The newly discovered appetite for approval and honor meant that human beings experienced a new menu of needs that rendered them increasingly dependent on others. Even positions of power or status depend on groups of human beings that exist in a subservient condition and offer praises to their socially established superiors. Dependence characterizes a person's life regardless of social status: "rich, he needs their services; poor, he needs their help, and moderate means do not enable him to do without them."[28] There are at least two plausible ways of understanding the basis for dependence in this passage. One possibility is that of economic dependence: wealth is most apparent when it is placed in contrast with poverty. The wealthy demonstrate their prominence by retaining the services of those with less money, who are

[27] Ibid., 170.

[28] Ibid.

in no position to turn down employment or resist servitude. The poor accept the terms offered by the wealthy with the hope of improving their own status or at least subsisting in these disparate conditions. Social life highlights the contrast between the weak and the powerful; it is through this juxtaposition that the wealthy can appear powerful.

Rousseau's description of this relationship plausibly includes a second form of dependence related to the growing chasm between being and appearing. Appearances depend on the person designing them (consciously or unconsciously) as well as on the perspectives of the audience(s) that perceive and interpret these appearances.[29] Hierarchy requires a projection of certain images about one's status as well as an audience that sees and interprets these projections in ways that are compatible with one's desired status. If one does not receive the desired level of recognition, one must repeat or modify the projected image of the self. The desire for and creation of hierarchy creates a cycle of projection, interpretation, and re-projection. As they navigate this cycle, human beings (perhaps unconsciously) come to perform not their own identity, but identities ascribed by others. The result, Rousseau argues, is that social life is "reduced to appearances," and every action is a form of acting. People, rather than pursuing introspection and striving for self-knowledge, constantly need others to participate in the process of mutually creating definitions for one another. "Everything," Rousseau writes, "becomes factitious and play-acting…" Human beings are "forever asking of others what we are, without ever daring to ask it of ourselves…we have nothing more than a deceiving and frivolous exterior, honor without virtue, reason without wisdom, and pleasure without

[29] This reading is further supported near the end of the *Second Discourse* as Rousseau contrasts the inward life of savage man with the world of opinion in which social man trapped himself. He writes as follows: "This, indeed, is the genuine cause of all these differences: the Savage lives within himself; sociable man, always outside himself, is capable of living only in the opinion of others and, so to speak, derives the sentiment of his own existence solely from their judgment." Ibid., 187.

happiness."[30] The results of this acting become the unstable foundation for hierarchy and relationship.

Prior to the creation of states, this hierarchy exists without a justifying principle other than the will of the stronger. At this point in Rousseau's narrative, human existences became similar to the Hobbesian state of nature. Those who were stronger than their fellows or claimed greater need seized what they desired and renamed that which they took "property." Rousseau describes this condition in the following words: "Thus, the usurpations of the rich, the Banditry of the Poor, the unbridled passions of all, stifling natural pity and the still weak voice of justice, made men greedy, ambitious, and wicked."[31] It is at this point in human history that individuals find themselves in the state of war. Rousseau states, 'Nascent Society gave way to the most horrible state of war: Humankind, debased and devastated, no longer able to turn back or to renounce its wretched acquisitions…brought itself to the brink of ruin."[32] War among individuals is a result of appetites that have grown beyond one's ability to satisfy. The development of these appetites closes off a return to life governed by instinct and *amour de soi*. The effects of *amour-propre* cannot be reversed, but they can be constrained by institutions that constrain the use of power and attempt to limit human cruelty.[33]

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[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid., 171.

[32] Ibid., 172.

[33] For an alternative reading of the relationship between *amour-propre* and the community see John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples with "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited"* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999) 34-35. Rawls interprets *amour-propre* in a much less dangerous way, almost as a healthy desire for cultural recognition or an appropriately moderate patriotism. I argue that it is possible to develop healthy expressions of *amour-propre* but this requires strong institutions developed explicitly for this purpose.

Amour-propre *and Politics*

It is at this juncture in humanity's social evolution that Rousseau believes political institutions came into being. Rousseau describes the transition in these dismal words: "All ran toward their chains in the belief that they were securing their freedom; for while they had enough reason to sense the advantages of a political establishment, they had not enough experiences to foresee its dangers; those most capable of anticipating the abuses were precisely those who counted on profiting from them."[34] While politics can ameliorate some of humanity's abusive tendencies, permanent association presents the occasion for new abuses. Political life offers such mixed results because it depends on *amour-propre* perhaps even more than it constrains human vanity. Politics is based upon *amour-propre* in that political institutions attempt to make association permanent, and often reflect the aspirations of those seeking to justify and entrench their social status. But politics is not exclusively the realm of the privileged; those who are less wealthy or of lower social status turn to politics with the hope that rules and institutions will moderate the caprices of their rulers. Politics cannot eliminate *amour-propre*; at best is provides form and direction to the way to the way members of a community pursue esteem and power.

Although politics facilitates higher levels of order between individuals, the proliferation of political communities (and eventually states) produced an international realm that replicated and amplified the same types of problems that individuals faced. In Rousseau's words:

> The Bodies Politic thus remaining in the state of Nature among themselves soon experienced the inconveniences that had forced individuals to leave it, and this

[34] Rousseau, "Second Discourse," 173.

> state became even more fatal among these great Bodies than it had previously been among the individuals who made them up. From it arose the National Wars, Battles, Murders, reprisals that made Nature tremble…[35]

The formation of independent states extended the vices of *amour-propre* into international interactions. The appetites and ambitions that national *amour-propre* unleashes create greater dangers than individuals ever experienced previously. Rousseau's "State of War" offers further insights into Rousseau's understanding of national *amour-propre* and war.

In 1758, Rousseau wrote to his publisher that he intended to publish *Principles of the Right of War.* He never completed this work, and the "State of War" is the largest semi-continuous fragment that remains.[36] While elements from this document appear in the *Social Contract* and in the "Judgment" on the Abbé St. Pierre's work, neither of those writings deals with the formation of the international structure as explicitly as this document.[37] The "State of War" is useful to this project because it speaks to the formation of the international realm, the character of states, and hints at the possibility for improving the dynamics of international politics.

With respect to the formation of the international structure, the "State of War" complements the *Second Discourse*. The formation of the first state precipitated the formation of an international system because the existence of one society forced individuals to choose between uniting themselves to this society, or banding together to oppose it. In Rousseau's words, "One must either imitate it or let oneself be swallowed

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[35] Ibid., 174.

[36] *Rousseau: The Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings*, ed. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 307.

[37] Ibid.

up by it."[38] The socialization of individuals and the social orders they formed worked in combination with the psychological developments of *amour-propre*. These institutional and psychological changes closed off the possibility for human beings to live solitary and self-sufficient lives. Furthermore, the creation of social order imposed limits on the actions and choices available to individuals. Human beings (some willingly and other resisting) handed their independence over to their communities, and community leaders claimed the authority to act on behalf of all those under their jurisdiction.

States alone retained a sort of natural freedom to protect and govern themselves as they saw fit: "The independence that is taken away from men finds refuge in societies."[39] By depriving individuals of their independence, communities (particularly states) gain for themselves existence in a society without a sovereign. This is appears to be the primary reason that Rousseau calls the international realm a state of nature, for the international state of nature bears little resemblance to the first. In the first, individuals saw little of one another, had few desires, and even fewer occasions to attack one another. Among states, this is not so. Rousseau identifies several important differences that contribute to the volatility of the international condition; namely, states are much larger bodies with far greater appetites. Greater size and appetites bring states into proximity and dependence with one another. States enter into the process of socialization more quickly than individuals and they have none of the physical constraints that limit individual appetites.

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[38] Rousseau, "State of War," *Rousseau: The Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings*, ed. and trans.Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 167.

[39] *Ibid*, 168. This is supported by the following passage in the *Second Discourse*: "The Bodies Politic thus remaining in the state of Nature among themselves soon experienced the inconveniences that had forced individuals to leave it, and this state became even more fatal among these great Bodies than it had previously been among the individuals who made them up." Rousseau, "Second Discourse," 174.

International Structure

Two problems are bound up in the formation of the international realm. First, although states limit the types of internal violence that might take place between neighbors, they authorize and institutionalize violence towards those outside the community. Second, states constrain the *amour-propre* of individuals, but there is no clear check on their own, and the national capabilities to pursue self-interest far surpass those of an individual. With respect to the first problem, Rousseau writes: It is only after [a person] entered into society with other human beings that he decides to attack someone else; and he becomes a soldier only after having been a citizen." [40] As in the state of war between individuals, states accept force as a form of authority, and among princes, force carries the weight of law. The possibility for institutional longevity within states creates long-term needs. Among individuals these needs may be resolved with a brief fight or with one person relocating to where resources are more abundant. States are not in so flexible a position; because they cannot physically relocate, they adopt sustained forms of violence both to protect themselves and to deprive others. In this condition, force becomes increasingly important: "According to the ideas of princes about their absolute independence, force alone, speaking to citizens in the guise of law and to foreigners in the guise of reason of state, deprives the latter of the power and the former of the will to resist, so that everywhere the vain name of justice only serves as a shield for violence."[41] Because states refuse to sacrifice any of their own autonomy, force must be both an acceptable and an ultimate recourse. For citizens, force applied internationally appears as

[40] Rousseau, "State of War," 166.

[41] Ibid., 163.

foreign policy and therefore enjoys the status of law. By characterizing international violence as lawful, states strongly discourage their own citizens from questioning or resisting this policy. Foreigners have little claim to obligation or duties from other states, and hold fewer resources than states. They are, therefore, in an even weaker position to resist violence and come to accept it as the purportedly rational behavior of one community towards those outside of it.

The anarchic state of nature that states recreated among themselves explains the lack of restraint on international actors, but Rousseau does not attribute the violence of international politics to anarchy itself. War is a consciously made decision that must be explained with reference to states, the agents responsible for waging war. Regarding war as a decision instead of a function of necessity points to the second problem of international politics: the absence of constraints on national *amour-propre*.

The problem of national *amour-propre* comes to light as Rousseau searches to explain why states choose to wage war. Rousseau argues that states war against one another because they are inherently fragile institutions and war provides a way to project durability and strength. This argument seems counter-intuitive given that Rousseau has just pointed out how much larger states are than individuals. Size, particularly understood in terms of materials, does not translate into strength. Strength is more closely related to the ability to care for oneself and exist as a cohesive whole. Unlike individuals, states are not unified wholes: "Even though citizens call themselves members of the state, they cannot join it as true members are joined to the body."[42]The state is an abstraction that depends on citizens' persistent loyalty to the idea of community and submission to its

[42] Ibid., 169.

laws even when they are at odds with personal preferences. Though a state may claim to be a corporate entity, its members must be persuaded to join themselves to its body, and can defect from it without harming themselves. Furthermore, states do not have the same limits as a natural body. There are biological boundaries that an individual cannot exceed, regardless of how much he or she desires to do so; biological limits help to constrain individuals' appetites and limit the sorts of actions they attempt.[43] States do not face such stern limits. Rousseau's distinction between a human's physical body and the abstract corporation of a state is worth noting at length:

> The State, by contrast, being an artificial body, has no determinate measure, it is without definite proper size, it can always increase it, it feels weak so long as some are stronger than it is. Its security, its preservation demands that it make itself more powerful than all of its neighbors. It can only enlarge, feed, exercise its forces at their expense, and while it may not need to look for its subsistence outside itself, it does constantly look outside itself for new members who might give it greater stability.[44]

This view of states' appetites clarifies how Rousseau understands the causes of war. Because states lack a genetic or natural limit on their size, they operate as if they can always increase in size or status. Rousseau presents this as a danger common to all states. States' desire to surpass their existing limits and continually show signs of growth contributes to radical inequality between states. States understand their size and capabilities in reference to one another. National self-understanding depends on comparisons with other states and results in understanding one's own nation in terms of the surrounding nations. States find their own value by discovering relative advantages and attempting to increase these advantages over other states. These inequalities amplify

[43] Ibid., 168.

[44] Ibid., 169.

the difficulty of establishing stable national identities. In order for a state to *feel* secure, it is not enough that a state provides for its own economic and political needs; states constantly look outside themselves for affirmation and proofs of superiority.

The character of national *amour-propre*, therefore, inclines states to pursue relative gains with respect to one another even when they are in a stable position that allows them to provide for themselves. States believe themselves secure when they surpass their neighbors in size, economic volume, or military strength. States display political vitality through national policy; foreign policy demonstrates vitality and unity to the citizens in a community as well as to those outside the community. Although it addresses both domestic and international audiences, foreign policy is more likely to be concerned with appearances and with the reactions of other states than it is with advancing the good of citizens within the community. States, like individuals, find themselves involved in a cycle of comparison and power projection. This cycle generates national identity, contributes to the instability of the international realm, and helps to explain how states feel the operation of necessity. By this account the necessity bound up in international politics is driven by conditions that states create among themselves. Anarchy does not fall out of Rousseau's account of international politics, but it is better understood as a permissive condition than an impetus to war.[45]The absence of a clear

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[45] For Waltz, anarchy is certainly permissive, but its very presence leaves states in a position where the good of one precipitates the harm of another. His interpretation of Rousseau is that the context in which action takes place largely determines the choices available to the actors. In *Man, the State and War* he says it this way: "The absence of an authority above states to prevent and adjust the conflicts inevitably arising from particular wills means that war is inevitable." Waltz goes on to say that the internal characteristics of states make no difference in its decision to wage war. In this sense, Waltz minimizes state agency and emphasizes the causal power of anarchy. *Man the State and War*, 182, 183.

In the *Theory of International Politics*, Waltz takes the argument a step further: "Rousseau is…giving an environmental explanation [of war]: States can experience little conflict if they are only distantly related to each other." His reading of Rousseau suggests that the only way states can limit their own *amour-propre* and avoid participating in power politics is by isolating themselves from their

authority enables states to project their identities and display their power in violent or aggressive ways. Anarchy, however, does not compel this type of behavior. States, led by their own *amour-propre*, establish the content of international anarchy. This content includes the identity of each state, its foreign policy objectives, the cooperation related to shared identity or interests, and the conflict stemming from rival objectives or identities.

International Political Change

This explanation of international structure is more complicated than Waltz's neorealism allows. Rousseau's account of structure begins with the idea of anarchy but looks to states in order to explain the particular dynamics within this condition. States are concerned with their relative positions in the international structure, and these positions often depend on material capabilities. States, however, participate in the construction of their own identities and interpret the actions of their neighbors; anarchy and material capabilities acquire significance through state interactions. Although the *Second Discourse* and the "State of War" indicate that international relationships are typically hostile and egoistic, the construction of relationship dynamics suggests possibilities for developing interactions that are less hostile. Rousseau points to this hope by denying the inevitability of war and by attempting to constrain the sentiment of *amour-propre* itself.

The "State of War" supports the view that some of the most dangerous elements of the international realm are established through ill-designed conventions. Perhaps the most dangerous convention is the one that attributes war's persistence to the right of

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neighbors. But as he continues to develop the "third image" Waltz comes to regard anarchy as more of a causal force. Wars happen because states must participate in the struggle for relative power over one another. Anarchy conditions behavior independently from individual actions or decisions. Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 2010), 48, 74.

states to defend themselves in an anarchic and uncertain international realm. Waltz's understanding of international structure as the cause of war is a recent expression of this type of argument, but Rousseau identifies analogous claims even in his own day and distances himself from them. Rousseau writes, "In vain would the sophist say that this mutual enmity is…based on the competition that inevitably follows from everyone's right to all. For the sentiment of this supposed right is no more natural to man than the war which has arisen from it."[46] In these words Rousseau proves himself to be aware of and opposed to the very type of argument that Waltz and other structural realists make. Waltz and the ambiguously defined "sophists" to whom Rousseau alludes argue that the existence of multiple self-interested states in anarchic environment necessarily produces war, because each state has a right to all things. This theory of states' rights in the international realm encourages war by perpetuating the notion that states can claim a right to all and would be naïve to refrain from doing so. Rousseau's point, however, is that enmity is neither innate, nor is it a necessary effect of a pluralistic states system. States do not have a right to all that provides a de facto right to war against other states. If war is not natural, then it exists by conventions as a kind of social relationship. The causes of war can be subjected to human inquiry and the rights of war are open to negotiation and revision.

In criticizing this theory as "sophistic" this passage of the "State of War" has the effect of suggesting another cause for war: individual people themselves. It is the influence of individual people on one another and on social institutions that corrupts

[46] Rousseau, "State of War," 164. The text is unclear as to the identity of a particular sophist, but Rousseau mentions Hobbes's name before and after this statement. For this reason, I am inclined to identify the sophist with Hobbes and others who contend that war is natural to the human condition.

social life and produces war. To identify the causes of war as anarchy and the plurality of sovereign states (as Waltz and the Sophists whom Rousseau confronts do) is duplicitous and inconsistent, or in Rousseau's phrase, "sophistic."

This argument is duplicitous because it ostensibly deflects responsibility for war away from agents like human beings or states by saying that the structure of the international realm rather than flaws within actors is what causes war. In order to care for oneself, actors (individuals or states) must seek to disadvantage or destroy others, if only because abstaining from strife entails personal vulnerability. Advancing this argument requires one to marginalize the value of human choice. If structure is the cause of war, then people are less responsible for the political choices that they make; the urgency of life in the context of anarchy reduces the burden of personal responsibility. Rousseau's objections on the grounds of nature and inconsistency help to bring individual responsibility back into the discussion.

Rousseau confronts the inconsistency of this claim through his own account of the state of nature. Left to themselves, human beings do not have ambition because they do not understand the joy of domination: "He who has nothing desires little; he who commands no one has little ambition."[47] It is through the creation of and participation in society that human beings learn greed and ambition. The process of socialization universally corrupts, but social life is particularly dangerous for those in position of authority: "But superfluity arouses greed; the more one gets, the more one desires. He who has much wants to have all; and the madness for universal monarchy never

[47] Rousseau, "State of War," 164.

tormented any but a great king's heart."[48] Exercising power expands the appetites even more than other forms of social interactions. These distended appetites transform human nature into something hideous and rapacious. Those in positions of authority take joy in commanding others and come to desire command over more. The purported right of each to all springs from becoming habituated to ruling others and using authority to advance one's own interest.

This perspective acknowledges that human beings behave in egoistic and destructive ways, but insists this is an acquired pattern of existence for which human beings remain responsible. To identify these types of behavior and then determine them to be the effects of human nature is to conduct only a superficial investigation of humanity. Acts of selfishness and tyranny are more properly understood to be the result of human passions that are "kneaded and risen a thousand times over in the leaven of society."[49] The evidence Rousseau presents for his position is the impossibility of living this way for any sustained period of time. If people operated as though they possessed an unlimited right to all things, then pursuing this right would be utterly destructive. Claiming and exercising such a right is incompatible with human life and even contrary to the desire for status or glory. Rousseau argues:

> But even if it were true that this unbounded and uncontrollable greed were as developed in all men as our Sophist assumes, it would still not bring about the universal state of war of each against all of which Hobbes dares to sketch this odious image. This unbridled desire to appropriate everything is incompatible with that of destroying all of one's fellows; and the victor who, having killed everyone, had the misfortune to remain alone in the world because he would have everything.[50]

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[48] Ibid., 164-165.

[49] Ibid., 165.

[50] Ibid.

For human beings to enjoy their lives, possessions, and even status, there must be others with whom they interact, compete, and live. Even for something as narcissistic as vanity or as corrupt as despotism to be enjoyable, there must be genuine rivals who must be overcome and compelled to admire or to serve. Here, Rousseau suggests that no one wants to be a lonely victor. Taken to its logical conclusion, the idea that natural right gives each a right to all is a vision of such desolation, misery, and loneliness that no one actually behaves as though it were true. To build a system of right or obligation on the basis of the Hobbesian account of nature is to deny that there are healthy and necessary limits to human acquisition and use of power.

Discovering these limits requires disentangling natural sentiments from those developed by socialization and then searching for constraints that prevent or at least retard the corruption of these natural sentiments.[51] This task is difficult and leads to "abysses and mysteries, where the wisest understands the least." Rousseau insists, despite the difficulties, that it is necessary to separate the natural from the contrived in order to clarify where limits should be drawn. While the search for constraints on vanity and appetites appears most clearly with respect to individuals, Rousseau indicates in the *Second Discourse,* the "Letter to Philopolis," and an early draft of the *Social Contract* known as the Geneva manuscript that this project is to be applied to states.[52] I will discuss each in turn.

In the *Second Discourse*, after lamenting the instability of social relationships based on vanity, Rousseau offers this consolation: "human establishments seem at first

[51] Rousseau repeatedly identifies "disentangling" as an essential component of his project. See the "State of War" (165), the "First Discourse" (6), the "Second Discourse," (124), and *Emile*.

[52] With respect to individuals see, Stephen Salkever, "Interpreting Rousseau's Paradoxes," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 11 no 2 (Winter, 1977-1978) 218-219.

glance to be founded on piles of Quicksand; it is only by examining them closely, only after setting aside the dust and sand that surround the Edifice, that one perceives the unshakable base on which it is raised, and learns to respect its foundations."[53] Excavation involves removing that which is superfluous in order to see the forms beneath the accretions. Political life, according to Rousseau's argument, is a human establishment that flows from the evolution of human nature. Political life is not natural in the sense that it is part of humanity's original condition, but it is a necessary and inescapable part of human psychology. In order to correct social institutions corrupted in vanity, it is necessary to excavate the foundations of political life before that exist prior to this corruption. To propose this remedy is to suggest that there is either a natural basis or a historically grounded need for political life that has been lost beneath states' artificially expanded needs and competitive performances of national identity. If this debris can be removed and the true foundation of political life uncovered, then politics can be re-established on an "unshakable base."[54] Perhaps these true foundations will help states to understand themselves with fewer references to other states' power and support a more narrow account of national interests. These constraints may ameliorate the competition of international politics.

The "Letter to Philopolis," written in defense of the *Second Discourse*, provides additional evidence that supports understanding Rousseau's political writings as a search for proper foundations and limits to social innovation.[55] In this letter, Rousseau replies to

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[53] Rousseau, "Second Discourse," 128.

[54] *Ibid*.

[55] Victor Gourevitch identifies Philopolis as the likely pseudonym for Charles Bonnet, a powerful citizen of Geneva who served for many years in Geneva's government and who was instrumental in bringing about Geneva's condemnation of the *Social Contract* and *Emile*. Bonnet published a critique of

Charles Bonnet, who had recently published a critique of the *Second Discourse* under the pseudonym Philopolis. From Rousseau's response, it appears that Bonnet criticized Rousseau for presenting politics as an institution that stands in tension with nature. Bonnet objects to the *Second Discourse* on the grounds that political life is an inevitable result of human nature; thus, to criticize society is to criticize God's intentions for human beings.[56]

Rousseau engages this critique by developing a parallel between political society and the old age of individual human beings. Just as old age is an inevitable time in human life, so is social corruption for the human race. Inevitability is not a convincing argument to support either the goodness of old age or the goodness of corrupt social life. In effect, however, Philopolis has praised the inevitable as the good without considering what might be done to restrain or delay it. Encouraging people to pursue and even maximize their sociable tendencies is analogous to encouraging people to hasten the onset of old age because old age carries connotations of wisdom. Philopolis' argument commits a dual error: it assumes that the old are always wise, and it assumes that the wisdom of old age outweighs the inconvenience of physical infirmity and the certain approach of death.

Rousseau contrasts Bonnet's supposed refutation of the *Second Discourse* with his own understanding of nature. *Amour-propre* is part of human nature; it is natural for people to be drawn out of themselves into politics and become corrupt. It is not inconsistent to identify these things as inevitable developments within the species and to

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the *Second Discourse* under the name Philopolis in 1755. Victor Gourevitch, *The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, 378n. see also http://rousseauassociation.ish-lyon.cnrs.fr/publications/PDF/PL5/PL5-Kelly&Masters.pdf

[56]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Letter by J.J. Rousseau to M Philopolis," *Rousseau: The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, ed. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 223.

insist simultaneously that serious problems accompany these developments.[57] Even as it would be foolish to hasten the onset of old age, it is similarly foolish to immerse oneself in society without considering what may be lost. One purpose of Rousseau's writings is to show ways in which the species might delay the onset of its old age. He writes: "Old age is a state that follows from the nature of humankind, not as you maintain, immediately, but only, as I have proved, with the help of external circumstances which might have been or not been, or might at least have occurred soon or later, and hence speeded up or slowed down the progress."[58] By showing *how* the species contributes to its own corruption, Rousseau can illuminate ways for people to care for themselves better and to delay the advance of their own corruption. Rousseau compares his task to that of a physician or an educator, who selectively attempts to delay aspects of nature (sometimes even human nature) to correct maladies: "If all is good as it is in the way in which you understand it, what is the point of redressing our vices, curing our evils correcting our errors? Of what use are our Pulpits, our Courts, our Academies? Why call the Doctor when you have a fever?"[59] Philopolis' defense of the status quo glosses over the social diversity of Europe and disparages the primitive societies of the New World; to make his argument is to deduce "what ought to be from what one sees."[60] Exposing the evolution

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[57] "I therefore need answer neither Leibniz nor Pope, but only yourself, who, without drawing any distinction between universal evil, which they deny, and particular evil, which they do not deny, claim that simply because a thing exists it is not permissible to wish that it exist differently." Ibid., 226.

[58] Ibid., 224-225.

[59] Ibid., 226.

[60] "Man, you say, is such as the place he was to occupy in the universe required. But men differ so much according to times and places that with this kind of logic, inferences from the particular to the universal are liable to lead to rather contradictory and inconclusive conclusions. A single error in Geography is enough to overturn the whole of this supposed doctrine which deduces what ought to be from what one sees. Ibid., 226.

of political society reveals the contingency of particular social institutions on history and place; it illuminates inconsistencies and problems in the construction of social institutions; and it holds out the possibility for improving our understanding of the human condition and restraining our corruption in society.

Rousseau also employs the image of bodily health as a simile for political life in the *Social Contract.* He describes the political condition in this way:

> The body politic, just like the body of a man, begins to die as soon as it is born and carries within itself the causes of its destruction. But either body can have a constitution that is more or less robust and suited to preserve it for more or less time…It is not within men's capacity to prolong their life, it is within their capacity to prolong the State's life as far as possible by giving it the best constitution it can have.[61]

Political life, like the maintenance of a healthy body, is difficult and continuous work. No political institution offers a final resolution to any problem. Institutions must be maintained and renewed if they are to remain effective. Both the *Second Discourse* and the *Social Contract* look to nature for the principles to guide maintenance and renewal.[62] It is therefore important to understand the correlation between what Rousseau presents as natural principles and the political institutions that he recommends.

Revisiting Rousseau and IR Theory

With the content in mind, it is worthwhile to re-visit the place of Rousseau's understanding of international anarchy in the context of IR theory. This chapter began with Waltz's famous argument emphasizing international anarchy as the primary cause of war in Rousseau's thought. Waltz summarizes his own analysis of Rousseau's thought as

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[61] Rousseau, *Social Contract,* 109.

[62] Ibid., 41.

follows: "Rousseau's conclusion, which is also the heart of his theory of international relations, is accurately though somewhat abstractly summarized in the following statement: That among particularities accidents will occur is not accidental but necessary. And this, in turn, is simply another way of saying that in anarchy there is no automatic harmony."[63] At first glance, this appears to be another way of saying anarchy is the permissive cause of war. Underlying this statement, however, is the assumption that anarchy compels states to behave in an egoistic fashion. The internal character of states has no bearing on how they conduct foreign policy; states, regardless of whether they are good or evil, will resort to force.[64] In brief, Waltz considers both anarchy and the proximity of states to one another as the cause of the egoistic and violent behavior of the international realm. This "structural realist" argument reverses the causal relationship that Rousseau establishes in the *Second Discourse* and then continues in the "State of War."

Alexander Wendt's Constructivist approach to explaining the dynamics of the international realm more closely resembles Rousseau's explanation and helps to draw out some of the possibilities bound up in Rousseau's argument. This is not to suggest that the two thinkers are wholly parallel. Wendt's thought focuses on the evolution of social relationships; thus, one of the most prominent differences between the two authors is that Wendt does not describe a clear beginning or "state of nature."[65] He does not articulate

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[63] Waltz, *Man the State and War,* 182.

[64] Ibid., 183.

[65] Wendt introduces his topic with a discussion of ontology and the ways of knowing and interpreting political behavior. One of the reasons he begins with this type of discussion is that doing so helps him enumerate the way abstract ideas condition human knowledge and experiences. For example, he writes: "I believe that social life is 'ideas all the way down' (or almost anyway; chapter 3), and that deep, unobservable structures constitute agents and rules of interaction (chapter 4), both of which are at odds with mainstream IR theory." Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 90-91.

any natural principles that might serve as standards for social development or as political objectives. Without minimizing the significance of this disparity between the two thinkers, I want to stress that several themes of his argument are especially helpful in uncovering the international implications of Rousseau's thought. Wendt shows the role abstract ideas play in the construction of power dynamics. Second, Wendt moves away from explaining egoistic behavior as a result of a nexus between material capabilities and international anarchy. Both of these elements are important influences on international politics, but these conditions do not have agency of their own. Ideas about power and order create an egoistic self-help system. Examining the role of ideas helps Wendt to explain the egoistic international system as an institution rather than a given condition. Furthermore because ideas influence political behavior, changes within ideas can change the dynamics of international politics. I will explain each of these in turn.

Ideas, Interests, and Power

Constructivist theories of international politics resist Waltz's emphasis on material capabilities as the primary foundation for power. Wendt advances this claim by emphasizing the convergence of ideas and materials as the basis for power relationships.[66] Ideas about power are the basis for how individual human beings perceive power relationships, and these ideas shape how institutions project their power over individuals and among other institutions. Material conditions influence the mechanisms

[66] Other constructivists address the definitional problem of power by narrowing what operations constitute the application of power. Stefano Guizzini emphasizes the importance of shared ideas for understanding and measuring power. Apart from mutually agreed upon notions of appropriate behavior and desired outcomes, the reason animating particular behaviors remains ambiguous. Identifying mutually agreed upon meanings and goods helps to avoid mistaking correlation for causation. Power, from this perspective, exists when one actor consciously obeys the command of another because the other actor commanded it, and not for some secondary cause or interest. Stefano Guizzini, *Power, Realism and Constructivism*, (New York: Routledge, 2013), 4.

available to states. Wendt insists, however, that the emphasis that structural realism places on material capabilities obscures the ideas and experiences underlying the material realm.[67] Wendt summarizes the formation of political relationships this way: "Actors acquire identities—relatively stable, role-specific understandings and expectations about self—by participating in such collective meanings. Identities are inherently relational…"[68] An actor, whether a person or a state, takes on an identity based on the social group in which that actor functions. Repeated interactions allow members of a group to develop expectations for one another, establishing a stable identity for themselves as well as a collective identity that applies to the group of actors.

Applied to international systems of states, this idea helps to explain how material capabilities acquire significance in the international realm. States engage one another on the basis of material capabilities and objectives. At first glance this appears to be because the material realm provides a commensurate form of interaction and negotiation between states. Economic resources, material capabilities, and national objectives are fungible and can be negotiated. A nation and its interest, however, is more than the sum of its material parts. Abstract ideas such as fears, hopes, and ambitions, are what give purpose to the material capabilities that states pursue. Ideas animate material political objectives, not the materials themselves.[69] The convergence of ideas, institutions, and experiences becomes the basis for particular national interests and is the medium through which states express

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[67] "The central thesis is that the meaning of power and the content of interests are largely a function of ideas. As such only after the ideational conditions of possibility for power and interest explanations have been exposed and stripped out can we assess the materiality *as such*." Wendt, *Social Theory*, 96.

[68] Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It," *International Organizations*, 46 no. 3 (Spring, 1992), 397.

[69] Wendt, *Social Theory*, 113.

power. National objectives in the international realm can take on a similarity with one another because they come into being as states interact with one another. They may be influenced by the uncertainties of anarchy and the desire for the material capabilities that support physical security, but anarchy does not impose the same menu of interests on all states.[70] States often have relatively stable sets of identities and interests because repeated interactions between states clarifies the role each state is likely to play, thereby creating expectations among other states and encouraging consistent behavior.[71] A clear social identity may bring stability to a system of interacting states, but Wendt points out that socially established identities often result in regarding other actors from an instrumental perspective: "Self-interest is a belief about how to meet one's own needs—a subjective interest—that is characterized by a purely *instrumental* attitude toward the Other: the other is an object to be picked up, used, and/or discarded for reasons having solely to do with an actor's individual gratification."[72]

Because state power and interests come into being through relationships, international stability flows from shared *ideas* about how states should behave. Shared ideas give meaning to material capabilities and explain the relationship between materials and status. Wendt acknowledges that states operate in self-regarding ways, but insists that the terms "national interests" or "military capabilities" are ambiguous until multiple

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[70] Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It," 398.

[71] Ibid., 399. Wendt explicitly identifies his project as building on the work of International Liberalism. For this reason it may also be helpful to consult Robert Keohane's article "Demand for International Regimes" for an account of how the international community encourages consistent state behavior. The fact that Wendt explicitly builds on liberal institutionalism suggests that he has a preference for these types of interactions as the basis for international order. He is *not* open to any political construction. Robert O. Keohane, "The Demand for International Regimes," *International Organization* 36 no. 2 (Spring 1982).

[72] Wendt, *Social Theory*, 240.

states acknowledge what they mean by these terms. Not only may one state's definition of greatness or success differ significantly from another's, states may prioritize similar interests at different levels. Constructivism maintains that to describe states as self-interested units animated by the pursuit of relative material gains is to obscure the differences between the interests of each nation and to marginalize the significance that ideas about social status play in the creation of power dynamics.[73] A more complete understanding of politics requires integrating the study of *ideas* about power with the material manifestations of this power. By pointing out the influence of constructed identities and performed roles on international political behavior, Constructivists hope to show the diversity within the concept of "national interest" as well as ways in which changes to states' identity and interests can ameliorate the violent tendencies of the international realm.[74]

Although he does not use the terms "*amour de soi*" or "*amour-propre*" to convey the distinction between different forms of self-regard, Wendt argues for a sort of reciprocity between actors' identities and their social experiences. This means that national identity is an ongoing, incomplete, and social process that depends on both internal and external influences. Actors encounter one another with pre-existing ideas about themselves, about others, and about likely outcomes based on other experiences. Ongoing experiences and objectives contribute to the formation of states' identity and perceived role. National interest and the policies that advance this interest are, therefore, created through a synthesis of experiences. Alexander Wendt describes it in this way:

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[73] Ibid., 110.

[74] Ibid., 12.

"Self-interest is not an intrinsic property of actors, like having blue eyes or brown hair, but a contingent belief about how to meet needs that gets activated in relation to specific situations and Others, and as such it is culturally constituted."[75] To bring Wendt's terminology closer to Rousseau's, one might say that actors (whether they are people or states) express their own self-regard by referring to the opinions or expectations of others.

Articulating political objectives, domestically or internationally, is one part of national identity formation. Because collectives like states are abstract entities, their needs include both material and abstract goods. Wendt classifies these needs or objectives into several broad categories. Physical security is the most basic need, but physical security includes a deeply psychological component. It is not enough that states and citizens have their bodies and property protected, they must *feel* that their environment is stable and secure. This feeling or awareness is related to material goods, but the two may not correspond directly. It is possible to feel vulnerable even in a condition of plenty. Security is rarely an end to itself; states pursue security in order to gain the opportunity for community either within the state or between multiple states. National interest is dynamic; the desire for community is related to a concern for self-esteem. Wendt's account of self-esteem is not as romantic as the fireside dances that Rousseau describes, but includes similar outcomes. Individuals and collectives develop appetites for honor, power and recognition; the presence of community, or at least social interactions, provides the context in which self-esteem develops. Wendt's presentation of the national interest begins with the concept of security, but quickly shows a host of other abstract problems that are bound up with the idea of security. Although his enumeration

[75] Ibid., 240.

of national interests emphasizes the abstract categories within which they fall, Wendt insists that these interests are not ephemeral. Policy is the work of transforming abstractions into actionable claims and concrete political objectives. The ability of a state to transform ideas into actions or physical capabilities is the basis for power. Power consists of ideas about what is desirable and the ability to translate these ideas into the material realm. Effectively making this translation depends on shared definitions of power and mutual understandings of interest. Power, then, is a type of relationship that actors create between themselves as they reach these definitions and understandings; it is not simply a function of material capabilities.[76]

Construction of Power Politics

Insofar as he regards power relationships as mutually constructed institutions, Wendt's explanation for the social underpinnings of international politics is similar to Rousseau's account of *amour-propre*. Recognizing this similarity helps to correct the positions of both Waltz and Carter. Because the dynamics of the international realm depend on shared understandings of power and interest, and even something as fundamental as national security is both psychological and material, the anarchic structure of the international realm must be regarded as a contingent institution. It is contingent in the sense that actors' interests and actors' relationships with one another can change. States, while inherently self-interested, are not so compelled by necessity or by the need for security that they must unceasingly pursue egoism.[77]

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[76] Ibid., 109.

[77] Ibid., 241.

To say that the international structure is an institution is to argue that it is the product of convention. Social experiences create meanings and associate status with material capabilities, but they also teach states what to expect from one another. The process of transforming ideas into policies and policies into actions provides the conventions that guide international politics. Both Wendt and Rousseau acknowledge that many regard the egoistic rule of the strongest as the most common of all international conventions. Although it is employed frequently, this does not make it just. Furthermore, one state's decision to employ this egoistic convention does not wholly prevent other states from developing different conventions between themselves. Using this insight Wendt re-evaluates the role of the international structure and suggests a more diverse menu of possibilities available to states.

Wendt describes three different types of conventions for international politics that he calls "logics of anarchy."[78] The three logics of anarchy do not necessarily correspond to a hierarchy of justice, but they describe different ways that states may understand the international realm and the level of mutually established order between states. Wendt describes the first logic of anarchy as a Hobbesian approach to international politics. In this condition, states regard one another as enemies. Any shared ideas about power or order exist solely because one or a few states have forced them upon others. Although there is a measure of consistency under this Hobbeisan ordering principle, states continue to assume the worst about each other's intentions and seek the opportunity to revise

[78] Wendt himself notes that this articulation of "logics of anarchy" is not entirely original to constructivism or to himself. It has roots in the thought of Martin Wight and Hedley Bull, theorists commonly associated with the English School of International Relations theory. See Wendt, *Social Theory*, 251-255, 257 as well as Martin Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions,* (Leicester & London: Leicester University Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs) 1991 and Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society*: *A Study of Order in World Politics*, (New York: Columbia University Press) 1983.

norms themselves. Thus, the only shared and stable idea is that war is a perpetual threat. Other commonalities will be fleeting because widespread fear and predation encourage states to revise norms.[79]

Wendt describes a second logic of anarchy as a "Lockean culture" in which states regard one another as rivals but not enemies. States that regard one another as rivals believe there are clear distinctions between the good of the self and the good of other states, but they agree on certain basic conventions that support the territorial property and political independence of each. This connection to property and self-rule bears similarities to John Locke's political thought and serves as the basis for the name of the category.

The Westphalian settlement, Wendt argues, brought the princes of Europe into an international arrangement that valued pluralism and local autonomy.[80] This is not to say that the states of Europe wholly set aside their quarrels, but that they accepted the idea that multiple states with diverse political and religious institutions must learn to exist alongside one another. The state system that developed following Westphalia upheld the notion of territorial sovereignty as one of the most important organizing principles for international politics.[81] Although states may still resort to violence to resolve disputes, sovereignty underlies these disputes and usually limits the objectives of war so that states may attempt to take territory from one another but they rarely attempt to destroy one

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[79] Wendt, *Social Theory,* 252, 259-278.

[80] Ibid., 279.

[81] For a deeper discussion of Westphalia and the related treaty of Augsburg see Johannes Burkhardt, "The Thirty Years' War," *A Companion to the Reformation World*, ed R. Po-Chia Hsia (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd 2006) pp 272-291.

another's existence.[82] Sovereignty is a shared *idea* about the conduct of international politics that provides basic protection to the life and liberty of states.[83] The institution of sovereignty allows states to avoid making "worst-case" assumptions about one another. States can therefore devote more resources to non-military dimensions of security. Thus, the Lockean model of international political culture accepts states as self-interested institutions that continue to understand themselves in terms of other states, but have come to a shared understanding about order and a minimal international good.

A third possibility that Wendt sees is a "Kantian culture" of anarchy. Kant in *Perpetual Peace* describes an idealistic global culture of non-violence and cooperation between states. This culture is based on the belief that it is possible for states to regard one another as friends. Wendt describes international friendship between two or more states as a relationship that is based on two shared norms. The first is that disputes are to be resolved without war or the threat of war. The second is that that if the security of one state is threatened, other friendly state(s) will aid in its defense.[84] This type of relationship exists in a collective security community. Each state in such a community remains an independent sovereign, and each state is confident that the other members of the community will not attack it. This confidence exists not through a "Leviathan who enforces peace through centralized power…but from shared knowledge of each other's

[82] Wendt, *Social Theory*, 283, 286.

[83] Ibid., 280, 283.

[84] Ibid., 298-299.

peaceful intentions and behavior." [85] Such knowledge is never absolutely certain, but this type of relationship is possible between states and may last for decades.[86]

To elaborate these different interpretations of anarchy is not to suggest that Wendt and Rousseau are fully consistent on the possibilities before states. The differentiation Wendt sees between logics of anarchy is much more specific than what Rousseau includes in his account of international political development. Furthermore, Rousseau's of political "old age" suggests that states and the institutions they build can become entrenched and brittle. There may come a point in time at which states cannot change their identities. The process of building a definition, even through interactions with others, is not infinitely flexible. Rousseau is more keenly aware of the limits bound up in political life than Wendt is, and he does not share the teleological commitment that Wendt invokes by calling the highest level of order a "Kantian" logic of anarchy. The limited point of commonality between Wendt and Rousseau, is that both thinkers endorse the idea that a Hobbesian approach to international politics derives from convention rather than necessity.

While Wendt and Rousseau share a critique of Hobbes, they depart from one another in the implications that they derive from this critique. Because power politics is a socially developed convention, changes in the way states understand themselves and one another can alter the dynamics of international political life. Moreover, Wendt's account of transitions between "logics of anarchy" emphasizes the way states choose to construct relationships with one another. Shifts between "logics" take place primarily through the

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[85] Ibid.

[86] Wendt uses the example of the U.S. and Canada to illustrate this point. Although the two countries have disputes over fishing, trade, and environmental policy, the U.S. does not use violence to get its own way despite overwhelming American military power. Ibid., 300.

historic processes of international socialization, and these processes are largely unrelated to domestic political institutions.

This is quite different from Rousseau's approach. Rousseau's search for the natural foundations of political order begins with individuals, applies this account of individual nature to domestic institutions, and then examines the possibility for transformation in the international realm. To borrow Waltz's terminology, Rousseau's understanding of the international realm begins with a study of the first and second images. Changes in how individuals and states understand themselves may change how states regard one another. Wendt, although he points out that constructivism preserves space for the roles of individuals and states, does not articulate the role of individuals or of domestic politics in his discussion of changes to the international realm. Rousseau's thought avoids this problem by beginning with an account of individual behavior and how characteristics of individuals influence state behavior and even characterize international relationships. While Rousseau's thought addresses an important gap in Wendt's constructivism, Rousseau's sustained emphasis on changing domestic politics for the sake of improving relationships between states means that he cannot simply be regarded as an addendum to Wendt. Rousseau's thought binds together the three images of analysis by claiming that social life, from the level of the individual up to the international level, is characterized by *amour-propre*. This sentiment compels both human beings and states to understand the self in terms of others, and to construct the self, not for the sake of unity, but as an ongoing response to others' opinions. From Rousseau's perspective while the process of social construction may be as open-ended as one's imagination and *amour-propre* allow, his goal is to accomplish more than

identifying the constructive process as evidence for political alternatives.[87] Rousseau wishes to construct a politics that takes human nature as its guide, checks the egoism of individuals and of states, and increasing the possibility for a consistent life in which being and appearing are not alienated from one another.

Conclusion

Placing Rousseau in conversation with Wendt illuminates possibilities that Waltz denies and that Carter overlooks, namely that changes in political ideas can influence the dynamics of international structure. Rousseau's account of *amour-propre* and Wendt's discussion of national interest both show the ideational or abstract basis for power politics. States behave in competitive and egoistic ways because they are taught to do so by the people who lead them and by the states with whom they interact. The socialization process, whether it is understood on the basis of *amour-propre* or through a more social scientific term like Wendt's "intersubjectivity," shapes what states value and how they understand their own status among other states. Ideas about power and status that states create and impose on one another animate state rivalries; they are the basis for competition and conflict. Conflict takes on material forms such as the pursuit of weapons technology or territory, but technology and territory are not so much the cause of war as they are illustrations of what the international realm has deemed valuable.

Material conflict, then, is often (although not exclusively) rooted in ideas about a state's proper status. Conflict expresses the desire to show one's superiority over others

[87] Michael Williams and other realists level this critique against Wendt's constructivism. Wendt, who claims that Constructivism is a method rather than a prescriptive theory, suggests that the point of the method is to open up the possibility for alternative and less egoistic ways of existence, but he claims that there is no need to specify what the content of this alternate construction might be. Michael Williams, *The Realist Tradition and the Limits of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 149-152.

or protect this superiority against rivals; it is an exaggeration to claim that a particular distribution of material capabilities forces states to war against one another.[88] For these reasons, changes within the ideas about power and status can influence the conduct of states in the international realm.

Rousseau's discussion of *amour-propre* suggests two ways in which these sorts of changes may come about. The first, and perhaps even the preliminary step, is bound up in recognizing the sources of political identity and ambition. The notion of *amour-propre* shows that neither individuals nor states can be a perfectly unified whole; the identity and value each finds in itself is conditioned by relationships with others. Recognizing the influence of others opens the possibility for making a more self-conscious decision about how to interact with others. Second, on the basis of this recognition, states may come to understand the importance of creating institutional restraints on their own *amour-propre*. One purpose of such restraints is to limit how states pursue power with respect to one another by avoiding the sophistic account of international right as the right of the strongest to all. Attempting to limit the *amour-propre* of one's own nation is to acknowledge that one's own state does not have a right to all things and will not attempt to claim such a right. Rousseau presents his response to this problem in the *Social Contract*.

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[88] For a more recent example of this, see Scott Sagan's article discussing why states pursue nuclear weapons. Sagan complicates the notion that states pursue nuclear weapons as a response to security threats by pointing to domestic political concerns and evolving international norms as alternate explanations for weapons policy in South Africa, India, and France. Scott D. Sagan, "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons? Three Models in Search of a Bomb," *International Security* 21 no 3 (Winter 1996/97).

CHAPTER FOUR

The Foreign Policy of the *Social Contract*

I have argued that for Rousseau the idea of *amour-propre* expresses the unhealthy and inescapable intertwining of self and other. This intertwining of egos may begin in individuals, but this problem extends into social institutions so that even states come to understand themselves and their purpose through their relationships with other states. A*mour-propre* and social corruption are bound up together in Rousseau's thought. If the ill effects of social corruption may to be ameliorated, and Rousseau is internally consistent, then Rousseau's efforts to address social corruption must confront the effects of *amour-propre*. This is not to suggest that *amour-propre* can be eliminated, but that political institutions can guide its development and limits its ill effects.

The *Second Discourse* claimed that excavating the foundations of human establishments could reveal the "unshakable base" on which the edifice of human institutions are raised. The *Social Contract*, while not a continuation of the *Second Discourse*, is concerned with the true foundation of political society: "I want to inquire whether in the civil order there can be some legitimate and sure rule of administration, taking men as they are and the laws as they can be;" and more famously: "Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains…How did this change come about? I do not know. What can make it legitimate? I believe I can solve this question."[1] The search in the *Social Contract* is concerned with domestic political institutions but Rousseau's ideas

[1] Rousseau, *Social Contract*, 41.

about domestic institutions have significant international implications. Domestic political institutions contribute to national self-understanding and shape how those within the community regard those outside it. I offer an interpretation of the *Social Contract* that focuses on how Rousseau's philosophic account of civil institutions deals with the national *amour-propre* that the *Second Discourse* and the "State of War" present as an enduring problem within human associations. I argue that in the *Social Contract* Rousseau writes as a "second image" theorist; he would change the way states understand justice among nations and create domestic institutions that support a plurality of states. I will argue that the natural sentiments of self-preservation and pity are the "unshakable base" for human social existence. In nature, these sentiments are good in that they exist as part of *amour de soi*. Rousseau uses ideas derived from these sentiments to confront the problem of national *amour-propre*. The development of social life means that it is not enough for each person to identify and cultivate these sentiments by him or herself; instead, Rousseau bolsters these healthy forms of self-interest and comparison through political institutions and national policies.

Piecing together the foreign policy of the *Social Contract* is a circuitous project and begins with material that is not obviously concerned with international politics. I open my argument with a discussion of self-preservation and pity as Rousseau presents them in the *Second Discourse*. These two elements of human nature lead human beings into society and serve as natural standards of conduct for individuals. Although these features of human nature have been corrupted by *amour-propre* they are not destroyed. I argue that Rousseau attempts to recover these sentiments as standards for political life.

Unadorned sentiment, however, is not an adequate guide in the context of society. Sentiment must be amplified and enforced by political principles and institutions that transform these individual attributes into collective expressions of self-preservation and pity. To support this interpretation, I turn to an examination of what I understand to be two ways in which Rousseau builds these restraining sentiments into national politics. The first of these, which reflects the desire for self-preservation, is the principle of consent as the basis for political rule. Consent can authorize government over a people, but it can also limit the extent of this authority. Rousseau underscores limiting effects of consent in his discussion of war, which severs sovereign authority from military victory. Violence may preserve an individual or a community but it cannot justify authority. This view would make war more like the violent encounters of individuals in the state of nature where limited resources might produce violent conflict, but the result did not alter the liberty of those fighting. The second, which pertains to pity, is a civil religion that promotes patriotism without dehumanizing those outside of one's particular state. Thus, the principle of consent and the institution of civil religion allow Rousseau to bring the benefits of self-love and pity into political life. The first imposes limits to the use of force and the second fosters a human disposition to those outside of one's particular community.

My argument builds on the work of Michael Williams, an IR scholar whose discussion of Rousseau begins with a search for the natural principles that inform Rousseau's discussion of international politics.[2] Rousseau's state of nature, while it is neither a historic reality nor a condition that can be recovered serves as a mode of self-

[2] Michael Williams, *The Realist Tradition and the Limits of International Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 57.

reflection for human beings in civil society. The state of nature shows human beings what they have become by underscoring what they can never be. The contrast between nature and society stresses that human beings have become self-conscious, capable of abstraction and comparison, keenly aware of their mortality, and in a sense, trapped by these abilities, which have made humanity capable of foresight, ambition, failure, and misery unlike any other creature.[3] Nature serves as a standard, not in the sense that it demonstrates what the future of human beings should be; rather, it illuminates what is possible by pointing out the externalities that influence human development.[4]

Williams points out two features of Rousseau's thought that distinguish his state of nature from that described by others: the absence of the fear of death and the impact of pity on human sociability.[5] These natural capacities have been overcome by *amour-propre*, a jealous and corrupted concern for self-preservation that reduces human beings to objects and transforms their interactions into an unhealthy competition much like the Hobbesian state of nature.[6]

This interpretation offers a more complete way of understanding how Rousseau's discussion of nature informs his account of international politics. Williams clarifies the significance of nature and emphasizes two elements that are important within Rousseau's account of nature. Some aspects of Williams's analysis merit further discussion, particularly the significance of the absence of the fear of death as well as the role of pity. Rousseau states that these two sentiments give rise to "all the rules of natural right," but

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[3] Williams, *Realist Tradition,* 58-61.

[4] Ibid., 61.

[5] Ibid., 60, 63.

[6] Ibid., 63-65.

that human socialization means that these laws must now be grounded on new foundations. Nature is a guide, but in the context of society, natural rights must be reinforced with social institutions.[7] This need for institutions to re-enforce natural sentiments brings me back to the purpose of this chapter, which argues that Rousseau's critique of politics includes an understanding of political rule and civil religion that reflect the sentimental basis of natural right. To develop the importance of sentiment for political institutions I turn now to the *Second Discourse*.

Self-preservation and Pity as Natural Standards

Rousseau presents self-preservation and pity as the most basic sentiments in the state of nature, and his evidence for this claim is that both exist prior to the cultivation of reason. Because they are sub-rational, they can serve as a guide for human behavior in a way that reason cannot. While the capacity for reason may also be a universal feature of human nature, the operations of reason depend on cultivation and socialization. A "reasonable" conclusion, like a mathematical deduction, is universally true; reaching this, however, conclusion requires study. Rousseau calls self-preservation and pity the "first and simplest operations of the human Soul;" apart from cultivation or study, they influence how human beings understand themselves and their interactions with others. From Rousseau's perspective these sentiments, not reason, are the basis for natural law.[8]

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[7] Rousseau, *Second Discourse,* 127.

[8] Ibid. Georg Cavallar points out that this formulation of natural law confronts and contradicts the natural law teachings of Diderot and Pufendorf. Diderot wrote *Encyclopédia*'s entry on "Natural Right" in which he claimed that it was based on the general will of the whole human race and expressed by the principles of right codified by civilized nations. Rousseau perceives the diversity of human laws and questions the universality of Europe's international jurisprudence as the basis for universal rights. Georg Cavallar, *The Rights of Strangers: Theories of International Hospitality, the Global Community, and Political Justice Since Vitoria*, (Burlington: Ashgate Publishers, 2002), 288-289.

Thus, defining what Rousseau means by self-preservation and pity makes it possible to draw inferences about how he understands natural law.

Self-preservation vs. Fear of Death

Rousseau brings his account of self-preservation into clearer focus by contrasting it with how Hobbes and other state-of-nature theorists describe the natural human condition. Rousseau writes, "Hobbes contends that man is naturally intrepid, and seeks only to attack, and to fight. …Cumberland and Pufendorf also maintain, that nothing is as timid as man in the state of Nature, and that he is forever trembling, and ready to flee at the least noise that strikes him, at the least movement he notices."[9] Rousseau imagines the state of nature quite differently. Like other animals, human beings were likely frightened by new experiences, but human ingenuity enabled them to overcome these obstacles as they become more familiar with them. Like the other animals, human beings, through creativity or intrinsic abilities, were capable of providing for their basic needs.[10] As Williams is careful to point out, these basic needs did not include self-conscious provision against death. Human needs consisted of short-term bodily concerns for food, sleep, and sex. Prior to reason, there is no understanding of mortality and no fear of what might be beyond the grave.

The desire and instinctive responsibility to preserve oneself is intrinsically self-regarding, but because it exists prior to reason, this responsibility cannot be understood as

[9] Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, 135.

[10] Ibid., 136.

egoism.[11] To be egoistic is to understand one's own good in relation to, or even competition with, the good of others. This would require a level of rationality that is undeveloped in the state of nature and comes into being only with *amour-propre*. Human beings, therefore, could care for themselves without *necessarily* coming into conflict with others. In the state of nature, self-preservation derives from *amour de soi*. This means that selfishness existed apart from jealousy; that is to say, selfishness was exclusively concerned with one's own physical wellbeing and did not include a concern for the esteem of others. Conflicts, when they did appear, were spontaneous rather than entrenched, and took place over short-term goods like a day's food or perhaps a mate. In the natural condition human beings regarded the violence they experienced as reparable harm, not an injury that must be punished.[12] Only after the emergence of social life and the development of *amour-propre* does self-preservation take on its egoistic turn. It is this later and egoistic form of self-preservation that does not regard the limits of pity and must be checked by institutions.

Finally, by understanding the drive for self-preservation apart from the fear of death, Rousseau closes off certain options, such as enslaving oneself, as an act of self-preservation that is consistent with nature. Without the fear of death, no situation is so dire that someone would exchange his or her freedom to escape it. Furthermore, every person has equal claim to the right of self-preservation, and the individual is the only judge of the proper means to this right. Because this right cannot be alienated, Rousseau argues that the right to self-preservation carries with it a right to self-possession. He

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[11] David Boucher, *The Limits of Ethics in International Relations: Natural Law, Natural Rights, and Human Rights in Transition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 174.

[12] Rousseau, *Second Discourse,* 154.

writes, "Freedom is a consequence of man's nature. His first law is to attend to his own preservation, his first cares are those he owes himself, and since, as soon as he has reached the age of reason, he is the sole judge of the means proper to preserve himself, he becomes his own master."[13] According to this line of argument, self-preservation is something that human beings naturally owe to themselves; the sentiment of *amour de soi* carries with it a duty to preserve one's own life and freedom. Thus, fear of death is not a foundation for political life; to give up one's freedom for the sake of self-preservation is inconsistent with one's natural duties to oneself.

Self-preservation and Authority

Rousseau turns to the family, which he describes as the only natural society, to illustrate how authority might develop in a way that is consistent with nature. A parent cares for a child until the child is capable of caring for him or herself. Parental authority is grounded in love for the child. Parents experience a sentimental attachment to their children. The child's need for support binds the child to the parent for so long as that need exists. Once a child is capable of caring for him or herself, the natural basis for their relationship dissolves; relationships that continue after physical dependence ends exist by convention. After childhood, members of the conventional family are "equal and free"; if they give up their freedom and continue their relationship, it is for the sake of utility; at this point the authority of parents is not grounded in their natural status as parents but in the child's consent to remain in a social relationship with them.[14] Natural authority, however, is limited by natural needs.

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[13] Rousseau, *Social Contract*, 42.

[14] Ibid.

Rousseau underscores his own account of natural authority by contrasting his argument with that of Grotius. Rousseau understands Grotius to derive political principles from existing facts of social life rather than nature itself. This results in an account of authority without clear limits. Slavery, for example, exists as a lawful institution. Grotius, therefore, acknowledges a right to authority that is not for the good of the ruled, but for the aggrandizement of the ruler. Rousseau summarizes Grotius' position as follows: "Grotius denies that all human power is established for the sake of the governed: he gives slavery as an example. His most frequent mode of argument is always to establish right by fact. One could use a more consistent method, but not one more favorable to Tyrants."[15] By obscuring the distinctions between natural and conventional authority, Grotius replaces the natural limits of authority with the ability to compel obedience. Force supersedes natural needs as the basis for power; this legal system privileges the status quo.

Nature, Rousseau argues, does not authorize authority in this way. A family has no right to enslave its children; the proper function of parental authority is to prepare children to govern themselves. Therefore, legitimate authority is that which is exercised for the good of the ruled, even when this authority is political rather than parental.[16] Rousseau identifies an important difference between the two types of rule: "In the family the father's love for his children repays him for the cares he bestows on them, and that in the State the pleasure of commanding takes the place of the chief's lack of love for his

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[15] Ibid.

[16] Rousseau, *Social Contract,* 42. Robert Derathé also observes Rousseau's criticism of Grotius and Pufendorf. In Derathé's analysis, Rousseau's condemnation of these jurists is based on the fact that they systematically take the part of the strong against the weak and are paid to do so. They are jurists in the service of the highest bidder. *Jean-Jacques Rousseau et la science Politique de son Temps*, 2nd ed, (Paris, Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1979), 69. See also, David Boucher, *Limits of Ethics*, 203.

peoples."[17] Conventional authority exists as a form of *amour-propre* because its basis is in others' wills and consent. As I argued in the preceding chapter, it depends on the opinions of both ruler and ruled.

For this reason, political life creates and sustains a joy in ruling. The joy found in command does not, however, give chiefs the right to enslave their people or rule contrary to their good. Rousseau's description of political rule indicates that it creates new and perhaps dangerous passions, but he does not eliminate categorically the possibility for joy in ruling to coexist with the good of individual subjects. His presentation of politics does not treat political authority as an altruistic service (rulers derive joy in exercising their power), but Rousseau insists that authority in accordance with nature is by consent and includes the possibility of teaching subjects self-governance. Authority that does not take this form, as in the master/slave relationship, exists only because convention has marred human nature and prevented human beings from learning self-governance.[18] A just social convention, therefore, is one that protects the equal right to self-governance by upholding a conventional or "moral" equality that prevents a community from defaulting to rule of the strongest. The *Social Contract* makes self-rule possible by denying that force is the natural basis for political power.[19]

Pity and Sociability

Pity also has a place in social life because it is necessarily concerned with the relationship between self and other. Its operations are subtler and more readily subdued

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[17] Rousseau, *Social Contract*, 42.

[18] Ibid., 43.

[19] Ibid., 54, 56.

than the duty for self-preservation, but the *Social Contract* holds onto this concern about the wellbeing of others. Prior to the development of reason, it is a non-rational way of experiencing relationships with other human beings and sensing a sort of responsibility towards others.[20] Rousseau defines pity as a natural repugnance at seeing any sentient being suffer or die, especially a creature similar to ourselves. Explaining pity in terms of suffering suggests that pity is connected to an understanding of our physical good.[21] The pre-rational nature of pity provides a way for Rousseau to describe a sense of compassion for other creatures before human beings can understand the implications of mortality. Pity influences human development in two beneficial ways. First, pity enables one person to put him or herself in the place of another, recognize when that other person is suffering, and feel both the happiness of not suffering, and the sorrow of remembering how one's own suffering has felt. Pity generates awareness of weakness, and uses this cognizance of mutual weakness to attach one person to another.[22] In other words, pity allows for comparison without the influence of jealousy. Because pity creates a healthy type of concern for others, Rousseau identifies it as the source of other-directed virtues. He writes: "Indeed, what are generosity, Clemency, Humanity, if not Pity applied to the weak, the guilty, or the species in general. Even Benevolence and friendship, properly

[20] Pity appears alongside friendship in *Emile* as the first relative sentiment, connecting one person to another. There are ways in which friendship is related tangentially to my argument here, but this is not the place for such a discussion. Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, or On Education,* translated by Alan Bloom, (USA: Basic Books, 1979), 222.

[21] Rousseau, *Second Discourse,* 127.

[22] Rousseau, *Emile,* 221.

understood, are the products of a steady pity focused on a particular object; for what else is it to wish that someone not suffer, than to wish that he be happy?"[23]

While pity gives rise to all of these relational sentiments, they are not all of the same kind. The first three derivations from pity—generosity, clemency and humanity—are directed towards the human species as a whole. Rousseau claims that the latter two, friendship and benevolence, are directed towards particular people. In Rousseau's presentation of these two forms, they are not in conflict with one another, but the possibility for such conflict exists as a latent problem.[24] As Roger Masters points out, pity directed towards humanity may not produce a reciprocal relationship.[25] On the other hand, friendship is an exclusive sort of bond, similar to patriotism. This type of attachment is much stronger than a general attachment to the species, and both friendship and patriotism can impose obligations that lead into conflict with other human beings.[26]

The Paradox of Pity

By placing these sentiments together as the result of the same natural disposition, Rousseau underscores an inescapable social problem: the possibility for conflict between a sense of obligation to particular people or a particular community, and the natural bond

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[23] Rousseau, *Second Discourse,* 153.

[24] It is possible that Rousseau's use of the word "générosité" sheds some light on the division between the two. This word can be translated either as generosity or magnanimity. Magnanimity indicates a disposition to show kindness because of one's own greatness. The disposition itself leads a human being to regard others as in a position of need. In the second group of characteristics benevolence and friendship (*la bienveillance et l'amitie*) require applying these dispositions to particular person. Benevolence to a particular person indicates a broader disposition of magnanimity. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Œuvres Complètes: avec des notes historiques* (Paris: L'Institut de France, 1861), 547.

[25] Masters insists that the human sentiments and the particular sentiments are irreconcilable. He claims that even though Rousseau attempts to combine them, the two forms of attachment are *necessarily* at odds with one another. Roger Masters, *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 50-51.

[26] Ibid.

that one shares with the whole species. The fact that both forms of attachment stem from pity has the effect of emphasizing both the naturalness and the inescapability of these conflicting obligations. Natural sentiments can be manipulated or even distorted, but they cannot be fully stricken from the human experience. Human beings experience different levels of obligation to others. In the context of political life, families, states, and even international organizations may attempt to influence and prioritize how these obligations make themselves felt. Each circle of association may articulate a claim to loyalty on the basis of pity. Pity itself offers only the ambiguous ordering principle of emotional weight—those who evoke a stronger feeling of pity may be more deserving of help. Pity may provide sentimental guidance in these matters and even result in actions based on this pity, but it does not compel one's behavior. Furthermore, strength or weakness of sentiment may be influenced by other factors such as the level of personal relationship or perceived similarity between self and other. It does not appear that sentiment alone can establish a hierarchy of obligations. Other forms of social relationship condition the attachment to others through pity; conflict between these spheres of relationship (family/state, state/human species) persists as an inescapable dimension of social life.

The second beneficial effect of pity in the state of nature is to operate as a check on the drive for self-preservation by evoking an impulse to care for others when there is not a rational or conventional obligation to do so. Pity creates a sentimental form of duty; these duties cannot be demanded of someone in a court of law, but to act in accordance with pity is to comply with the obligations of natural law. Rousseau writes: "It is therefore quite certain that pity is a natural sentiment which, by moderating in every individual the activity of self-love, contributes to the mutual preservation of the entire

species."[27] Pity enables human beings to recognize vulnerability in others and in themselves; this mutual recognition of incompletion or need opens the door to community.[28] Rousseau argues that the salutary effects of pity remain compelling, even in civil societies long-removed from the state of nature: "In Riots, in Street-brawls, the Populace gathers, the prudent man withdraws; it is the rabble, it is the Marketwomen who separate the combatants, and keeps honest folk from murdering one another."[29] Those whose education or social position teaches them that to be prudent is to value the self without regard for others may resist the impulses of pity, but the mild voice of pity still calls out.

Sentiment as Natural Law

Rousseau contends that these two sentiments do more than illustrate the competing obligations within the human experience. They provide the basis for natural law. Rousseau's statements on natural law are elliptical and often critical of existing natural law traditions. In the *Second Discourse* he expresses his concern with the natural law tradition as follows: "Knowing Nature so little, and agreeing so poorly about the meaning of the word *Law*, it would be most difficult to agree on a good definition of natural law."[30] Rousseau goes on to point out that there is fierce disagreement among natural law thinkers and that many of these theories depend on a level of knowledge that

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[27] Rousseau, *Second Discourse,* 154.

[28] "It is man's weakness which makes him sociable; it is our common miseries which turn our hearts to humanity; we would owe humanity nothing if we were not men. Every attachment is a sign of insufficiency. If each of us had no need of others, he would hardly think of uniting himself with them." Rousseau, *Emile,* 221.

[29] Rousseau, *Second Discourse,* 153-154.

[30] Ibid., 126.

is inaccessible to those in the state of nature. Existing natural law arguments are either grounded in what people now regard as useful and conducive to the peaceful operation of society as it now exists.[31] The *Second Discourse* presents two criteria a principle must satisfy in order to be regarded as natural law: first, "the will of him who is obligated must be able to submit to it knowingly;" and second, "for it to be natural it must speak immediately with the voice of Nature."[32] The first stipulation requires a free will that is capable of consent or denial. By emphasizing free will, Rousseau claims to dismiss an ancient version of natural law that claimed even animals participated in the natural law. A human being, however, is capable of recognizing that he or she is pursuing self-preservation or being influenced by pity. The first criterion indicates that submission to natural law, while prior to reason, is a conscious act that is backed by human intent. The second proposition confronts scholastic and even modern natural law theories that derive law from rational potential. This potential is uncultivated in nature, and developed differently in the context of society. Law derived from reason is not, therefore, universally applicable. From Rousseau's perspective, natural law must be grounded in the sentiments, particularly self-preservation and pity. They operate universally among human beings and can be experienced without the cultivation of reason.

Grounding natural law in sentiment rather than reason may expand the number of those who are aware of these standards, but it diminishes the law's enforceability, complicating the relationship between natural duty and the enforcement of this duty.[33]

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[31] Ibid., 126-127.

[32] Ibid., 127.

[33] For a contrasting account of natural law derived through reason, see Michael Zuckert's treatment of Aquinas and the natural law tradition. Zuckert argues that Aquinas viewed natural law as accessible to all through reason, and was legally binding on human beings who are inclined by nature to

Because the law is based on sentiment alone, it lacks the rational institutions that would otherwise accompany law inside political society.[34] For example, in the state of nature, there is no institution, only pity, that attaches parents to their children, or compels one person to aid someone who is injured. Rousseau seems to acknowledge this limitation when he makes the following statement in the *Second Discourse*:

> It would at first seem that men in [the state of nature] having neither moral relations of any sort between them, nor known duties, could be neither good nor wicked, and had neither vices nor virtues, unless these words are taken in a physical sense and the qualities that can harm an individual's self-preservation are called vices, and those that can contribute to it, virtues…[35]

These statements do not deny the role of virtue and justice, but argue that these concepts must be understood in the context of society where the community creates and shares a standard for judgment.

In nature, each person judges his or her own conduct, and the only standard is whether one is successful in prolonging his or her own life. It is not that the absence of justice makes human beings wicked or violent, but rather, that the concept of virtue is unknown.[36] In this context, the only guide is the natural law provided by the sentiments. Generalizing from self-preservation produces a law that is largely negative: preserve oneself and, as much as possible, refrain from impinging on right of others to do the

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behave rationally. Michael Zuckert, "Do Natural Rights Derive from Natural Law," *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*, 20 (1997), 704-708.

[34] Masters, *Political Philosophy,* 50.

[35] Rousseau, *Second Discourse,* 150.

[36] Ibid., 151.

same. The most general forms of pity—clemency and humanity—provide the barest understanding of what is owed to other sentient beings.[37]

Limits of Sentimental Law

Basing natural law in sentiment enables Rousseau to make a case for its broad applicability, but it undercuts the law's efficacy. Apart from the family, Rousseau mentions no other natural institutions that uphold the law. In the possible rivalry between self-preservation and pity, self-preservation appears to be the stronger sentiment. The desire for self-preservation quickly overcomes the pain at seeing an animal suffer when a human being is forced to choose between going hungry and killing for food. The conflict between the two becomes more pronounced in the context of society, because sociability brings these sentiments under the influence of other human beings.

Self-preservation becomes dependent on the concerted efforts of other people. Social life becomes a "horrible state of war" in which the good of the self is understood to be at odds with the good of others.[38] The comparisons between self and other are no longer directed towards compassion, but towards self-elevation. Human beings gain a sense of importance by searching for ways they surpass their fellows: "Everyone began to look at everyone else and to wish to be looked at himself, and public esteem acquired a price…from these first preferences arose vanity and contempt on the one hand, shame

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[37] *"La clémence"* applies to human dispositions and to the disposition of the natural elements. Human clemency is related to the idea of mercy of lenience. The clemency of the elements is understood as mildness or peacefulness. While Rousseau is clearly applying the term to human action, it is not clear that the two definitions are mutually exclusive in this context. The mildness of natural man means that he deals with other human beings with leniency. In the state of nature, human beings are not bent on destroying one another; they protect themselves, but do not behave vindictively towards those who compete with them for resources or cause them inconvenience.

[38] Rousseau, *Second Discourse,* 171.

and envy on the other; and the fermentation caused by these new leavens eventually produced compounds fatal to happiness and innocence."[39] The creativity made possible by the development of reason came to stifle pity and drown out the weak voice of justice, which were replaced by greed and ambition, which soon dominated social life.[40] Thus, for the principles of natural law to be enforced, they must be re-established on new foundations. These pre-rational standards, while they are not enforceable laws, do provide a standard by which to evaluate conventional institutions that advance the goal of self-preservation and teach people how to understand themselves with respect to others.[41] These institutions are most clearly found inside political communities. I turn, therefore, to the *Social Contract*, Rousseau's most explicit discussion of these conventional institutions.

Self-preservation, Pity, and International Politics

Rousseau explicitly invokes nature as an appropriate standard for human association but admits that the relationship between nature and politics is tangled and unclear: "it is no light undertaking to disentangle what is original from what is artificial in man's present nature."[42] Although he has begun the work of disentangling the natural from the artificial, the complexity of the problem means that responsibility for this task also falls upon others, such as his readers. Rousseau's approach, even to forming state institutions, often leaves the natural foundations of social conventions in obscurity. While

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[39] Ibid., 166.

[40] Ibid., 171.

[41] Masters, *Political Philosophy,* 162.

[42] Rousseau, "Second Discourse," 125. *Social Contract*, 41.

not a comprehensive examination of the natural foundations of the *Social Contract*, this section focuses on the implications of the natural sentiments of self-preservation and pity for social institutions.

Sentiment begins within a particular person and is concerned with one's own emotions or sensations. Self-preservation and pity are important because both of them are also relational between the self and other. Because they are both concerned with interacting with others they have social and political implications that I will argue apply to states as a whole. Both of these are expansive terms. I deal first with self-preservation as it pertains to the state among other states. The *Social Contract* is largely focused on forming a legitimate domestic regime and the types of institutions that support such a regime. War and self-defense, however, do appear in Rousseau's discussion. I focus on how Rousseau's ideal state understands the resort to war and what the state can justly accomplish through the use of military force. Second, I discuss pity, which has wide-ranging effects as it leaves the realm of nature and *amour de soi* and falls under the influence of *amour-propre* in the context of social life. Because pity, even in the state of nature, consists in making comparisons it is a disposition as well as an activity. These dual attributes make pity a difficult concept to institutionalize in an artificial body like a state. In exploring the role of pity, I focus on how pity influences the construction of self and other. I argue that the state has an important role to play in teaching citizens how to understand themselves in relation to other citizens, and especially how to regard those outside the state; in offering this education, the social contract state educates and shapes a sort of national pity. In the *Social Contract*, civil religion speaks to the relationship between self and other. Civil religion is the institution that most directly limits the

understanding of national self and opens the possibility for compassion or at least the recognition of equality in others.

Self-preservation and the Resort to Force

The *Social Contract* is primarily concerned with the foundation of a just regime within a state. A state formed by the consent of its members becomes a "common self" or a "public person," and has the responsibility of defending and protecting the persons and goods of those within it.[43] This defense of the public person takes place domestically through the administration of law, but internationally it may take a more violent form in war. Rousseau's discussion war takes place in the first few chapters of the text and focuses on the place of war in the creation of political authority. The remarks are brief, but they permit several inferences about Rousseau's teaching on the limits of war. The first inference is that Rousseau believes that the resort to war can be just, but that even a just war must be waged under certain constraints. Second (and possibly in tension with the first inference), war is a political condition between states; thus, the object of war is the resolution of political differences. Finally, while war may preserve the existence of one state, it cannot generate legitimate obligation or authority between one state and another.

With respect to the first, although critiques of war frequently appear in his writings, these criticisms do not rule out the possibility of just wars or deny that a state has a responsibility to defend the people and property within it. These objections range from lamenting the anarchic structure of international politics that makes war probable, to

[43] Rousseau, *Social Contract*, 49, 50.

condemning the laws of war as they are interpreted by the powers of Europe.[44] In none of these places does Rousseau deny the right to war. Some scholars have inferred that stating that war has a role in politics is evidence for Rousseau's despair over the possibility of peace, or that Rousseau reluctantly accepts war as an insurmountable ill deriving from the existence of multiple states.[45] These interpretations rightly emphasize the tragic dimensions of war; they fail, however, to account for Rousseau's commendation of virtuous soldiers and citizens who forcefully protect their own communities.[46] Furthermore, other aspects of the *Social Contract* support the inference that Rousseau believes it possible for war to be just.

The characteristics of a just war come into focus by clarifying what Rousseau would prohibit and then searching for what he praises or tacitly permits. He describes three forms of war as unqualifiedly unjust: wars that states use as a claim to political authority, wars fought by mercenaries or citizens who do not understand the causes, and wars that states use as a way of maintaining themselves, such as wars of colonization.[47] The first exclusion underscores the notion that force cannot produce a right to rule over others. Coercion may have a legitimate place in society, but political authority must be

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[44] Rousseau, "Second Discourse," 174. Hoffmann and Fidler, "Fragments on War" 48-52. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "The State of War" in *The Social Contract and other Later Political Writings* ed. and trans. Victor Gourevitch, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 162, 163, and Rousseau, *Social Contract,* 46.

[45] Andrew Linklater, *Men and Citizens in the Theory of International Relations* (London: Macmillan Press, 1982), 25. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War*, 182.

[46] Rousseau, *Social Contract,* 46 n.

[47] Rousseau, *Social Contract,* 46, 47, Rousseau, "Second Discourse," 174, Rousseau, "Fragments on War," in *Rousseau on International Relations*, edited by Stanley Hoffmann and David Fidler (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) 49, Rousseau, *Social Contract,* 75.

grounded in accordance with right, which force alone does not provide.[48] The second prohibition supports the ideal of individual self-rule. Mercenaries deprive citizens of the opportunity to rule themselves by defending their own community from aggressors. Rousseau's alternative is not simply citizen-soldiers fighting for their own community, but citizen soldiers who understand *why* they are fighting. To risk one's own life, simply because state authority commands it, is contrary to the individual's responsibility for self-preservation. The same principle also excludes conscripted armies. Conscription is problematic because it deprives citizens of the opportunity to choose how their serve their state. Not only does may conscription force citizens to act against their own will and conscience, it may also deprive them of the opportunity to choose to fight because they believe it is their duty. Finally, Rousseau condemns states that use war as a method of national maintenance. This sort of policy takes place when states use war to distract their citizens from domestic problems, or when states need the wealth and territory derived from conquest in order to preserve their way of life.[49] Re-casting these teachings in a positive form, it appears that a just war is an exception to the quotidian life of the state. When states must turn to war, they should fight with soldiers recruited from their own population, who understand the causes of the war and are prepared to sacrifice themselves for its objectives. The just state, even if it is victorious, must fight with the understanding that victory is not a title to rule or to enslave its enemy.

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[48] Rousseau, *Social Contract*, 44.

[49] "Still, States have been known which were so constituted that the necessity of conquests entered into their very constitution, and which were forced constantly to expand in order to maintain themselves." Ibid., 75.

The *Social Contract* also describes some wars as "just wars" and praises the actions of a "just prince" engaged in war.[50] The following passage illustrates both the possibility for just wars and clarifies the conditions under which they are fought:

> Declarations of war are warnings not so much to the powers as to their subjects. The foreigner, whether he be a king, a private individual, or a people, who robs, kills or detains subjects without declaring war on their prince, is not an enemy, he is a brigand. Even in the midst of war, a just prince may well seize everything in enemy territory that belongs to the public, but he respects the person and the goods of private individuals; he respects rights on which his own are founded.[51]

This passage introduces several additional constraints. One is found in the notion of war as a declaration. This implies that war is not a perpetual relationship, nor the assumed milieu of international politics, but a specific policy decision. The declaration terminates the peaceful relationship between states and warns people in an enemy territory of imminent hostilities. The idea of warning the subjects of another country suggests a concern for those who might be classified as non-combatants and it creates the opportunity for potential combatants to consider their own opinions on the justice of the cause and prepare themselves for war. Warning does not guarantee that non-combatants will not be harmed, but it conveys that the state going to war appreciates the need to confine violence, and protect private individuals who are not engaged in the acts of war.[52] Rousseau underscores this point by saying that a just prince may attack only public

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[50] Some of this rhetoric is consistent with the language of the just war tradition. Rousseau is not explicitly invoking Augustine or Aquinas, but in using the terms "just war," "just prince" and "peace of God" he evinces an awareness of the terminology used in the just war tradition.

[51] Rousseau, *Social Contract*, 47.

[52] Rousseau understands that this can place a heavy burden on states' military objectives. In the "State of War" he defends himself from the accusation that his teachings are impractical in the following way: "I ask my readers not to forget that I am not inquiring into what makes war advantageous to the one who wages it, but what makes it legitimate. Being just almost always costs something. Is one therefore exempted from being so?" Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "The State of War" in *The Social Contract and other Later Political Writings,* edited by Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 145.

resources. Those who remain private persons and have not consented to fight must not be treated as soldiers. Forcing people to enter war against their will is to rule by force. This sort of coercion violates the principles of free will and consent, which Rousseau argues are the basis for just authority. If the just prince is to "respect the rights on which his own are founded," he must acknowledge that his authority does not derive from the fear he inspires in his people or his greater strength, but through the freely accepted convention of the social contract. To reject consent as the basis for political authority is to eliminate the accepted standards for judgment and justice and to replace them with force, which Rousseau denies as the basis for a just regime.[53]

War as Political

The distinction between public acts and private citizens is closely related to a second theme in Rousseau's argument: war is a willfully established relationship between states, not an inherent condition of the international realm, and is certainly not a relationship among individuals or between a state and an individual.[54] Making this argument reiterates a distinction between Rousseau and Hobbes, who describes both pre-political life and the international realm as a state of war. From Rousseau's perspective, war is more than uncertainty about another's disposition; it is a socially constructed relationship expressed as a desire by one state to mobilize institutions and resources with

[53]"Since no man has a natural authority over his fellow-man, and since force produces no right, conventions remain as the basis of all legitimate authority among men." Rousseau, *Social Contract,* 44. Matthew Simpson, *Rousseau's Theory of Freedom,* (New York: Continuum Publishers, 2006), 29.

[54] "War is then not a relationship between one man and another, but a relationship between one State and another." Rousseau, *Social Contract,* 46-47.

the intent of harming another state.[55] War is abstracted from the will of any individual within the state; Rousseau clarifies what he means in a footnote to this discussion of war: "The Romans who understood and respected the right of war better than any nation in the world were so scrupulous in this regard that a citizen was not allowed to serve as a volunteer without having enlisted specifically against the enemy, and one designated as such by name."[56] The Roman example emphasizes the types of limitations a state should impose on itself to wage a just war. The soldiers are not mercenaries, but citizens. They do not fight by trade, but volunteer against a particular enemy for a particular reason. Soldiers, according to this teaching, do not enlist for a fixed number of years, but only for particular wars. The *Social Contract's* military doctrine supports citizen militias levied on an ad hoc basis for the purpose of increasing each soldier's personal responsibility over his actions and emphasizes that he fights on behalf of his state, not as a career or for his own financial gain. After the particular cause of war ends, the soldier from Rousseau's example must re-enlist in order to fight in another war. Soldiering is not a way life, but a particular form of civic obligation that works towards a political outcome. The obligation comes to an end when the outcome is achieved.

This argument urges against the maintenance of a professional army, but it does not clarify what Rousseau might regard as the appropriate political objectives of a war. The absence of a professional army indicates that war would be restricted to defensive operations. This position may limit the type of rhetoric used to justify war, but it falls

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[55] Contrast with Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* ed. Richard Tuck (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 88-89.

[56] Rousseau, *Social Contract,* 46n.

short of a military doctrine on the resort to force. It is potentially constraining but like any limiting principle, the principle itself does not guarantee political compliance.

War and Obligation

Rousseau's discussion of war suggests that war may preserve the life of one state, but it cannot create political authority or even a right to property in another state. Such a right is erroneously claimed under the title of the right of the stronger or the right of conquest. Superior strength may be a component of authority, but strength itself is an insufficient claim to rule. This is both a practical and a moral position. The *Social Contract* states, "The stronger is never strong enough to be forever master, unless he transforms his force into right, and obedience into duty…To yield to force is an act of necessity, not of will; at most it is an act of prudence. In what sense can it become a duty?"[57] From a wholly practical vantage point, authority claimed on the basis of coercion, especially when this coercion takes the form of military victory, is illegitimate. Obedience in the service of force is not grounded in the will; the coerced party is unlikely to accept the settlement and search for ways to escape it. Obedience in these cases is at best a prudential act in the service of self-preservation. One might be forced to obey for a time, but will never regard obedience to such an authority as a duty.[58]

Rousseau believes that his emphasis on consent as the basis for all political authority is a departure from prevalent teachings on the rights of war. "Grotius and the rest," Rousseau writes, "derive from war another origin of the alleged right of slavery. Since, according to them, the victor has the right to kill the vanquished, the latter can buy

[57] Ibid., 44, 46.

[58] Ibid., 44.

back his life at the cost of his freedom; a convention they regard as all the more legitimate because it proves profitable to both parties."[59] From Rousseau's perspective, the foundational premise of this argument is flawed: victors do not possess an unequivocal right to kill the vanquished. "Is it not clear," Rousseau writes, "that by establishing the right of life and death by the right of slavery and the right of slavery by the right of life and death, that one falls into a vicious circle?"[60] The condition of war does not permit the massacre of surrendered soldiers or of civilians and, despite what is practiced by the kings of Europe, war does not produce the right to enslave others. Soldiers fight one another as agents of states; when the state is defeated or the political dispute is otherwise resolved, surviving soldiers return to their private roles as citizens. Serving as a military agent of one's state does not dissolve the individual's personhood. True authority and obligation between human beings develop through a mutual recognition of rights. To recognize others' rights, particularly a right to consent to political authority, implies that military victory does not include an absolute right to rule as in the master/slave relationship. Government authority must seek the good of the ruled and acknowledge the right of the ruled to consent to their government. Grounding authority on something other than this mutual recognition results in an unjustified power structure that lasts only so long as the coercion can bind it together. This principle applies both to domestic politics and to international political relationships.[61]

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[59] Ibid., 47.

[60] Ibid.

[61] "The basis of legitimate political obligation lies in a mutual recognition of the rights of both self and others. For Rousseau, as for Kant, it is humanity's fundamental freedom which provides the ultimate ground of moral and political judgement. The 'contract' which is founded on this principle is particular in form: it is embodied within a specific state. But its principle is universal, and thus applies not only to citizens but to all humanity. This moral right and obligation is not, as both Hoffmann and Waltz argue, a

In summation, Rousseau's account of self-preservation informs his discussion of war. In both cases, he affirms the right of independent bodies (individuals as well as states) to protect and advance their own wellbeing. The wellbeing of an individual is related to the idea of consensual obligations and the ability to provide for physical needs. The clearest similarity between individual and state wellbeing pertains to consensual obligation. Rousseau rejects the right of conquest; his rejection supports an understanding of national wellbeing as self-rule and consent by the people to their government. The question of physical needs, however, is less clear for states than it is for individuals. States are collectives; as Rousseau points out in the "State of War," national health is not bound by the same physiological limits as the human body. Rousseau's teaching on war acknowledges that states may employ violence to defend themselves against aggressors. The threshold of aggression that justifies war remains ambiguous. Aggression can take economic and military forms, and Rousseau does not delineate a point at which a state's autonomy is so threatened that it must resort to force. This seems to be a matter left to the prudence of individual leaders. This teaching acknowledges that states have important material and territorial needs, but does not present a universal teaching on the appropriate limits for these needs.

Civil Religion as National Pity

Pity on its own terms is insufficient to restrain the egoistic desires of social human beings.[62] In domestic politics the characteristics of pity appear under the form of law. Pity causes a person to place him or herself in the position of another, and then choose a

purely 'inner' form of obligation internally exclusive to the particular state. Rather, its form is inner, but its principle is universal." Williams, *Realist Tradition*, 74.

[62] Masters, *Political Philosophy,* 50-51.

course of action based on the experience of empathy. Law teaches citizens to abstract from themselves and consider their actions with respect to the good of the whole. As Leo Strauss points out: "Voting on a law means to conceive of the object of one's private or natural will as the object of a law which is binding on all equally and benefits all equally. …Legislation by the all-inclusive citizen body is therefore the conventional substitute for natural compassion."[63] My primary focus, however, is on the role of pity in relationships between one community and another. How does the *Social Contract* guide people within the community to think about and relate to those outside of it? It is helpful to examine the relationship between pity and law within a particular community before turning to the effects pity might engender towards those outside the community.

The discussion of pity in the state of nature showed that the operation of this sentiment moves through several phases. Pity begins with a consideration of one's own condition with respect to that of others. Observing the miseries of others causes one to abstract from the self and recognize oneself as vulnerable to similar miseries. Pity then permits a return to self-awareness without being jealous of the other person's condition; the person expressing pity is grateful not to be suffering, and moved to aid the person who is in distress. Thus, pity is self-centered, but in a way that allows or even encourages concern for others. The process of legislation incorporates similar characteristics. Law is a collective response to the needs of the community, but it is established through the vote of individual citizens. In voting, the citizen expresses a private or personal will about the law, a statement of public will that is equally binding on all. The act of voting requires abstracting from the self to consider the needs of others and the effects of issuing a

[63] Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 283-285.

command to all, but even the most public-spirited vote is not fully severed from the individual's understanding of his or her own good.[64] Construed positively, legislation enables individuals to learn to think of their own good in terms of the community's good. Construed negatively, the law constrains individuals by prohibiting each person from following his or her own unlimited selfish impulses. In either case, the individual abstracts from the self to understand the concept of obligation through a political relationship with others. Law functions as a political and rational substitute for pity.

Legislation governs only those who have consented to be governed by the law of a particular community. Domestic law helps citizens to identify with one another; this strengthens the attachment between individual members of the community as well as between individuals and the public self (the state). Law teaches citizens to think in terms of a common good within the state. But law does little to attach citizens of one community to those outside of it. If anything, law creates opposition between those who identify with one state and those who identify with another. If the citizens of one community are to empathize with those outside their state, their empathy must stem either from what remains of uncorrupted natural pity or from a different institution than law. Rousseau has already indicated that the process of human socialization readily overcomes natural pity. Indeed, the formation of laws for particular states stands in tension with the notion that all human beings have equal rights. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a different institution than law to overcome the antipathy between human beings who understand themselves as part of a national self and those they regard as outside of it. Without such an institution, comparisons between one state and another resemble the

[64] Ibid., 285.

devolution of social life that Rousseau describes in the *Second Discourse*. These unhealthy comparisons between one's own state and other states produces egoistic acts of aggression as a result of national *amour-propre*. To avoid this problem states need a sort of national pity, a way of making comparisons with other communities that does not produce the insecurities of *amour-propre* and that admits self-assertion without the need to diminish the legitimacy of other political communities or dehumanize citizens of other states. This disposition is better described as national pity than as self-preservation because it entails making comparisons between one's national self and other individuals and communities. Furthermore, this national disposition resembles pity in that it can support a concern for the wellbeing of other individuals and communities, much like pity does in the state of nature.

Rousseau addresses this problem near the end of the *Social Contract* in the discussion of religion. The final chapter of the *Social Contract* discusses several forms of religion—the religion of the citizen, the religion of the priest, the religion of man, and the civil religion of the social contract. Rousseau evaluates each type of religion on the basis of how it influences domestic politics and from the perspective of how it teaches communities to regard outsiders. Rousseau dismisses the first two forms as dangerous to the community, and while he praises the religion of man, its principles are too lofty to be institutionalized as a national religion. He therefore presents a new account of civil religion as the most appropriate alternative. Examining each form of religion with respect to its compatibility with the ideas of pity help us to understand why the religion of man and civil religion are preferable to the other forms.

Religion of the Citizen

The "religion of the citizen" is the most ancient form of worship; it unites obligation to the divine and obligation to the community. The citizen's religion makes no claim to universality, but is inscribed in particular communities; from Rousseau's description of it, one may infer that he regards this as an early type of religious identity that developed in tribal cultures or perhaps ancient empires. Rousseau believes his type of religion gives rise to longstanding conflict between nations: "Two peoples alien to one another and almost always enemies could not long recognize the same master: Two armies engaged in battle with one another could not obey the same chief. Thus from national divisions resulted polytheism, and from it theological and civil intolerance which is naturally the same."[65] The gods represented the community's best and most fundamental principles, and the rulers of the state spoke on behalf of the gods.[66] This theology supports the notion that legislation is both civil and divine. The gods and the laws they establish necessarily adhere to particular communities. This meant, Rousseau argues, that all wars were wars of religion: "Every State, since it had its own cult as well as its government drew no distinction between its Gods and its laws. Political war was also Theological."[67] To expand the state was to expand the kingdom of the state's gods; moreover, by unifying the gods and the laws, war represented a fundamental conflict between ways of life in which there could be no compromise, only submission.

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[65] Rousseau, *Social Contract,* 142.

[66] An example of this kind of religion and conflict is the relationship between the ancient Hebrews and the Philistines. After defeating the people of Israel and capturing the Ark of the Covenant, the Philistines placed the ark in the temple of their own god. See I Samuel 5.

[67] Rousseau, *Social Contract,* 143.

The religion of the citizen may evoke deep commitments from the people, and provide a foundation for a very strong sense of identity and obligation, but it is antithetical to any kind of political diversity. This form of ancient civic religion claims that the laws are sacred revelations from the gods; thus, war is a contest between the gods as well as between human beings. The outcome of a war reflects on the whole of a culture. Military victory or defeat takes on moral, theological, and political significance. Because this religion regards war as a contest between gods as well as men, war provides an answer about what the gods regard as true and noble. Rousseau points out that this disposition was common among the ancient Greeks: "The Greeks' fancy of rediscovering their Gods among barbarian peoples came from their fancy of also regarding themselves as these peoples' natural sovereigns."[68] By claiming that the barbarian deities were simply the Greek deities by another name, the Greeks did not express a notion of equality or brotherhood, but instead asserted that the Greek Gods had acted as a sort of advance guard, preparing the way for Greek rule. By identifying themselves and Hellenistic culture with barbarian gods, the Greeks claimed a measure of divinity for themselves. The worship they demanded from the barbarians was that they sacrifice their political freedom. In the context of the religion of the citizen, conversion is accomplished only through political domination.

With respect to pity, this form of religion confines the notion of obligation to those within the particular state. Those outside the state do not worship the same gods, do not understand or obey the laws of these gods, and therefore cannot invoke duties or obligations from those inside the state. Instead of opening citizens to the concept of

[68] Ibid.

shared humanity and shared suffering that transcends the particular community, the religion of the citizen "regards everything outside the single Nation which adheres to it as infidel, alien, barbarous; it extends the rights and duties of man only as far as its altars."[69] The result, therefore, is an understanding of self that is co-terminus with one's particular community and irreconcilably at odds with the outside world. The citizen's religion supports a kind of pity, but only the aspects of pity related to particular and reciprocal human affections.[70] Its effects are not significantly different from the effects of domestic law; if anything, the religion of the citizens radicalizes the commitment to the state and suppresses pity towards those outside of it. Rousseau denounces this tendency in no uncertain terms:

> [Religious identity] is furthermore bad when, becoming exclusive and tyrannical, it makes a people bloodthirsty and intolerant; so that it breathes only murder and massacre, and believes it performs a holy deed in killing whoever does not accept its Gods. This places such a people in a natural state of war with all others, which is most prejudicial to its own security.[71]

Thus, while the state can legitimately claim a right to self-preservation and military defense, Rousseau's teachings do not support an understanding of national identity that defines itself in purely oppositional terms that require the destruction of other communities in order to assert one's own legitimacy. The religion of the citizen wholly opposes the humanitarian aspects of pity, and fosters an understanding of national identity that lends itself to ideological wars and tyranny over other communities. It is not, therefore, a suitable religion for a state built on principles of consent, self-governance, and the dignity of human choice.

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[69] Ibid., 146.

[70] Masters, *Political Philosophy*, 49-50.

[71] Rousseau, *Social Contract,* 147.

Religion of the Priest

The "religion of the priest" reverses the priorities found in the religion of the citizen. Like the religion of the citizen, it demands relentless devotion and teaches a sense of superior identity, but builds them around a spiritual rather than political identity. This spiritual identity transcends political and geographic boundaries, thereby leading to conflicting spiritual and political obligations. Rousseau identifies political turmoil as the dominant feature of the "religion of the priest." The religion of the priest divides political and spiritual loyalties. Rousseau identifies Jesus as the founder of this practice: "Jesus came to establish a spiritual kingdom on earth; which, by separating the theological from the political system, led to the State's ceasing to be one, and caused the intestine divisions which have never ceased to convulse Christian peoples."[72] Jesus taught his disciples that his kingdom was not of this world. Human beings from any political community could accept the authority of this spiritual kingdom and should seek to obey its commands, even when they conflict with those of civil authorities. Jesus' followers, not content with quiet service to their spiritual ruler, formed very concrete and temporal religious institutions. Priestly leadership of this spiritual kingdom assumed a markedly physical presence in the world, wielding spiritual, financial, and even military influence over civil authorities.[73]

In addition to these problems, the sacramental theology of the Christian Church equipped religious leaders with a public and symbolic way of proclaiming whether or not civil leaders were in communion with the church. The Church's power over the Eucharist

[72] Ibid., 144.

[73] Ibid., 145.

gave spiritual authorities a mechanism to coerce civil officials into submission, but could not decisively resolve the tension. Rival claims to authority between church and state produced a "perpetual conflict of jurisdiction which has made any good polity impossible in Christian States, and no one has ever succeeded in settling the question of which of the two, the master or the priest, one is obliged to obey."[74] Even in Protestant states like England where kings claimed religious authority, religion constrained political behavior, and the king's legitimacy depended on clerical support.[75] Kings, though they claimed to be the head of the church, merely perpetuated existing religious traditions; they had no power to substantively change religious forms.[76]

The religion of the priest inhibits and even prevents the development of pity by fracturing the way people understand themselves and obligation. Pity, although it abstracts from the self, is closely related to bodily needs, and the sensation of pleasure and pain. For it to work effectively, people need a clear sense of what is good or pleasant for themselves before they can relate to the experience of suffering in another. But, as the discussion of the religion of the citizen indicates, political community plays a significant role in shaping the understanding of self and other. The citizen's religion emphasizes concepts of the self as it is defined solely through a specific political community to the exclusion of all those outside it. The religion of the priest, on the other hand, transcends the particular community and claims the authority to impose its own distinct obligations. In effect, the religion of the priest divides the self, separating it into a political and a religious being, and then elevates the obligations of the soul over the obligations to

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid.

physical and bodily commitment. Physical torment may even be regarded as a spiritual good; this detracts from the salutary effects of pity.

These effects could be seen as an antidote to the problem of the citizen's religion. By emphasizing a spiritual rather than an earthly community, the religion of the priest creates a scenario in which people have obligations to a particular community as well as obligations to fellow believers. Priestly religion's temporal institutions and meddling in the working of civil authority vitiate the notion that this is genuinely a spiritual religion. The enduring struggle in Christian cultures between religious and civil authority indicates that this form of religion obscures the hierarchy of obligation. The religion of the priest creates a serious division; this form of religion, Rousseau writes, "by giving men two legislations, two chiefs, two fatherlands, subjects [people] to contradictory duties and prevents their being at once devout and Citizens. It results in a sort of mixed and unsociable right which has no name."[77] Human beings remain in an unresolved contradiction with themselves—torn between a political self and a religious self. This destroys social unity and puts human beings in contradiction with themselves; such institutions are, in Rousseau's estimation, worthless.[78]

Religion of Man

The *Social Contract* speaks very briefly about the religion of man, also calling it the Christianity of the Gospel. One sense in which this form of religion may be a truer Christianity is that it is more closely limited to the spiritual realm. It influences social life, but refrains from seeking involvement in temporal institutions or authority. Rousseau

[77] Rousseau, *Social Contract*, 146-147.

[78] Ibid., 147.

describes it as follows: "Without Temples, without altars, without rites, limited to the purely internal cult of the Supreme God and the eternal duties of morality."[79] Unconcerned with the political, the religion of man emphasizes the individual's relationship with God and humanitarian dimensions of pity. Because it so heavily emphasizes universal human obligations and lacks temporal institutions, the religion of man is unsuitable as a state-authorized religion:

> But this Religion, since it has no particular relation to the body politic, leaves the laws with only the force they derive from themselves without adding any other force to them, and hence one of the great bonds of particular societies remains without effect. What is more; far from attaching the Citizens' hearts to the State, it detaches them from it as from all earthly things.[80]

The religion of man's forbearance regarding particular attachments is, in Rousseau's estimation, sublime. Some people may be properly suited to be followers in this faith, and capable of avoiding the pitfall of being attached to no one by claiming attachment to all. For some, this detachment enables a sincere form of worship, and the expression of humanitarian pity. Such people are truly exceptional; many who claim spiritual detachment from the physical realm and from particular communities are doing little but stifling pity and denying their dependence on others. For those who honestly acknowledge attachment to political life there must be some alternative.

Civil Religion

One plausible alternative is the religious teaching Rousseau implements for the state in the *Social Contract*. Rousseau begins his positive remarks about civil religion

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[79] Ibid., 146.

[80] Rousseau, *Social Contract*, 147. See also, Fred H. Willhoite, Jr. "Rousseau's Political Religion," *Review of Politics* 27 no. 4 (Oct 1965), 512.

with a statement of constraint: "The right which the social pact gives the Sovereign over the subjects does not, as I have said, exceed the bounds of public utility. Subjects therefore only owe the Sovereign an account of their opinions insofar as those opinions matter to the community."[81] The state's religion is to be guided by the standard of public utility. This conveys a dual concern; first, that religious identity and obligation work cooperatively with political identity and obligation, and, second, that a particular theology not become a marker of an exclusive or preferred status within the state.[82] It may be possible for multiple religious expressions to hold common teachings on matters relating to the community. State-issued dogma, therefore, is presented under the banner of sociability, not religious teaching.

State-issued religious teachings are both prescriptive and prohibitive, but they are to be simple, precise, and few. Dogmas are part of a rationally instituted religion, but characterizing them as simple and unencumbered with "explanations or commentary" has the effect of placing them closer to sentiment than to systematic theology.[83] The positive teaching that Rousseau proposes requires citizens to affirm the following ideas: "The existence of the powerful, intelligent, beneficent, prescient, and provident Deity, the life to come, the happiness of the just, the punishment of the wicked, the sanctity of the social Contract and the laws."[84] These teachings leave room for a plurality of religious forms in the context of one state. Citizens may worship God as they see fit, but the social

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[81] Rousseau, *Social Contract*, 149-150.

[82] "Now that there no longer is and no longer can be an exclusive national Religion, one must tolerate all those which tolerate others insofar as their dogmas contain nothing contrary to the duties of the Citizen." Ibid., 151.

[83] Rousseau, *Social Contract*, 150. Felicity Baker, "Eternal Vigilance: Rousseau's Death Penalty," *Rousseau and Liberty*, ed. Robert Wokler (New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), 169.

[84] Rousseau, *Social Contract*, 150-151.

repercussions of their faith must support the regime by emphasizing the benefits of justice and the privileged position of civil law. The only prohibitive dogma is that intolerance is forbidden. While this flows naturally from the rejection of the religions of the citizen and of the priest, Rousseau goes out of his way to emphasize this point. His argument is worth quoting in full:

> Those who distinguish between civil and theological intolerance are mistaken, in my opinion. The two intolerances are inseparable. It is impossible to live in peace with people one believes to be damned; to love them would be to hate God who punishes them; one must absolutely bring them back [to the fold] or torment them. Wherever theological intolerance is allowed, it is impossible for it not to have some civil effect; and as soon as it does, the Sovereign is no longer Sovereign, even in the temporal sphere: from then on Priests are the true masters; Kings are but their officers.[85]

Establishing tolerance as an inviolable principle avoids the pitfalls of both the religion of the citizen and the religion of the priest. The citizen's religion produces civil intolerance—the belief that those outside the state serve neither the gods nor the laws, and should therefore be punished. The religion of the priest, as the history of Europe illustrates, produces rival institutions that each claim spiritual orthodoxy; religious identity may overlap with state boundaries, but it may not. This leads to violent conflict between religious and political rivals. Tolerance and faith in divine justice avoid these dangers by establishing the goods affirmed in the social contract—preservation of the laws, concern for fellow citizens—as obvious outcomes of religious devotion.

Principles of toleration, therefore, are compatible with the principles of pity. Toleration is learned first in the city, requiring an openness towards one's fellow citizens. The implications of this teaching do not end at the city walls. Rousseau's teachings on war help to show ways in which these principles are applied to those outside the

[85] Ibid., 151.

community. Difference of regime and difference of creed are not among the legitimate reasons for war that Rousseau provides. For the state to remain internally consistent, it must extend civil and theological toleration towards its neighbors. To war against or seek the destruction of other communities on the basis of religious identity or constitutional structure is to attack the notion of self-rule and individual choice. The anarchy of the international realm cannot be ameliorated by the imposition of an idealistic regime or hegemonic state. States can ameliorate international anarchy by accepting the inevitability of a plurality of civil identities. The safest foundation for peace is not an exclusive account of the best regime, but a recognition that consent and shared appreciation for human dignity are the proper foundation for the chains that political order and authority impose on social life.[86] This is not to diminish the importance of distinct states or obligation to particular community, but it is an insistence on the necessity of pluralism in order to protect the basis for sovereignty. Civil religion affirms the possibility of two levels of pity or empathy towards others based on shared human sentience. One level, the stronger one, is formed by the connection between individuals in particular states. The other exists among all people, and can be experienced through a shared commitment to pluralism. Civil religion, therefore, deliberately acknowledges that

[86]Michael Williams identifies both the need for pluralism and the need for states to construct limiting principles to constrain the territory and the conduct of independent states. He expresses the somber hopefulness of this position in the words of Isaiah Berlin: "Perhaps the best one can do is try to promote some kind of equilibrium, necessarily unstable, between the different aspirations of different groups of human beings—at the very least to prevent them from attempting to exterminate each other, and, so far as possible, to promote the maximum practical degree of sympathy and understanding, never likely to be complete, between them. But this is not *prima facia,* a wildly exciting programme: a liberal sermon which recommends machinery designed to prevent people from doing too much harm, giving each human group sufficient room to realize its own idiosyncratic, unique, particular ends without too much interference with the ends of others, it is not a passionate battle-cry to inspire men to sacrifice and martyrdom or heroic feats. Yet if it were adopted, it might yet prevent mutual destruction, and in the end, preserve the world." Williams, *Realist Tradition*, 132. For a discussion of pluralism as a norm of international politics see, Robert Jackson, *The Global Covenant: Human Conduct in a World of States*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) 22-23, 42-43.

human obligations transcend particular states. Healthy states are those that acknowledge the importance of both types of obligation. While the two exist in tension with one another, the tension must be preserved if the idea of community is to accurately reflect the human experience.[87]

Conclusion

The *Social Contract*, therefore, is a variety of second image theorizing about international politics in that it addresses the problems of international relations through domestic politics. Rousseau's approach does not, however, attempt to transform the members of the international realm into a particular type of state. Rather, he argues for principled institutions that limit the scope of state authority and remind citizens that shared humanity creates bonds even with those outside of their own community. Rousseau grounds political authority in individual consent and prohibits violence as a means of extending the state. Legitimate political authority derives from the consent of the ruled; states undermine the foundation of their authority when they disregard consent and attempt to rule by force. War's limited political function is to protect the way of life within a particular community. Rousseau's teaching on war does not permit it to be used to create a balance of power or to project national greatness over other communities. This understanding of war assumes that states can limit national *amour-propre* and come to understand their own good and political success without referring to the gains other states make. This teaching on domestic politics is transformative in that Rousseau advocates a way of thinking about political life in which the good of one's own community is not

[87] Katrin Froese, "Beyond Liberalism: The Moral Community of Rousseau's Social Contract," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 34 (Sept, 2001), 580.

necessarily at odds with the good of another community. The *Social Contract* attempts to inscribe these principles in the sentiments of its citizens. One of the most important ways the state acts on the sentiments of its citizens is through religion. The religion of the *Social Contract* also supports a dual emphasis on obligation to one's state and attachment to humanity more broadly. This civil religion strongly emphasizes the importance of particular political communities and at the same time calls citizens' to recognize as valuable the life and wellbeing of those outside their community.

Rousseau's argument builds a case for institutional restraints that limit the conduct of foreign policy. The idea of constraint permeates the *Social Contract*; Rousseau describes his project as an attempt to justify the political institutions that bind people together. In order for these social chains to be acceptable, the chains themselves must be created with an eye towards legitimacy. Both the "Second Discourse" and the *Social Contract* indicate that legitimacy depends on mutually accepting shared human dignity and respecting this dignity by establishing authority based on willing consent.

This perspective provides a rejoinder to some of the scholarly critiques leveled against Rousseau's international thought. One major criticism that Kenneth Waltz, F.H. Hinsley, and Raymond Aron express is that Rousseau's proposals are so impractical that they are impossible to implement.[88] Others, like Stanley Hoffmann and David Fidler argue that if the policies of the *Social Contract* prevailed they would produce a state system of either unstable isolated republics or (somewhat ironically) one in which states exhibited militant nationalism.[89]

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[88] Waltz, *Man, the State, and War,* 181-183. F.H. Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace,* 55.

[89] Stanley Hoffmann and David Fidler, *Rousseau on International Relations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), lxii, lxv.

With respect to the practicability of Rousseau's emphasis on small states governed by a general will, my argument supports a two-fold response. First, the practical reality is that the international realm does include small states, and a theory of international relations that speaks to the role of small powers is an important contribution to the study of international politics. In the second place, Hoffmann and Fidler are correct to point out that the international realm cannot be re-made into a world of small states. Great powers are likely permanent fixtures of the international realm. Regardless of disparities in power, the question of how great powers *should* understand their influence over small powers is an important one. Rousseau's standards for legitimate domestic authority—consent and mutual recognition of human dignity— begin with evaluating the role of war and force as foundations of obligation and authority. Coercion is an illegitimate claim to authority between individual people; it is only more so when used to compel the submission of entire communities. Rousseau's argument does not eliminate the will or the force of great powers in international politics, but it supports the idea that consent is the most durable form of authority, it is the one that most consistent with human dignity. Consent may never be perfectly attained, especially between states, it remains and an important standard of legitimacy and obligation. States find themselves less obliged by laws to which they have not consented.[90]

A stronger critique of what Rousseau hopes to accomplish targets the difficulty of reaching an acceptable international status quo rather than the difficulty of building small states. Rousseau thinks that by limiting the conditions of political authority and teaching states to understand politics apart from relative gains states will learn a sort of

[90] See Hedley Bull on consent vs. consensus in international law: *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* 3d ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 150-152.

international contentment. Raymond Aron's calls this idea "peace by satisfaction." Peace by satisfaction is a hypothetical condition in the international realm in which states live in peace with one another because they accept their own status quo as the best position for themselves and other states. This hypothetical condition exists when states are content with their positioning the international realm and plan to live peaceably in the status quo.[91] Aron admits that such a condition is not impossible; there might be a time when states do correspond to nations, and these states are satisfied with their territorial possessions. In this position, leaders attempt only to protect their territorial borders and preserve the cohesive identity of their people. There are two necessary conditions for this international environment to prevail. The first is that political rulers must be satisfied with consent as the one principle of legitimate rule. Rulers must be willing to suspend the types of satisfaction that derive from the violent struggles over land, human resources, and rule by force. The second, and more problematic condition is that the distribution of resources and territory remains satisfactory. If even one state becomes discontented or ambitious, this is enough to push the international system back into a state of war.[92] Aron despairs of these conditions ever taking place: "Universal peace by universal consent and mutual confidence does not seem to me effectively possible if the political units do not find a substitute for security by force."[93] This position shows the problem with Rousseau's argument, but it does not answer Rousseau's concern for how relationships

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[91] Raymond Aron, *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations,* (Malabar: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Co, 1981), 160.

[92] Aron, *Peace and War*, 161. This is parallel to Kenneth Waltz's argument about the uncertainty of the international realm. Waltz demonstrates that Rousseau is aware of international uncertainty, but he fails to discuss limits Rousseau puts forward in the hope of constraining conflict. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War,* 181.

[93] Aron, *Peace and War*, 161.

between states can be legitimate. While Rousseau agrees that security may depend on the use of violence, he insists that legitimate political authority cannot be grounded in force. Aron, therefore, highlights a practical problem, but he does not deny the truth of Rousseau's account of authority.

Stanley Hoffmann and David Fidler's objection to the nationalistic tendencies in Rousseau's thought is, in some ways, more formidable. This position ostensibly takes Rousseau's idea seriously, and searches out future consequences. I will explore the role of the nation more fully in the next chapter, but for the time being it is important to recall that legitimate governance depends on consent. By Rousseau's account, there are no natural slaves, and conquest is not a legitimate claim to authority. Any nation claiming to model its practices on Rousseau's teaching cannot consistently invoke Rousseau to justify national expansion as a good in itself. The nation can be understood as a good when it rules and defends those who consent to be its members; any attempt to extend this authority by force or violence beyond the pale of consent is a threat to the very basis of national sovereignty. Such actions would be at odds with the foundational principles of the political sovereign. Invoking the idea of the nation as the basis for conquest is not only contrary to the laws of nature, it would as Yuichi Aiko points out, call into question the authority of the domestic regime.[94]

Rousseau explicitly takes nature as his model of freedom for both the individual and the state. Individuals are free to the extent that they self-sufficiently rule themselves.

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[94] Yuichi Aiko, "Rousseau and Saint-Pierre's Peace Project: A Critique of 'History of International Relations Theory,'" *Classical Theory in International Relations* edited by Beate Jahn, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 98, 99. The example of Russia and the Ukraine may be a contemporary illustration of an act of conquest that calls into question the broader legitimacy of a government. Russia's seizure of the Crimea would, from Rousseau's point of view, raises questions about the basis of Russia's own government: Does Putin's regime govern by consent, or is force typical of his regime?

Self-sufficiency and self-rule also apply as measures of national freedom. When states fail to govern themselves according to the laws of self-preservation, they call into question their own sovereign independence. Without an alternative to the nation-state, the fact that certain nations abuse their power does not disprove the need for particular communities that reflect local interests and obligation. Rather, these instances illustrate the need for stronger institutional restraints on the abuse of state authority as well as the importance of clearly defined and politically attainable national objectives. Such restraints might serve to insulate communities from rivalries in the outside world. Insulation may create the time necessary for a people to develop a collective identity and national interest that reflects the character of those within the community instead of the wills of outside forces. Changes within these elements of the international structure diminish the rivalry of the international realm and show the possibility for increased levels of order despite the prevalence of anarchy.

CHAPTER FIVE

Rousseau and the National Interest

The *Social Contract* expresses political principles. It is difficult to translate arguments from principle into political institutions, even for Rousseau. For example, on the two occasions when Rousseau writes to particular states (Corsica and Poland), he does not refer them to the *Social Contract* to resolve their problems. He speaks to their particular political context and attempts to work through their existing political institutions. This is not to say that Rousseau forgets about his own political theory; he holds onto the principles of self-sufficiency, consent, and self-governance, and he reminds his audience that in order to uphold these principles they must understand and embrace political limits. Rousseau's writings to Corsica and to Poland are both interesting in relation to the *Social Contract*, but his advice to Poland is explicitly concerned with international politics. For this reason, I focus on this text as a continuation of the *Social Contract's* discussion of political limits, particularly limits that develop in response to international politics.

Rousseau's *Considerations on the Government of Poland* is one of his less studied works. Willmoore Kendall's scholarly introduction to his 1972 translation of the text provides a helpful overview of the historical context and builds a case for seriously considering the philosophic weight of a text contributed from Rousseau's retirement.[1]

[1] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Government of Poland,* trans. Willmoore Kendall, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1985) ix-xxxix. When I cite this volume, I only refer to Kendall's interpretive essay. All quotations from the *Government of Poland* are drawn from the Gourevitch translation.

Kendall's work, however, is an introduction; it points to broad themes, but offers little by way of textual analysis. This text is one of only a few in Rousseau's corpus that speaks directly to the problems of international politics. I come to this text asking how Rousseau's constitutional arguments address the overwhelming threat Poland faces from Russia. I argue that this work domestic institutional change illustrates way in which internal politics can address the competition of the international realm.

Because international politics occurs among governments, the way a government understands itself has bearing on how it engages the outside realm. In what follows, I argue that the *Government of Poland* speaks to the formation and understanding of a national interest, as it exists in the international realm.This interest contains both aspirational principles and actionable policies. The essential components of this interest are national independence and self-governance, political institutions that reflect the character of the people, and a governing system that supports the opportunity to participate in rule. These objectives are aspirational in that they require constitutional changes; they are actionable in that Rousseau suggests changes that he believes are within the existing abilities of the government.

The *Government of Poland* supports three inferences regarding the national interest. First, a national interest is a necessary and potentially good feature of political life. As Rousseau argues in the *Discourse on Political Economy*, local or regional interests are a necessary feature of human association because human beings are more closely attached to those who are near, who share a community and social burdens.[2] National interest is an important example of local attachment because the state represents

[2] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Political Economy* in *The Social Contract and other Later Political Writings,* trans. Victor Gourevitch (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 15.

a conscious instantiation of common interest, and is in a position to protect such interests through military force and political institutions. Second, national interest is something that can and should be cultivated through the insight of state leaders. Finally, Rousseau does not treat national interest as synonymous with an unscrupulous *raison d'état,* but as a type of principled interest that empowers as well as constrains international behavior.[3]

My discussion of the national interest begins with an overview of the historical context and the critical issues surrounding the *Considerations on the Government of Poland.* After exploring these underlying details, I analyze the sections of the *Government of Poland* that Rousseau indicates relate to Poland's relationship with outside powers. Finally, I turn to a discussion of Rousseau's argument about the national interest and how it relates to contemporary literature on the role of the national interest within international politics.

Historical Context

The story of eighteenth-century Poland is a lesson in the dangers of the balance of power system.[4] Poland, situated between Russia to the east and Austria and Prussia to the west, came to function as a geographic buffer between the three great powers of central Europe. Faults in Poland's governing institutions amplified the vulnerabilities of Poland's

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[3] Several scholars argue that Rousseau's advocacy of patriotism, if it were actually applied, would result in violent and competing forms of nationalism. While conquest only for the sake of the nation may not be as refined as the notion of *raison d'état*, the nationalistic idea that the state is the highest good and must be defended or expanded regardless of the human costs, is similar to the justifications offered by *raison d'état* diplomats. For this critique of Rousseau, see the following authors: Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 179-181. Stanley Hoffmann and David Fidler, *Rousseau on International Relations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), lxv. Andrew Linklater, *Men and Citizens in the Theory of International Relations* (London: Macmillan Publishers, 1982), 25.

[4] Paul W. Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics 1763-1848* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 10-19.

geographic location. Rousseau characterizes Poland's government in the following words: "[It is] a great body made up of a large number of dead, and a small number of disjointed limbs, with all of its movements almost independent of one another, far from having a common end, cancel each other…which gets paralyzed with every effort it tries to make…"[5] Discord within the branches of government invited exploitation and incursion from the great powers. For example, Russia massed troops in Polish territory, and violated Polish territorial sovereignty at will. During the Seven Years' War, Poland's declaration of neutrality provided no impediment to the warring states of Europe, which used Polish territory as a major theatre for their campaigns. Russia and Prussia demonstrated the fullness of their contempt for Polish autonomy by meddling in the royal election. Through these efforts, Russia successfully established Stanislas Augustus, a partisan of Catherine II, as the king of Poland.[6]

Poland's chaotic domestic political institutions contributed to its vulnerability. There was no single culprit for Poland's domestic political problems—issues of social class, institutional incapacity, and regional faction precluded government from functioning with decisive unity. The hereditary nobility (*szlachta*) was the only class regarded as Polish citizens.[7] They vehemently defended their privileges, but experienced declining levels of wealth and struggled to satisfy the obligations of aristocratic leadership. The nobles filled the seemingly important constitutional role of directly electing the king. The coronation oath, however, severely limited the monarch's

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[5] Rousseau, *Government of Poland,* in *The Social Contract and other Later Political Writings,* trans. Victor Gourevitch (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 178.

[6] Schroeder, *Transformation of European Politics,* 12.

[7] Marc F. Plattner, "Rousseau and the Origins of Nationalism," *The Legacy of Rousseau,* edited by Clifford Orwin and Nathan Tarcov, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 195.

authority. The Polish king lacked authority of taxation, had no institutional check on the nobility, and possessed only a meager standing army.[8] The Polish legislature consisted of elected representatives (*nonces*) commissioned to fulfill very explicit instructions by their regional constituents (*dietines*). In order to pass legislation, the constitution required the legislature to reach a unanimous decision. When proposed legislation failed to satisfy the stipulations within a representative's mandate, *dietines* expected their representative to exercise the *liberum veto*, and reject the legislation. Any representative could exercise the veto at will; representatives even went so far as to veto the act of legislative deliberation itself.[9] This hamstrung the legislature and prevented the assembly from functioning as an authoritative law-giving body.

There was, however, a provision in the Polish Constitution for an emergency procedure called confederation. Unlike the normal legislative assembly, confederations operated by majority rule, temporarily suspending the *liberum veto.* The disorder of Poland's constitution meant that emergency government could be much more decisive than the rule of law under non-emergency conditions. The limitation to the system was that confederations spoke authoritatively only for the regions of Poland that submitted delegates. Thus, emergency policies did not necessarily produce a concerted national response.

In 1768 a group of Polish-Catholic nobles gathered at the Fortress of Bar and formed what is remembered as the Bar Confederation. Their most noteworthy actions were the initiation of a widespread insurgency against King Stanislas Augustus and a

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[8] Denise Schaeffer, "Realism, Rhetoric and the Possibility of Reform in Rousseau's *Considerations on the Government of Poland," Polity* 42, no. 3 (2010), 379. Schroeder, *Transformation of European Politics,* 11.

[9] Kendall, *Government of Poland*, xxi.

series of proposed revisions to the Polish Constitution.[10] As insurgents, the participating nobles represented the territory under their control, but the convention could hardly be understood as fully representing all of Poland.[11] The looming threat from the Russian supporters of King Stanislas made the convention's attempts to improve Poland's domestic constitution only more urgent. Count Michal Wielhorski served as the Confederation's delegate to France. He secured the support of some French troops and solicited the work of several French philosophers to aid the Bar Confederation in developing constitutional reforms.[12] Two philosophers submitted proposals—Gabriel Bonnot Mably (Abbé Mably) and Jean Jacques Rousseau. The correspondence between Wielhorski and Rousseau is lost, but Wielhorski's own writings indicate that if he was influenced by one of these philosophers, his preference was not for Rousseau.[13] Rousseau penned his recommendations after Mably, and there is some indication that he read Mably's work before offering his own advice. Rousseau devoted six months to studying Poland's Constitution as well as Wielhorski's description of Poland's troubles before he submitted his work in 1771.[14] This text proved to be one of Rousseau's final ventures into political philosophy. Nevertheless, even the Bar Confederation, which wanted serious changes to the constitution, largely ignored Rousseau's seemingly minor revisions. The

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[10] Schroeder, *Transformation of European Politics,* 13.

[11] Rousseau, *Government of Poland,* trans. Willmore Kendall, x.

[12] Daniel Zachary Stone, "Polish Politics and National Reform 1775-1788." Order No. 7230452, Indiana University, 1972, http://ezproxy.baylor.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/302640927?accountid=7014 (accessed April 1, 2014), 35.

[13] Stone observes that Wielhorski's argument in his *Essai sure le rétablissement de l'ancienne forme du gouvernment de Pologne* is focused primarily on institutional processes and pays little attention to the cultural arguments Rousseau offers. [13] Stone, "Polish Politics and National Reform," 35, 36.

[14] Denise Schaeffer, "Realism, Rhetoric and the Possibility of Reform in Rousseau's Considerations on the Government of Poland," *Polity* 42, no. 3 (July 2010): 378, n.

Bar Confederation's reform efforts were ultimately fruitless. Russia suppressed the insurrection and subsequently divided large swathes of Polish territory between itself, Austria, and Prussia in an attempt to preserve stability among the great powers of central Europe.[15]

Return to Foundational Principles

The historical context that prompted Rousseau's work supports the notion that the *Government of Poland* is a text that can be mined for implications on international politics. In reading the text from an international perspective, my interpretation is not that the *Government of Poland* shows a way for Poland to overpower its oppressors and escape the tyranny of the great powers. Nor do I find a text that speaks only to the survival of "Poland" as it might exist in the hearts of defeated Poles. My position is somewhere between these two: Rousseau teaches the Poles to understand and protect the idea of Poland, allowing them to re-evaluate their practical strategy for national defense. Rousseau is aware of Poland's dire position and claims only that his advice *might* succeed in preserving Poland's freedom.

Rousseau divides the text into fifteen sections and provides a subtitle for each one. Rousseau's concern for Poland's external difficulties appear at both ends of the text: the "State of the Question" and the "Conclusion" speak directly to the imminent Russian threat and the difficulty of surviving the treacherous currents of international relations.[16]

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[15] Schroeder, *Transformation of European Politics,* 15-19.

[16] "While Poland, this depopulated, devastated, and oppressed region, wide open to its aggressors, at the height of its misfortunes and its anarchy, still displays all the fire of youth; and it dares to call for a government and laws, as if it had only just been born. It is in chains, and debates the ways to remain free!" See also, "You will never be free so long as a single Russian soldier remains in Poland, and you will always be under threat of losing your freedom so long as Russia continues to meddle in your affairs." Rousseau, *Government of Poland,* 178 and 255-256.

Structuring the text in this way has the effect of reminding readers that internal reforms are conditioned by external realities. Russian aggression gave rise to the conditions that prompted the Bar Confederation; furthermore Poland's geographic location means that its domestic regime must take international politics into account. Efforts to reform Poland's government cannot fail to account for the objective limitations imposed by the international political context. Aware of these limitations, Rousseau claims he has not divorced political possibility from practical reality, even the realities of international threats.[17] He offers recommendations for domestic reforms that respond to both internal political problems and international threats. As the historical context illustrates, the two problems are intertwined; both must be addressed if Poland is to find even a modicum of political stability.

The first three sections of the *Government of Poland* introduce the core of Rousseau's argument: the Poles' hope for maintaining a free community depends on their ability to distinguish themselves politically from their neighbors, and wholly devote themselves to the freedom of their own community. A constitution reflects an existing social reality; it binds a people in the pursuit of a common end under agreed upon laws. A constitution serves as a form of institutional demarcation. While it follows rather than creates a community, a constitution has a role in the preservation and maintenance of a nation's identity and objectives. In this sense the Poles' Constitution is a means to the end of political freedom.[18]

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[17] "I even admit that however odd others may find these ideas, I myself see in them nothing that is not well adapted to the human heart, good, practicable, especially in Poland…" Ibid, 259.

[18] For these reasons, a nation can become a value of itself. The active creation of communal identity and norms generates commitment to the state and to fellow citizens, and thereby takes on a significance that transcends the territory and structures that are the visible signs of the state. See Michael C.

Count Wielhorski and the other Polish reformers are in danger of misdiagnosing the cause of their political problems. They recognize the inefficiencies of the Polish Constitution and infer that improved administration is the best way to escape their political crisis. Rousseau cautions them against the belief that constitutional transformation is the sufficient condition of sound administration and political liberty. Poland's leaders need to recognize the importance of their own political history and operate within the tradition that has thus far preserved their liberty. Constitutional changes must be made in light of what can be practically accomplished within an existing political tradition. Rousseau's advice in this regard at first appears to be conservative. He writes, "Brave Poles, beware; beware lest in wanting to be too well, you only make your situation worse. In thinking about what you want to acquire, do not forget what you might lose. Correct the abuses of your constitution, if it is possible to do so but do not despise the constitution that made you what you are."[19] Historically, the Poles enjoyed freedom under their existing constitution; they should not cast it aside as though it were the central cause of their problems. The Polish reformers, driven to action by Russia's aggressive posture, have grown weary in their struggle for freedom. The desire to replace entirely the existing constitution indicates to Rousseau that in their weariness, the members of the Bar Confederation are attempting to effect political transformation with parchment alone. Reformers may be falling prey to the illusion that a new constitution will quickly generate the stability and freedom for which they long. Rousseau rebukes the confederation in the following words: "I am afraid that they want things that are

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Williams, *The Realist Tradition and the Limits of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 78-79.

[19] Rousseau, *Government of Poland,* 179.

contradictory. Repose and freedom seem to me incompatible; one has to choose."[20] The completion of a constitution is not the beginning of political rest, but the framework within which the ongoing struggle to maintain vital of political institutions must take place. This rebuke reminds the Poles that a good constitution generates action and participation, not repose. A constitution establishes public institutions through which citizens develop and renew their community, as well as participate in their own rule. It is foolish to expect the product of a political convention to generate durable order in the absence of a strong community.

Although Rousseau couches his argument as a defense of Poland's history and existing traditions, the way he suggests maintaining the traditions will requires radical transformation within state. Poland needs to accomplish more than improving its laws, it needs citizens that love and support the laws that rule them.[21] This more fundamental transformation requires a new way of thinking about community and civic obligation. Poland is struggling for freedom, not better administration. Characterizing Poland's struggle in terms of freedom rather than institutional design underscores the genuine problem the Bar Convention faces: its central task is to re-found Poland so that the people actively pursue both domestic and international freedom. This requires changing Poland's existing understanding of citizenship to include the whole population. Domestic freedom exists when all citizens, to one degree or another, can participate in self-governing political institutions.[22] International freedom exists when the governing institutions of a

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[20] Ibid, 178.

[21] Ibid, 179.

[22] Jeffrey Smith, "Nationalism, Virtue, and the Spirit of Liberty in Rousseau's 'Government of Poland,'" *The Review of Politics* 65 no. 3 (Summer 2003), 434.

particular state operate without being coerced by outside powers. Individual participation in civic institutions contributes to the pursuit of both kinds of freedom. By participating in their own governing institutions, individual citizens contribute to the strength and durability of their community. Participation attaches Poland's laws and institutions to the hearts of its citizens. Conscious attachment to the laws elevates the people from mere subjects of legislation to physical embodiments of constitutional principles. This expands the sense of responsibility for governance, and makes it difficult for outside powers to gain control by corrupting only a small portion of the population.

The way Rousseau presents these ideas to his audience has two significant effects. On the one hand, it provides a model of political change. Rousseau begins by identifying the importance of Poland's history of freedom. He believes that the advice he presents is consistent with this existing dimension of Polish identity. He then advocates expanding citizenship beyond the nobility as something that is consistent with the Polish tradition and useful for the preservation of liberty. On the other hand, this may also serve as a model of statesmanship for the Bar Confederation. He is teaching them how to introduce fundamental changes without appearing to destroy existing institutions.

Ancient Examples

Rousseau acknowledges the difficulty of statesmanship and simultaneously underscores the importance of widespread civic participation by turning to the examples of Moses, Lycurgus, and Numa. These mythic founders are recurring images for lawgivers in Rousseau's political writings and they illustrate the type of founding that

Poland needs.[23] They hold the title of founder not because they built cities, but because they transformed communities into distinct peoples. Poland does not need a new city or even more territory; rather, it needs a different way of understanding both itself and itself in relation to surrounding nations. By turning the discussion of state institutions to a consideration of ancient founders, Rousseau illustrates the deeper level of change Poland needs. Poland needs a lawgiver.

The Lawgiver

The lawgiver is a strange and problematic figure in Rousseau's political thought. The role of the lawgiver is to overcome the nature of individuals and unite each person into the community through the law.[24] From where, however, does the lawgiver come? On the one hand, the lawgiver is inside the community; he knows the people so well that he anticipates and institutionalizes their national character and their needs in the laws. On the other, the lawgiver rules by neither force nor reason; his authority takes on a quasi-divine character in that it speaks directly to human will without being mediated by rationality or coercion.[25] He does not impose the laws on the people, but develops the law

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[23] For Lycurgus, see Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile: or On Education,* trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 40 and Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and other Later Political Writings,* ed and trans. Victor Gourevitch (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Scholarly treatments of Moses, Lycurgus, and Numa focus on the domestic role of the lawgiver, and the paradoxical relationship between the lawgiver and the people. Rousseau's depiction of these mythic characters, particularly Numa and Lycurgus, seems heavily influenced by Plutarch. Plutarch also pairs them together, and emphasizes the divine aspect of their roles as lawgivers. See Plutarch, *Plutarch's Lives vol I,* trans. by John Dryden (New York: Random House, 2001) 101-106.

[24] Graeme Garrad, *Rousseau's Counter-Enlightenment: A Republican Critique of the* Philosophes, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003) 57.

[25] J.S. Maloy, "The Very Order of Things: Rousseau's Tutorial Republicanism," *Polity* 37, no 2 (April, 2005), 255.

as the people simultaneously will the law into being.[26] After these things are accomplished, the lawgiver disappears from the city.[27] The cycle of lawgiving results in a puzzling scenario: if the people will the law themselves, why do they need someone to give it to them? And if the lawgiver thoroughly knows the people, how is it that he takes on the quasi-divine role seemingly beyond the capacity of the citizens?

There are several reasonable approaches to interpreting and understanding the lawgiver. One possibility is that the problematic formulation of the lawgiver's role does not outline a political office so much as articulate the difficulty of developing a distinctively national law. An alternate view regards the lawgiver as an idealized role that Rousseau describes philosophically, and may attempt to model in the way he advises the Poles, but he neither overtly claims nor bestows the office on anyone.[28] A third possibility, along similar lines, is that it is an ideal for a political office; one may not rise to the level of a Moses or a Numa, but legislators can aspire to draw out a similar type of consensus and support from their own people.[29] All three formulations may be in part true, but my reading of the text emphasizes the second two possibilities, which

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[26] Rousseau, *Social Contract,* in *The Social Contract and other Later Political Writings,* trans. Victor Gourevitch (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 69.

[27] Gerrad, *Rousseau's Counter-Enlightenment*, 59.

[28] Schaeffer takes this position. Her research on the *Government of Poland* examines the nation as a thing of beauty. She contends that Rousseau's advice to Poles (and his other readers, for that matter) is an illustration of how one might come to love the beautiful. Schaeffer examines the educative dimension of the lawgiver's role to illustrate the difficulty of such a transformative education as well as the possibility for a nation to love what is good about itself. Human appetites cannot be immediately transformed; they must be gradually shifted and then re-built. The constitution Rousseau recommends re-orders existing preferences and conditions in an effort to change how these preferences manifest themselves politically. Rousseau would change how the Poles think about themselves in order to make them what they truly are. In this sense, Rousseau serves as the model of the true legislator. See "Realism, Rhetoric," 380-381, 389.

[29] Ibid, 387-390.

understand the work as practical as well as theoretical. Rousseau intends not merely to explain fundamental problems, but to improve political life.

Even in reading the lawgiver as an ideal type, it is important to recognize the lawgiver's effect on the community is practical. Rousseau describes the lawgiver's effect on the community in profound terms. The act of promulgating the law transforms the nature of the individual, making it complete only when engaging with other citizens. The individual citizen cannot return to the status of a self-sufficient individual, and surrounding nations cannot re-absorb the new community.[30] These lawgivers address the problem of individual *amour-propre* by turning the desire for individual recognition to the service of a common good. They deal with national *amour-propre* by teaching citizens to devote themselves to developing a nation that is independent from other communities and secure in its own identity. The lawgiver limits national *amour-propre* by directing the people's attention inward to cultivate the good of their own community without reference to other states' opinions on greatness or prestige. Part of a lawgiver's greatness, therefore, is the ability to found institutions that divert public attention from international opinion and create the possibility for the people to build their own national identity that is self-sufficient, free from the struggle for international recognition that besets other states.

Rousseau summarizes the accomplishments of Moses, Lycurgus, and Numa in the following words: "All of them sought bonds that might attach the Citizens to the fatherland and to one another, and they found them in distinctive practices, in religious

[30] Judith N. Shklar, *Men and Citizens: A Study of Rousseau's Social Theory* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 16.

ceremonies by which their very nature were always exclusive and national…"[31] Creating a new political identity has several practical effects. The laws and institutions each founder gives to his people become the basis for a national identity that is rooted in shared ideas and communal practices. The material dimensions of politics—wealth, property, and relative international power—are of less importance than the ideas that give rise to distinctive communal identity. Shared understandings of identity and justice, not physical resources, become the basis for the enduring success of each founders' community.

Moses

With this account of the lawgiver in mind, let us turn to the question of what the example of these lawgivers could teach Poland. Each of these founders emphasized ideas as the basis for political community and worked to develop political practices that inscribed these ideas in the psychology of his people. The conscious formation of a national identity had strong implications for the relationship between each founder's national community and the international realm. From the perspective of international politics, Moses' laws are the most noteworthy of the three. The people of Israel, Rousseau argues, were vagabonds. Mosaic law created a durable identity for a group of wanderers. *Deuteronomy* describes the effect of Mosaic law on the Hebrew people in the following way: "For thou *art* an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations of the earth."[32] "Peculiar" in this context is related to the idea of differentiating one group from

[31] Rousseau, *Government of Poland,* 181.

[32] Deuteronomy 14:2, KJV.

a mass of apparently similar things. The law established customs and a way of life that became so ingrained in Hebrew life that neither persecution nor exile could destroy their identity. Rousseau exalts Mosaic Law because it has preserved the Hebrew people after the loss of their territory and political rulers.

Lycurgus

Lycurgus' example conveys a similar message to Poland. Lycurgus transformed the Spartans into lovers of their city by causing them to devote constant attention to its laws. Rousseau writes, "[Lycurgus] did not leave [the Spartan people] a moment's respite to be by itself, and from this constant constraint, ennobled by its object, arose in it that ardent love of fatherland which was always the Spartans' strongest or rather their sole passion, and made them beings above humanity."[33]

Sparta's laws, while "iron yokes,"[34] were objects of devotion. Institutional strength is no reason for neglect. The constraint of the laws produced a passionate devotion to Spartan identity. As Plutarch writes, "To conclude, [Lycurgus] bred up his citizens in such a way that they neither would nor could live by themselves; they were to make themselves one with the public good…and devoted wholly to their country." [35] Lycurgus used the law to direct the people's attention to the civic ideal, required citizens to practice these ideals in public ways, and thereby created a political community that was self-reinforcing.

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[33] Rousseau, *Government of Poland,* 181.

[34] Ibid, 181.

[35] Plutarch, *Lives,* 75.

Numa

Numa serves as a third and moderating example of inscribing national identity through communal participation in the laws. Rousseau identifies Numa as the "true founder of Rome" who refines and protects what Romulus imperfectly began.[36] Numa ruled by neither force nor reason, but through religious rites and institutions.[37] Numa ruled artfully, evoking obedience from his people by persuading them that to obey the law was to please the gods. For instance, Numa invoked divine oracles in order to encourage his soldiers and persuade them to persevere through dire siege conditions.[38] These "mild institutions" cultivated attachments between citizens and became the basis for the vigorous civic identity for which Rome is remembered. Numa's institutions were mild in that they united the people without resorting to physical coercion. Numa recognized and exploited the possibilities for reinterpreting adverse circumstances based the purportedly divine purposes at the foundation of the community. Knowing how to encourage and develop communal ideals opens possibilities for interpreting and overcoming adversity. These possibilities simply could not exist from a purely materialistic perspective. Furthermore, by exalting Numa instead of Romulus, Rousseau indicates that it is both possible and important to build on foundations laid by others. This echoes earlier advice to the Bar Confederation, warning its members against needlessly destroying ancient political institutions in their haste to reform Poland's government.

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[36] Rousseau, *Government of Poland,* 181.

[37] Ibid, 181. Maloy, "The Very Order of Things", 255.

[38] Ruth Grant, *Hypocrisy and Integrity: Machiavelli, Rousseau, and the Ethics of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 21.

Rousseau's treatment of these founders has two significant implications for how Poland might come to understand its role in international politics. The first is that a clearly defined understanding of identity and interest demarcates one people from those surrounding it, and endows a nation with unique attributes that are not easily destroyed.[39] None of the founders Rousseau mentions is a great conqueror, and their contributions are far more ideational than military. The effects of Mosaic Law should serve as an ideal to Polish reformers. Poland is not a nation of wanderers, but it is a nation under duress, subjected to political and territorial revisions that it cannot prevent. The Polish reformers are engaging the superficial aspects of their problem if they change the institutions of government without altering the prevailing understanding of community. Poland can begin to protect itself by emphasizing existing laws and customs that distinguish Poland from surrounding nations and render it a "peculiar people" that cannot be simply absorbed or integrated by the surrounding great powers. These types of national institutions protect the idea of "Polishness" by safeguarding identity in a way that parallels what Mosaic Law accomplished for the Jews. These defenses are not solely ideational; they will also contribute to defending the physical dimensions of the Polish community.

The Spartan and Roman republics became significant military powers, but neither Lycurgus nor Numa governed empires. In each case, the founder's great accomplishment was the creation of a national identity that transcended external and material limitations,

[39] By "clearly defined" I mean an understanding of national identity that is self-consciously established and moderated by the people and government within a particular nation. A narrow identity deals with precisely defined principles that can be negotiated both within the community as well as between the community and outside powers. Finally, narrowly construing national objectives implies that a state can achieve its goals on its own power or with only marginal assistance from outside actors.

and altered the way people thought about their civic identity and obligations.[40] If Poland is to guard the possibility for self-rule, the Poles must change the way they think about their community. They must commit themselves to the inculcation of cultural traditions that are invulnerable to changing administrations. Poland cannot defend itself by violence or coercion; it must create a type of bulwark that cannot be physically torn down. National identity and communal relationships can be preserved, even when rulers change. Rousseau has advice on administration and physical defenses, but his first concern is for the reinforcement of the intangible dimensions of Poland. Reinforcing the intangible dimensions of national identity means that when the Russians come, they will find that imposing a new form of government is too economically costly and culturally difficult to be a profitable endeavor.

Poland's Laws

Rousseau identifies cultural and legal dimensions of this strategy. From a cultural standpoint, the *Government of Poland* praises the forms of beauty and excellence that are unique to Poland, such as folk music and dances, as well as village competitions. Cultivating these arts instead of the Russian Imperial standards of artistic beauty would impose certain constraints on Poland's behavior. Poland would have to embrace an understanding of the good life that would be unappealing, even appalling, to neighboring

[40] Morgenthau, though he does not invoke any founder by name, points to these civilizations as illustrations of how national purpose and character speak to something true and enduring in the human experience. He writes, "We remember ancient Greece, Rome, and Israel with a sense of personal involvement—in contrast to the many states of the ancient world whose existence and deeds are recorded only in history books—because they were not just political organizations whose purpose was limited to their survival and physical growth, but civilizations, unique realizations of human potentialities that we have in common with them." Hans Morgenthau, *The Purpose of American Politics* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 8-9.

countries.[41] Rousseau hopes that by entrenching rustic standards of beauty based on what Poland can appreciate and accomplish without the influence of the great powers, Poland can avoid economic and cultural dependence on its neighbors. Rousseau summarizes his objective as follows:

> I should wish all the patriotic virtues to be given luster by attaching to them honors and public rewards, the Citizens to be kept constantly occupied with the fatherland, for it is to be made their principal business…I admit that this way they would have less opportunity and time to grow rich, but they would also have less desire or need to do so: their hearts would get to know a happiness other than fortune, and therein lives the art of ennobling souls and turning them into an instrument more powerful than gold.[42]

This presentation of national identity is focused on the possibility for a community to understand and define itself without deferring to the expectations of other states.[43] Frugality could become a domestic point of pride, and it would also constrain Poland's outward disposition. Accepting Rousseau's version of national identity serves the dual purpose of distinguishing the Poles from their neighbors and providing a safeguard against the development of dangerous international ambitions in the future.[44]

The second implication, and a recurring theme in Rousseau's political thought, is a criticism of the struggle for material supremacy that has come to dominate both the domestic and international dimensions of modern politics. Domestic politics is focused on the materialistic dimensions of community.[45] With this in mind, Rousseau can

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[41] See the discussion of Poland's financial system below.

[42] Rousseau, *Government of Poland,* 185.

[43] In the subsequent paragraph, Rousseau criticizes the tendency of nations to chase after the morals and tastes that are regarded as fashionable. Rousseau, *Government of Poland,* 185.

[44] For a further discussion of the constraining effects of national interest, see W. David Clinton, "The National Interest: Normative Foundations," *Review of Politics* 48, no. 4 (1986), 501-503.

[45] Garrard, *Rousseau's Counter-Enlightenment,* 9.

hyperbolically claim that there are no citizens in modern states. Material interests—the accumulation of wealth, and the protection of physical comforts—have usurped the idea of a shared national identity and political good. In his treatise on *Political Economy* Rousseau depicts modern politics as the mechanistic functions of an administrative state. Rather than cultivating individuals for self- rule states take on the ubiquitous drudgery of tax collection and punishment of legal infractions; there is no account of a public good that encompasses and elevates the community as a whole.

Internationally, modern politics operates as though there is a disparity between the interests of the community and those of the state. The international policy of *raison d'état*, common within balance of power policies of Europe, introduces the notion that a state can have international interests that are discrete from the interests of its own people. Rousseau's approach to forming national identity emphasizes the almost subconscious ideas underpinning the Polish nation. Moving these ideas from the subconscious level to the central focus of public life turns them from a shared identity into a shared endeavor. The defense of "Polishness" becomes the nation's chief project. The activity of defining and protecting the shared Polish life can be understood as Poland's common end or national interest, and functions as a constraining influence on political ambition.[46]

Institutional Implementation

Administration

This account of national self-understanding and restrained posture towards other powers demands a high level of public spiritedness. For these ideals to be remotely

[46] For further discussion of the conservative nature of Rousseau's nationalism see Anne M. Cohler, *Rousseau and Nationalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), especially chapters 1 and 5.

possible, there must be institutional forms that translate the ideal into practice. Rousseau devotes the remainder of the *Government of Poland* to discussing the creation and maintenance of such institutions. This discussion is primarily concerned with domestic political life, the customs surrounding public honors, modifications to the kingship, and penalties on unjustified exercise of veto power, to name some of the most striking. Rousseau returns to matters with direct international relevance towards the end of the essay in sections ten, eleven, and twelve. My argument now turns to examine these three sections.

Rousseau draws attention to these sections on international politics and presents the arguments within them as inter-related. He makes the following introduction at the beginning of section ten:

> Without entering into details of administration about which I am equally lacking in knowledge and opinions, I shall only venture some ideas about the two areas of finance and of war, ideas which I must state because I believe them good, although I am almost certain they will not be appreciated: but first of all I shall say something about the administration of justice which departs somewhat less from the spirit of the Polish Government. [47]

Rousseau introduces the section with a profession of ignorance on the particularities of administration, and poses financial policy and war as his next topics of discussion. In the same paragraph, however, he seems to reverse his earlier statement: before he can discuss war and finance, he must say something on the administration of justice. Is there any difference between administration (of which Rousseau is ignorant) and the administration of justice, which becomes the substance of the chapter? As the section unfolds, it becomes apparent that the distinction is between the political process of civil administration and the capacity for judgment that is necessary for the administration of

[47] "Rousseau, *Government of Poland,* 221.

justice. While Rousseau may lack both knowledge and opinions regarding the political process of administration, he has very clear ideas about the cultivation of judgment.

The community encourages the capacity for judgment when it establishes institutions through which citizens participate in the interpretation and application of law. Once again, Rousseau turns to the ancients for an example of his goal: "The two estates of the men of the sword and men of the robe were unknown to the ancients. Citizens were neither soldiers, nor judges, nor priests by profession; they were all [of these] by duty."[48] This illustration suggests that civic duties do not fit with artificially established professional or social classes. Necessity and merit could elevate any citizen to one of these positions. A political community should prepare its citizens for leadership by creating opportunities for people, regardless of station, to participate in ruling institutions. Hierarchy may remain, but political authority is no longer tied exclusively to one class or group of families; the identity and interests of the whole community supersede the identity and prestige of any one class within it. [49]

Communities institutionalize their account of the common good in law. Laws should be written in short and precise language so that the entire population can study and develop a basic understanding of their content.[50] Furthermore, the legal education of the nobility, who aspire to a role in the legislature, must be accompanied by great ceremony. Rousseau describes his vision for such occasions in the following words:

> All noblemen, before being entered in the golden book which grants them admission to a Dietine, have to pass about the subject of these codes…an exam

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[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] "But all Citizens and especially public figures must be taught their country's positive laws and the particular rules by which they are governed." Ibid, 222.

> which is not a mere formality, and about which, if they do not know it sufficiently well, they will be sent back until they know it better.[51]

The opportunity to contribute to Poland's legal corpus, a clear expression of Polish national identity, must be contingent on mastery of existing laws. This gives weight to existing legislation and underscores the responsibility and honor of directly contributing to the community's identity.

Rousseau's discussion of administration also places special emphasis on the office of judge. He insists that judgeship be open to all meriting the office, and that the office of judge serve as a transitional position for all who desire higher offices. He writes: "The function of judge, in the highest as well as in the local courts, should be a transitional, testing state by which the nation might assess a Citizen's merit and probity, so that it might elevate him to the position of greater eminence he is found capable of filling."[52] By making attentive and upright service to the law the path to political promotion, Rousseau reinforces devotion to institutions that are uniquely Polish and contribute to Poland's understanding of what differentiates it from other communities.

Not only will judges apply existing laws, but the office also requires prudence in understanding how to interpret laws according to "uprightness and good sense."[53] The act of judgment requires knowledge of the particular law, the ability to derive the principle from law, and then apply it to particular situations; judgment requires prudence. Expanding the judiciary to all who desire political office, and honoring those who cultivate judgment, blurs the distinction between prudence as a moral virtue and prudence

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[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid, 221.

[53] Ibid, 222.

as a political virtue. This encourages private individuals to develop prudence for the sake of what it might contribute to their public success. In the individual, prudence opens the possibility for self-rule; at the judge's bench it enables local rule. In the absence of strong central authority, effective local rule and self-governance are essential to the preservation of order and stability. For Poland's decentralized administration to function, and for its national identity to survive conquest, the burden for self-rule falls broadly across citizens. One effect of Rousseau's plan is that the preservation of order and identity is now spread across the citizens; many could assume responsibility for the preservation and application of the laws.

This posture defends a nation against conquest and assimilation by broadly equipping citizens for self-rule and reducing their dependence on a central administration. If the abilities necessary for sound political judgment are widely cultivated, then political leadership is not relegated to a select few. Many have a functional understanding of the law; many have experience in searching for the principles of justice within the law, and applying those principles to particular scenarios. A conqueror that overthrows one government will not hamstring the people's ability to rule themselves in an orderly fashion.

Financial Policy

The second outward looking institution Rousseau discusses is Poland's financial system. Rousseau argues that a state's financial system and fiscal policy should reflect its national ambitions and capabilities. Poland's central ambition is to continue its existence as a free and self-ruling state; it must design its financial institutions accordingly. Rousseau opposes the idea that financial prosperity indicates political vigor, and denies

the notion that economic interdependence can supersede power politics to create fair and peaceful international relationships. Material wealth and economic interdependence are very appealing; they are not, however, interchangeable with national security or independence. Security, especially for a small state like Poland, exists when that state can support itself without becoming a desirable prize for its neighbors. In the absence of large weapons and reliable allies, Rousseau's economic argument becomes a form of "passive deterrence" against its neighbors. That is to say, Poland's small economy and decentralized administration make such an unattractive target that neighboring states would be more efficiently served by working around Poland than attempting to control it.

This is not the most lucrative national policy, but Rousseau warns the Poles against emulating the behavior of their neighbors. If they imitate their neighbors, the Poles would strive to become fearsome and highly regarded for their accomplishments, and would seek influence over the other nations of Europe. If this is their aspiration, Poland must pursue great power status, along with all of its accoutrements. Poland would then need a strong army, extensive fortifications, a well-regulated currency, academies, and a relentless devotion to material luxury.[54] None of these things is well suited to Poland's existing conditions, so if this is what the Poles desire, then Rousseau's suggestions for their constitution are of no value to them.

But great power status is not the only option; Poland could accept its condition as a small power and attempt to maintain itself in this capacity. Rousseau endorses this position, describing its possibilities in the following words:

> But if by chance you preferred to form a free, peaceful, and wise nation which neither fears nor needs anyone, is self-sufficient and is happy; then you must

[54] Ibid, 224.

> adopt an altogether different method, preserve, restore among you simple morals, wholesome tastes, a warlike spirit free from ambition.[55]

This set of national ambitions may also be difficult to achieve, but it attempts to constrain the ends of Poland's economic policy within Poland's means. Poland cannot seek great power status without becoming indebted to its neighbors and relying heavily on the good faith of outside powers. If Poland can learn to be content with self-rule and the basic goods provided by social life, it can hold onto the possibility of its own freedom. Poland must learn to forsake financial prosperity as the signifier of political success. Large currency reserves, though fungible, are no guarantee of loyal allies or military success. Rousseau describes money as the weakest and least effectual spring in the political machine.[56] "Money," Rousseau writes, "is not wealth, it is only a sign of it; it is not the sign that should be multiplied, but the thing represented."[57] The wealth Rousseau encourages Poland to seek is found in political autonomy, prudent subjects, and economic self-sufficiency.

This advice does not deny material interests, but attempts to separate these interests from the pursuit of money itself. Money is the most fickle and corrupt form of obligation; economic integration with other states generates conflicts and creates mechanisms for manipulation or coercion. While Rousseau operates under no illusions about the termination of Poland's currency, he sees that small powers are better served by understanding wealth in terms of commodities and other necessities that support political independence than by attempting to compete economically with their larger neighbors.

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[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid, 255.

[57] Ibid, 228.

Military Doctrine

Rousseau continues the theme of restraint in his analysis of Poland's military structure. Here, he argues that Poland's military and strategic posture should be crafted with respect to what is feasible given Poland's extensive territory and financial constraints. The military's focus is defensive, emphasizing the preservation of Poland's national identity, domestic customs, and political independence. Rousseau's argument confronts the realities of power politics, underscores the inadequacy of conventional military tactics, and shows how Poland's national interest empowers an alternate form of defense.

Poland is a small power; nothing in Rousseau's constitutional revisions can alter the disparities in material resources and population that exist between Poland and Russia. Cognizant of these realities, Rousseau states, "The most inviolable law of nature is the law of the stronger. No legislation, no constitution can exempt from this law. To look for the means of guaranteeing yourselves against the invasion of a neighbor stronger than you is to look for a chimera."[58] Rousseau accepts that politics favors the will of the stronger; the domestic perfection of law will not prevent exploitation or abuse from outside powers. The effort to avoid large wars by waging preemptive battles, or to deter enemies through the expansion of offensive capabilities would likewise be futile.[59] Poland's central objective is preserving the idea of Polishness in the place they can be the safest—the hearts of the Poles.[60] The idea of Poland—expressed through a constitution

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[58] Ibid, 233.

[59] "You will never have offensive force; it will be a long time before you have defensive force…" Ibid.

[60] Ibid.

that instills the discipline of self-rule and culture that reinforces the good of what is local— is the part of the nation that is most difficult to destroy and the centerpiece of Rousseau's defensive strategy. This is not to say the material or territorial dimensions of Poland are unimportant. The material realm matters, but its value and purpose is constructed through ideas about what is valuable and useful. Emphasizing and protecting the *ideas* behind Polish freedom and self-governance prepare citizens to accept a personal sense of obligations to the community apart from the material wealth the community can give back to them. Establishing a publicly shared and beloved national identity is therefore an essential part of national defense. This idea helps to explain why Rousseau emphasizes the importance of distinctive cultural forms. Folk dances, national games, and national education inculcate a love for the community throughout the population and across social classes. This sort of patriotism has very material consequences; perhaps most importantly it prepares the whole nation to mobilize in defense of the culture and community that they hold dear. Rousseau's recommendations for Poland's military system are consistent with this analysis.

An important piece of evidence for this interpretation is that Rousseau warns Poland against trying to build a large professional army. In Poland a traditional standing army would be ill suited for the task of national defense. In part this is because of economic limitations. Poland cannot financially sustain a large professional army. Even Count Wielhorski's suggestion to maintain a core of professional soldiers and build supplemental forces from the militias of each palatinate would be a financial strain.[61] As the Poles well know, they have no military successes to justify the costs of maintaining

[61] Ibid, 234.

even a modest professional army. The traditional army Poland could muster would be too weak to deter Russia, and traditional fortifications are unlikely to provide an effective defense.[62]

Instead, Rousseau argues, the Poles should abolish what remains of their standing army, and replace it with a militia of citizens trained in guerilla warfare. This is an uncommon practice, but a military is to reflect to political objectives of its people. Poland's objective is surviving as a small power; it is therefore reasonable, Rousseau argues, for a Polish army to take different form than the armies of neighboring states.[63] Rousseau is not advocating acts of terrorism, but a form of defense calculated according to Poland's existing capabilities. Though not a professional army, a guerilla force needs to develop its own tactics and training. Rousseau describes the possibility as follows: "I should like it to devise its own distinctive tactics, which would develop and perfect its natural and national dispositions, to train primarily in speed and lightness…to excel in what is known as guerilla warfare."[64] Poland will never be strong enough to defeat enemies in pitched battle, but by adopting these strategies, it can make occupation too costly for its enemies: "You will never succeed in making it difficult for your neighbors to enter your territory; but you can succeed in making it difficult for them to leave it with impunity, and that should be the object of all your cares."[65] Poland's strategic objective is

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[62] "A free people is ill advised to have fortifications; they are not in the least suited to the Polish genius, and sooner or later they become nests of tyrants anywhere. You will invariably be fortifying for the Russians the places which you think you are fortifying against them…" Ibid, 238.

[63] "Once again, the Poles should not look about them with a view to imitating even the good that is done elsewhere. Such a good relative to entirely different constitutions would be an evil in theirs. They should exclusively do what suits them and not what others do." Ibid, 234.

[64] Rousseau, *Government of Poland,* 237.

[65] Ibid, 238.

therefore limited to not losing its political identity by being absorbed into larger states.[66] Finally, by maintaining an army of irregular forces the state provides an opportunity for public responsibility and honor that is broadly accessible to members of the community. Military drills could be incorporated into society in the form of public competitions, thereby elevating military service to a place of honor.[67]

This is, however, quite different from Napoleon's *levée en mass*. The entire population is mobilized, but in defense rather than conquest. It is patriotic, but make no claims about the necessity of expanding national ideals. It is, therefore, not a revolutionary teaching in the sense of attempting to violently transform the character of neighboring states. "Each country," Rousseau acknowledges, "has advantages that are distinctively its own and which its institution ought to enlarge and to foster."[68] Affirmation of national identity empowers the mobilization of the people. This is not a contradiction of limits on nationalism that Rousseau develops in the *Social Contract*. Rousseau's argument here also includes principles to constrain expressions of the national spirit.

Rousseau and National Interest

The importance of a distinctive Polish identity, embedded in the national constitution and consciously reinforced through public life, is the refrain of the *Government of Poland.* This refrain provides evidence for Smith and Cohler's work on

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[66] Raymond Aron presents a strategic choice between victory and not losing. The latter strategy is especially important for a weaker side that desires to avoid being conquered, by finding a way to negotiate. Raymond Aron, *Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations*, trans. Richard Howard and Annette Baker Fox (Malabar: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Co, 1981) 30-36.

[67] Rousseau, *Government of Poland,* 235.

[68] Ibid, 238.

nationalism in Rousseau's thought. The term "nationalism," however, does not precisely capture the sense of what takes place in the text. The *Government of Poland* is concerned with the political integrity of the Polish people. This argument, however, is not grounded in the racial or ethnic rhetoric that accompanies the nationalist movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This political integrity is the result of civic participation and legislation, that is to say, shared ideas about the identity and interests of the community, not a particular racial or ethnic construction.[69]

This leaves open the question of what Rousseau might mean when he talks about the importance of specific nations, such as Poland. Denise Schaeffer reads the *Government of Poland* in conjunction with the *Discourse on Political Economy.* She argues that the *Government of Poland* operates as a sort of illustration of *Political Economy,* showing how the principles of sound administration might take on certain institutional forms. While Schaeffer's interest is in mechanisms for political change, a similar relationship can be seen between the function of a nation in *Political Economy* and the argument in favor of maintaining Polish independence.[70]

The *Discourse on Political Economy* discusses how a political community can provide for and protect itself. One aspect of political self-preservation is the cultivation of shared virtues that teach the people to sacrifice themselves in defense of their community. Such selfless civic virtue is possible, but it must be taught through the deliberate example of political leaders, and even then, is learned with difficulty. Geography, the territorial extent of a state, is an obstacle to the cultivation of political virtue. Geographic distance

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[69] Smith, "*Nationalism, Virtue, and the Spirit of Liberty*," 411.

[70] For Schaeffer's discussion of the relationship between ideals and the community, see "Schaeffer, "Realism, Rhetoric," 394-397.

is a problem with direct impact on the strength of social obligations. Rousseau poses the difficulty in this way: "It would seem that the sentiment of humanity dissipates and weakens as it spreads to the whole earth, and that we cannot be as touched by the calamities of Tartary or Japan as we are by those of a European people."[71] He in no way denies the humanity of those who are distant, but he notes the weakening effect of distance on a shared identity. Compassion is most strongly felt towards those who are near, and made familiar by geographic location and shared life. Rousseau explains it as follows:

> Interest and commiseration must in some way be constricted and compressed in order to be activated. Now since this inclination in us can be useful only to those with whom we have to live, it is good that [the sentiment of] humanity, concentrated among fellow-citizens, acquire in them added force through the habit of seeing one another, and the common interest that unites them.[72]

This line of argument makes use of the egoistic impulses of *amour-propre* by turning them to the service of a shared political good.[73] When the desire for self-preservation and esteem from one's fellows is restrained, compressed, and activated, it results in patriotism. Individuals pursue honor and seek to fulfill their own interests through the working of their political community. Individual interest is overcome by and replaced with a national interest, a shared account of the common good.[74] The nation, from this perspective, is not defined by race or ethnicity, but by dedication to common political goals and a mutual willingness among individual citizens to sacrifice personal interest for the sake of the community. The *Government of Poland* is not about ethnic self-

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[71] Rousseau, *Political Economy,* 15.

[72] Ibid, 15-16.

[73] Schaeffer, "Realism, Rhetoric," 385.

[74] Rousseau, *Political Economy,* 16.

determination, but an argument about the types of institutions that promote a unique and cohesive national interest.

The *Government of Poland* and *Political Economy* serve to clarify the need for and role of a nation. The nation state gives political and territorial structure to a community. The organs of government and social institutions have an important role in defining and protecting the community's shared interests and goals. The international realm consists of many nations because individual communities define their interests and virtues in different ways, and because dedication to a shared end is strongest when people closely identify with the objectives of a community. Geographic proximity influences how fully people commit to shared ideals. The constitutional argument in the *Government of Poland* makes clear that Rousseau thinks of a nation as far more than an administrative unit. He openly states that the constitution he recommends is not the easiest to administer, but the one that is best suited to defending the characteristics unique to the Polish people and reminding individual citizens of the identity they share with one another. There are ways in which this is similar to the concept of nationalism, but a less anachronistic reading would be to understand this position as an acceptance of a world in which there is necessarily a plurality of nations and of national interests or purposes. This is not an endorsement of nationhood as an unqualified good, but of the role of the nation as the proper sphere for enduring human attachment and the cultivation of virtue.[75]

[75] This understanding of national interest is similar to the way David Clinton describes national interest. See W. David Clinton, *The Two Faces of National Interest* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994), 50.

Conclusion

This understanding of the significance of independent nations contains four implications for the role of national interest in mitigating the problems of international politics. As to the first, Rousseau's argument avoids the tyranny of power politics by emphasizing the possibility for choice even in the face of tremendous coercion. As the discussion of Poland's military indicates, Rousseau is keenly aware of the seemingly inescapable dynamics of power relationships. He acknowledges that the law of the strongest is the most inviolable law of nature.[76] Nothing Poland does can *prevent* the strong from exploiting the weak, but Poland can frustrate exploitation by the way it conducts its internal politics. If Poland abstains from participating in the regional struggles over power, the Poles can fully devote themselves to deterrent strategies that allow them to maintain self-rule and national identity. Rousseau's shows the Poles that the exigencies of power politics do not reduce political choices down to the sole option of participation in an endless struggle for marginal gains. States can choose to define their community and understandings of political success in ways that do not support the political structures of the great powers.

Second, Rousseau's account of interest is based on the ideational dimensions of political life. While Poland's Constitution is devised with respect to Poland's geographic position and material capabilities, Rousseau's work searches for and identifies ways to turn what might be regarded as crippling limitations into useful political possibilities. This conveys that political power is open to interpretation and negotiation. Political significance is relative to the values of a given community. The value that citizens and

[76] Rousseau, *Government of Poland,* 233.

leaders place on material resources is variable and opens new possibilities for the avoidance of conflict. Material conditions, even conditions of poverty, are open to interpretation. Small powers, if they preserve economic independence and are willing to impose on themselves limits to the way they pursue economic and industrial development, can avoid being driven by the whims of great powers. Some have identified this approach to politics as isolationism.[77] It is certainly a restrained approach, but the economic and military policies Rousseau advocates are made in response to the policies of neighboring great powers. Rousseau would have Poland avoid competitions it cannot win and cultivate an alternate series of political goods. This requires an intimate awareness of international society, especially of how rival states understand national greatness and the use of power. By developing an alternate account of national greatness, and emphasizing the role of military power in conserving a particular national identity, Rousseau would insulate the Poles with the express purpose of maintaining domestic political interests. These narrow interests create a greater likelihood for maintaining internal stability and preserving the aspects of Poland that are most dear to its citizens.

Third, while Rousseau treats the national interest as a necessary feature of political life, he remains aware of the difficulties that surround the construction a unifying national interest. In extolling Moses, Lycurgus, and Numa as exemplars of type of the statesmanship Poland needs, Rousseau underscores the legendary qualities a leader must possess for the national interest to guide the conduct of international politics. Acting the part of the statesman, Rousseau himself attempts to discern and establish the foremost

[77] "The foreign policy of the republic is therefore determined by the nature of its constitution and its commitment to freedom: one might almost say that it has no foreign policy, since Rousseau recommends as complete a withdrawal from international society as is practically possible." Christine Jane Carter, *Rousseau and the Problem of War,* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1987), 185.

objectives of a political community, and to turn this interest into a consistent foreign policy.[78] But as Rousseau's discussion of institutional implementation conveys, enacting such a policy is the unceasing work of the whole community.[79] Yet Rousseau's denunciation of modern politics, even in the *Government of Poland,* indicates that such an endeavor is beyond the capacity of most states.[80] A cohesive national interest exists as a normative ideal for both domestic politics and international relations. In many ways these problems remain in contemporary discussions of the national interest.[81] Rousseau's thought provides a way of conceptualizing the problem that goes beyond the exhortation to prudence without mitigating the tremendous difficulty of the statesman's role. While Rousseau's text pays homage to the brilliance of statesmen, it also points to the role of participatory institutions in shaping the sort national character that is symbiotic with excellent statecraft.

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[78] Schaeffer, "Realism, Rhetoric," 381.

[79] Morgenthau also points out the perennial difficulty of establishing a national purpose under which a state might organize a cohesive national policy. Morgenthau, *Purpose of American Politics,* 117.

[80] Williams, *The Realist Tradition*, 67.

[81]In perhaps one of the most famous discussions of national interest, Hans Morgenthau studies the political evolution of the United States' expressed interest in being a "predominant power without rival," that establishes a free society, maintains this society as an example to the other nations of the world, and takes and active role in expanding the realm of freedom. Morgenthau points out that on the one hand the United States broadly expresses interest in terms of power with respect to other nations, but in the conduct of foreign policy, the interest in power is often obscured by both misunderstandings of what constitutions power or competing ideals. Hans Morgenthau, *In Defense of the National Interest: A Critical Examination of American Foreign Policy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952) 5,33-39. See Also Hans Morgenthau, *The Purpose of American Politics*, 33-37. On a similar note, W. David Clinton identifies many strands of thought that all claim to define or describe national interest, but produce competing accounts of what a nation is and what might constitute appropriate interests. W. David Clinton, *Two Faces of the National Interest.* For a truly contemporary illustration of this difficulty see Peter Baker, "Rebutting Critics, Obama Seeks Higher Bar for Military Action," *New York Times*, May 29, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/29/us/politics/rebutting-critics-obama-seeks-higher-bar-for-military-action.html?hp.

Finally, Rousseau's methods for cultivating a cohesive and limited national interest depend on overcoming what he called the radical vice—the disconnected communities that are common within a territorially extensive state. Large states make it much more difficult, perhaps impossible, to establish the participatory institutions he regards as essential for genuinely shared civic identity and clearly defined interests. The political reality is that many states are expansive and cannot develop the level of participation that Rousseau advocates. Some very general elements of Rousseau's teaching may be applicable to large states and great powers, but the institutional forms he advocates cannot be readily translated from Poland to large states. Moreover, Rousseau's preference for non-intervention and avoiding economic integration marginalize the role of great powers as enforcers of international law, or centers of economic stability.

The implicit criticism and ambivalence towards great powers is a serious obstacle to applying Rousseau's theory. One might attempt to justify this gap in Rousseau's position by remembering that Russia, Prussia, and Austria tore Poland apart not long after Rousseau completed his essay. Great powers, as a class of states, are in no sense disappearing. There is no shortage of writings on how these states might continue or even increase their status as great powers, but there is much less discussion of the significance and value of small powers. A theory that underscores the value and potential viability of small power identity and interest is an important counter to the seemingly inviolable law of the stronger. Small states and the unique forms of community they support need a theory of international politics that outlines a plan of survival.

Furthermore, Rousseau's argument is a powerful reminder that states, both great and small, are responsible agents over the institutions and norms they construct. By

showing the possibilities open to Poland in truly dire circumstances, Rousseau's argument demonstrates that states always have some degree of choice as to how they participate in power politics. If changes to international politics depend on states' acknowledgement of this responsibility, then perhaps the most powerful illustration of such responsibility is a presentation of the options available to a weak state, hemmed in on all sides, whose only apparent option is capitulation. If Poland is still responsible for serious moral and political choices despite its duress, so much more are the great powers that attempt to control international security and finance.

CHAPTER SIX

The Limits of International Cooperation

The previous two chapters have illustrated ways in which Rousseau hopes to make international politics more orderly and peaceful by improving the conduct of politics within states. While much of Rousseau's international thought focuses on these "second image" solutions, he does not ignore the possibility for changes to the external relationships between states. There are instances in Rousseau's writings in which he mentions the possibility that states might be able to relate to one another in cooperative and perhaps harmonious ways through international confederations and alliances. Rousseau's references to international confederations appear (very briefly) in *Emile* and the *Social Contract*, but are treated at greater length in the "Abstract" and "Judgment" of the Abbé Saint-Pierre's writings. This chapter provides a survey of Rousseau's writings on international cooperation. It demonstrates that Rousseau is open in principle to the idea of cooperation through international institutions such as federations. In practice, however, existing plans for federation are unsatisfactory. That of Saint-Pierre, for instance, is a rationalist scheme detached from the sentiments of political life. That of Henri IV is so dangerous to the freedom of individual states that it can hardly be called cooperation. The only alternative that Rousseau identifies and endorses is the limited alliance.

I develop my argument by first examining Rousseau's own writings on confederation and his summary of the Abbé Saint-Pierre's work. Next, I look at

Rousseau's critique of Saint-Pierre in the "Judgment" and the *Confessions*. Finally, I take up the possibility for an alliance between Poland and Turkey as Rousseau describes it in the *Government of Poland*.

Reception of the Writings on Confederation

Rousseau's writings on this subject, particularly his work on Saint-Pierre, generated almost immediate criticism in his own day and have continued to draw the attention of international relations scholars. Most critics fall into one of three categories. The first category includes those who approach the "Abstract" not only as a summary of Saint-Pierre's work but also as Rousseau's own view of the role and value of confederations. Voltaire and James Madison are some of the first authors to have engaged Rousseau in this way. Voltaire's comments appear in the form a satirical letter entitled "Rescript of the Emperor of China on the Occasion of the Plan for Perpetual Peace." Voltaire, by writing from the perspective of the offended Emperor of China, points out the futility of a confederation that encompasses only the kings of Europe.[1] Madison also joins in criticizing Rousseau as overly idealistic in considering the possibilities for harmony through confederation. Unlike Voltaire, Madison argues that war does not stem from international anarchy, but from flaws within states themselves. Confederation will not sufficiently perfect states and thus cannot end the problem of war.[2] *Man, the State and War* provides a more recent example of this approach. In his analysis of the "Abstract," Kenneth Waltz refrains from calling Rousseau an idealist in part because he

[1] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Plan for Perpetual Peace, On the Government of Poland, and other writings on History and Politics*, trans. Christopher Kelly and Judith Bush, ed. Christopher Kelly, (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2005) 50-52.

[2] James Madison, "Universal Peace," http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/1941.

agrees that one possible solution to the problem of war is "effective control" over "separate and imperfect states."[3] Although confederation is probably too difficult to achieve, Waltz acknowledges that it could resolve the problem of international anarchy and thereby make peace more likely. Like these other writers, Waltz reaches his conclusion about Rousseau without paying sufficient attention to the argument of the "Judgment."

The second approach, more common in recent scholarship, is that the "Abstract" and the "Judgment" should be read together in order to discover Rousseau's stance on the subject of confederations. While the "Abstract" points out the benefits on international confederation, the "Judgment" critically evaluates the Abbé Saint-Pierre's argument, and questions the practical and moral implications of an international confederation. This reading typically places Rousseau in agreement with the Abbé's argument for confederation, but contends that Rousseau's practical understanding of politics leads him to dismiss it in the "Judgment." A more extreme version of this interpretation is that Rousseau's final opinion on the matter is found in the "Judgment." While he might have entertained the possibility of federation as an ideal, his further reflections on the idea led him to reject it altogether.[4]

A third approach is to interpret the "Abstract" and "Judgement" by placing them in a broader context. One such context is Rousseau's own writings. One example of this

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[3] Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, 182. Nicholas Rengger also seems to consolidate the opinions of Rousseau and St. Pierre. In Rengger's list of thinkers who attempt to transcend the state through confederation we find St. Pierre, Leibniz, Rousseau and Kant. N.J. Rengger *International Relations, Political Theory and the Problem of Order: Beyond International Relations Theory?* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 143.

[4] F.H. Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 50. Patrick Riley agrees with Hinsley's reading of the "Abstract" and "Judgment." See Patrick Riley, "Rousseau as a Theorist of National and International Federalism," *Publius,* 3, no 1(Spring, 1973), 12.

is a brief essay by David Boucher on Rousseau's contributions to International Relations Theory. Boucher contextualizes these documents in light of the *Social Contract* and the *Government of Poland*. On the one hand, Boucher agrees that texts like the *Government of Poland* and the *Social Contract* call for states to delimit their national interests in ways that restrain a desire for conquest and acquisition.[5] It is therefore possible, in Boucher's reading of Rousseau, for properly constituted states to transform the conduct of international politics. On the other hand, Boucher argues that Saint-Pierre's international confederation is not the way to effect this transformation because the European balance of power system would prevent it from coming into being.[6] He concludes therefore, that Rousseau accepts the balance of power as an institution that states cannot modify through internal reforms. From Boucher's perspective, Rousseau's other writings underscore the futility of attempts to transform international politics into domestic politics writ large.

Another contextual interpretation is Christine Jane Carter's *Rousseau and the Problem of War*. Carter develops a rather different context, reading the "Abstract" in light of the Abbé Saint-Pierre's writings instead of Rousseau's. She uses the whole manuscript of the *Plan for Perpetual Peace* to illuminate more clearly Rousseau's role as editor. She uses Rousseau's *Confessions* to supplement her comparison with Saint-Pierre's original work. This approach highlights important differences between Rousseau and the Abbé even in the apparently sympathetic "Abstract." Carter draws attention to

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[5] " Rousseau is not suggesting that a world of multiple states inevitably leads to conflict….He is saying that states as they are currently constituted, established as they are to further the particular interests of those who wish to consolidate and perpetuate inequalities, are bound to come into constant conflict." David Boucher, *Political Theories of International Relations: From Thucydides to the Present*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998) 300.

[6] "The Westphalian settlement legitimated the principal of the balance of power, and any ruler who tried to realize Henry IV's project by means of force would be defeated by an alliance of other European states." Boucher, *Political Theories*, 302.

evidence that Rousseau's critical posture towards Saint-Pierre runs through both the "Abstract" and the "Judgment." On Carter's analysis, Rousseau is not only skeptical of the possibility for confederation, but also opposed to the rationalistic assumptions that seem to animate Saint-Pierre's whole approach. Carter's argument is well researched and convincingly places the texts on St. Pierre in the broader framework of Rousseau's political thought. But, her emphasis tends to develop Saint-Pierre's contributions more than it explains Rousseau's thought. The conclusions that I draw are similar to Carter's, but my approach is closer to Boucher's in that I interpret the "Abstract" and "Judgement" from the perspective of Rousseau's own writings, particularly the *Confessions*. My reading offers a more complete understanding of Rousseau's position than the existing scholarship. I bring his critique of international politics into sharper focus, which illuminates the complexity of Rousseau's relationship with the realist tradition.

Rousseau and International Confederations

Rousseau mentions the idea of international confederations in several places including *Emile* and the *Social Contract*. His comments indicate that he sees a positive role for confederations in promoting justice between nations and constraining the evils of war. He does not contend that confederation is unequivocally the solution to the problems of war nor that confederation might be a permanent solution to the problems of international politics. Rousseau's accounts of confederations place them in the service of states. The relationship between the federation and states is of a different kind from the relationship that Rousseau describes for individuals and their national sovereign. Although neither *Emile* nor the *Social Contract* provides anything approaching a full

account of international federations, both texts emphasize this particular point. I will take up each text in turn.

One of the final steps in Emile's political education is a study of federations. The tutor presents an overview of the subject in the following words: "Finally, we shall examine the kind of remedies for these disadvantages [war and the disadvantages associated with anarchy] provided by leagues and confederations, which leave each state its own master within but arm it against every unjust aggressor from without."[7] The tutor presents confederations as a worthy subject to study. It is at least worthwhile to *ask* whether confederations might provide a remedy for the problems that emerge between states. But even here confederation is a qualified good. One of the most obvious limits is that it is not universal; unjust aggressors exist outside its bounds. To the degree that confederation increases international order, its effects benefit only some states.[8] Rousseau does not explain why membership is limited to only to certain states, but the second half of his statement contains a plausible answer to this question. The confederation is not to endanger the sovereignty of particular states; each is to remain "its own master within." A universal confederation may be more likely to threaten the sovereignty of particular communities because it is not threatened by any outside aggressors. If this interpretation is correct, then outside powers are a salutary check on the authority and ambition of the federation itself. An alternative explanation may be the practical one that a confederation of *all* states is too difficult. States are sufficiently different from one another that there are not enough shared interests to unite them all into a single confederation.

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[7] Rousseau, *Emile*, 466.

[8] Ibid.

This reading is substantiated as the tutor continues. He says, "We shall investigate how a good federative association can be established, what can make it durable, and how far the right of confederation can be extended without jeopardizing that of sovereignty."[9] The idea of a "right" of federation suggests that federations have constitutional limits that must be explored. Confederation is not, therefore, good of itself.[10] Rousseau is unclear about where all of these limits might exist, but he explicitly mentions that he is interested in a federation that brings states together without attempting to supersede state sovereignty. It is plausible that Rousseau understands the rights of sovereign states as a necessary check to the rights of a federation. A federation that jeopardizes state sovereignty transgresses its own limits, ceases to become a federation, and attempts to makes international cooperation something that it is not—an extension of domestic political life.

This is not much of a course outline and it is even less of a practical plan. Rousseau seemingly acknowledges the insufficiency of the plan he provides by mentioning the Abbé St. Pierre's writings as a more developed alternative: "The Abbé de Saint-Pierre proposed an association of all the states of Europe in order to maintain perpetual peace among them. Was this association feasible? And if it had been established, can it be presumed that it would have lasted?"[11] St. Pierre's plan, even in this context, is not Rousseau's definitive answer to the constitutional questions that international federation raises. He treats St. Pierre's work as a point of departure and

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[9] Ibid.

[10] This account of international confederation and government, therefore stands in tension with Kant's. Rousseau's argument does not support the idea that international confederations are not products of the teleological progression of politics or the historic destiny of individual reason.

[11] Rousseau, *Emile*, 467.

acknowledges the difficulties surrounding the implementation of a federation limited to Europe.

Emile, therefore, suggests that Rousseau is aware of the criticism any federative plan will produce and that he has his own reservations about confederation. He does not, however, end on a wholly skeptical note. Rousseau places words of doubt in Emile's mouth only to reassure him that the project is not vain: "I would not be surprised if my young man, who has good sense, were to interrupt me in the middle of all our reasoning and say, 'Someone might say that we are building our edifice with wood and not with men, so exactly do we align each piece with the ruler!'" The tutor responds with the following words: "'It is true, my friend, but keep in mind that right is not bent by men's passions, and that our first concern was to establish the true principles of political right. Now that our foundations are laid, come and examine what men have built on them; and you will see some fine things!'"[12] The sense of hope the tutor offers is tied to the correct ordering of political foundations. Based on Emile's education, it appears that these foundations exist in domestic politics. Establishing principles of political right within a state makes it possible for states, independent of one another, to behave justly in the international realm. As the "Second Discourse" illustrates, the international realm comes into being after the formation of particular states. In some sense international politics is secondary to domestic political life. Although international relations are posterior to the formation of states, Rousseau maintains an important connection between the domestic and the international. This connection, as Rousseau presents it, is found in the concept of

[12] Ibid.

political right. A proper account of political right makes possible a correct ordering that extends from the particular state into the international realm.[13]

The *Social Contract's* subtitle is "Principles of Political Right," and in this text Rousseau explicitly connects domestic and international right in his discussion of war and when he mentions federations. While the *Social Contract* establishes this connection to the idea of federations, it provides very little substantive guidance; Rousseau addresses the problem only briefly and at the very end of the text. He writes, "After setting down the true principles of political right and trying to found the State on its basis, it would remain to buttress the State by its external relations; which would include the right of nations, commerce, the right of war and conquests, public right, leagues, negotiations, treaties, etc."[14] The location and brevity of this statement essentially render it a postscript for a work on political right. The structure of the text appears to support Rengger's argument that Rousseau severs domestic from international right. The content of these statements, however, suggests that Rousseau subordinates international relations to domestic politics rather than severs the two. International politics necessarily comes into being after the formation of distinct states. International politics are not only secondary in temporal order, but they also seem to be for the sake of particular states. Rousseau says that a state's external relations, including international leagues, are to buttress states

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[13] Following in the tradition of Ernst Cassirer, Michael Williams explains this idea by referencing and then contrasting Rousseau's understanding of political right with Kant's understanding of right found in the categorical imperative. Michael Williams*, The Realist Tradition and the Limits of International Relations*, 77. The idea that Rousseau sees an important connection between the order of the particular state and the order of the international realm is disputed. Nicholas Rengger, for example, argues that Rousseau severs the two and theorizes about the domestic and international realms as distinctly different political problems. N.J. Rengger, *International Relations, Political Theory and the Problem of Order: Beyond International Relations Theory?* (London: Routledge, 2000), 11.

[14] Rousseau, *Social Contract*, 152. I acknowledge that the textual structure appears to support Rengger's argument that Rousseau severs domestic from international right. The content of these statements, however, seems closer to the interpretive approach that Michael Williams takes and I support.

themselves. The imagery of a buttress is interesting. A buttress stands outside a structure to provide it with additional support; a buttress may itself be ornamented and it may ornament a building, but it is not created for its own sake.

After creating this image, Rousseau cuts short the discussion: "But all this forms a new object too vast for my short sight; I should always have fixed it nearer to myself."[15] This dissatisfying conclusion is consistent with the statements of *Emile*, but it does little to expand them. It is possible that Rousseau planned to develop his own ideas on confederations in the *Political Institutions* but he destroyed that work before its completion. We have only two characteristics that Rousseau desires for a confederation: it must protect states from outside threats while also guaranteeing their own independent sovereignty. This synopsis of Rousseau's preferences does not constitute a plan. It does, however, serve as an important backdrop for the "Abstract" of Saint-Pierre's work. Moreover this provides a context for Rousseau's critique of Saint-Pierre in the *Confessions* and the "Judgment."

Editing Abbé Saint-Pierre

Rousseau's attitude towards Saint-Pierre's plan for European Confederation is favorable and inquisitive in *Emile*, but as he directly engages the Abbé's work inquisitiveness gives way to skepticism. Some scholars have argued that St. Pierre was highly influential on Rousseau,[16] but the *Confessions* support a less symbiotic

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[15] Rousseau, *Social Contract*, 152.

[16] Aiko, Yuichi, "Rousseau and Saint-Pierre's Peace Project: a Critique of 'History of International Relations Theory," in *Classical Theory in International Relations*, edited by Beate Jahn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 106-109. I share Aiko's concern that contemporary scholarship on Rousseau and IR often misses the historic context of Rousseau's debate. I agree with Aiko's idea that Rousseau's Sovereign is intended to operate under constitutional limits designed to promote moral

relationship between the two thinkers. They depict Rousseau as an editor and a severe critic. Although written long after the project is complete, the *Confessions* is helpful to consider before reading either the "Abstract" or the "Judgment." After looking at Rousseau's posture towards Saint-Pierre in the *Confessions*, I examine how Rousseau depicts Saint-Pierre's argument, and then look briefly at the elements of the plan itself.

It is evident from the *Confessions* that the Abbé de Mably and Madame Dupin influenced Rousseau's decision to work on Saint-Pierre. The Abbé de Mably and Madame Dupin (Rousseau's patron, protector, and lover) were closely acquainted with St. Pierre. When Saint- Pierre died, Mably and Dupin asked Rousseau to look through the deceased's writings and revise them for publication. Rousseau had some reservations about taking up the project. In part, they may have been related to struggles with his own work; the *Confessions* say censors were aggressively opposing the work Rousseau had submitted for publication and that he was on a hiatus between his own projects. Another idea in the *Confessions* is that the project was presented to Rousseau as a form of academic charity work; his friends paid him to summarize someone else's ideas rather than produce his own.[17] What can one make of these suggestions? Without ranging too far from the words themselves, Rousseau's recollection about being persuaded to take on the project is far from enthusiastic: "[Mme Dupin] preserved a respect and affection for the memory of the good man that did honor to them both, and her *amour-propre* might have been flattered at seeing the still-born works of her friend resuscitated by her

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action, but his argument does not demonstrate that Saint-Pierre's writings are more influential than Montesquieu's. Furthermore, Aiko minimizes Rousseau's derision towards Saint-Pierre in the *Confessions*.

[17] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 342.

secretary. These same works did not fail to contain some things that were excellent but so poorly stated that reading them was hard to endure."[18] This is faint praise, indeed.

Another problem Rousseau mentions is the volume of Saint-Pierre's writings. After Rousseau agreed to edit Saint-Pierre's work, his patroness sent him to Saint-Pierre's nephew and heir to retrieve the manuscripts. Upon his arrival, Rousseau discovered that he was now responsible for editing "twenty-three volumes that were diffuse, confused, full of tedious passages, unnecessary repetitions, little short-sighted or false ideas, among which it was necessary to fish for some great, fine ones which gave one the courage to bear this painful labor."[19] This process of fishing for great ideas in a sea of stupefying boredom was the most positive light in which Rousseau cast his editorial work.

For these reasons it is plausible to interpret Rousseau as more of a critical reviewer than a friendly editor. At the same time, it also important to acknowledge that Rousseau intended to fulfill his promise to Madame Dupin and Saint-Pierre's family; his sense of personal obligation to Madame Dupin tempers his hostility.[20] Rousseau acknowledged that there were opportunities for him to insert his own opinions and analysis even as he redacted Saint-Pierre's writings. He says, "Besides, by not being limited to the function of translator, I was not forbidden to think for myself sometimes, and I could give such a form to my work that very important truths would pass in it under the Abbé de St. Pierre's cloak even more happily than my own."[21] As Carter points out,

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid., 355.

[21] Ibid., 342.

Saint-Pierre was accepted at court even after Rousseau brought the wrath of the censors upon himself. Editing Saint-Pierre provided a limited opportunity for Rousseau to express his own creativity and thought under the guise of someone more palatable to the censors.

The *Confessions* reveal that in making his revisions Rousseau did develop an appreciation for some of Saint-Pierre's objectives, but he grew increasingly critical of the assumptions behind Saint-Pierre's political writings. For instance, Rousseau says, "His writings on morality confirmed me in the idea…that he had more intelligence than I had believed."[22] But Rousseau follows this underhanded compliment with a more explicit assessment: "The thorough examination of his political works showed me only superficial views, projects that were useful but impracticable because of the idea from which the author was never able to depart that men were led by their enlightenment rather than by their passions."[23] Saint-Pierre's commitment to (or perhaps faith in) human rationalism is Rousseau's fundamental objection. If this truly is the point of departure between him and the Abbé, then the two thinkers have radically different approaches to resolving the problems of political life. This critique of Saint-Pierre's rationalism draws our attention to Rousseau's insistence that political life is not wholly rational and does not admit purely rational solutions. Rousseau's political thought identifies *amour-propre* as the fundamental cause of political problems and, paradoxically, the sentiment that gives rise to political behavior itself. From Rousseau's perspective, "enlightenment," the cumulative advances made by human reason, leads to greater confusion, not the

[22] Ibid., 354.

[23] Ibid.

resolution of our moral and political problems. Rousseau's political solutions involve an element of reason, but he very deliberately attempts to operate on the sentiments.[24]

After Rousseau expresses this insight into his disagreement with Saint-Pierre, his tone in the *Confessions* changes. He does not retract his barbed statements or minimize the frustration that he expressed, but he articulates a strategy for making his revisions. He says: "To let the author's visions pass was not to do anything useful: to refute them rigorously was to do something dishonorable, since the custody of his manuscripts, which I had accepted and even asked for, imposed on me the obligation of treating their author honorably."[25] The solution that he sees is to present Saint-Pierre's ideas and his own separately. In rendering Saint-Pierre's argument, Rousseau says that strove to "enter into his intentions," "clarify" and "extend them," and in so doing "spare nothing to make them valued at their full worth." Despite the fact that Rousseau invested significant energy in producing the "Abstract," he refused to publish the work as his original thought. He would however, supplement this work with a statement of his own opinions written in his own name and hold it unpublished until "after the first had its effect."[26]

Saint-Pierre According to Rousseau

The synopsis of the "Plan for Perpetual Peace" suggests that the Abbé's proposal may partially meet some of Rousseau's expectations for confederations, but on the whole it is not an argument with which he agrees. Despite Rousseau's statement that the "Abstract" was intended as a relatively friendly review, the structure and the content of

[24] I hope this is evident from my argument up to this point. This is the heart of my argument in chapter two.

[25] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 355.

[26] Ibid.

the synopsis reveal a significant disparity between the two thinkers. There are no formal breaks in the text but there are thematic divisions. Rousseau distances himself from the Abbé at the beginning and the end by emphasizing the importance that sentiment and non-rational attachments have for political life. The first section is a sort of preface, and the last is a conclusion that foreshadows the argument of the "Judgment." The long middle section presents Saint-Pierre's argument. Here, Rousseau summarizes the rational arguments that Saint-Pierre gives in favor of confederation. The Abbé 's argument, as Rousseau presents it, minimizes or ignores the role of sentiment in forming a confederation and fails to include a check on the power of the federation over member states.

Rousseau's Preface

Rousseau prefaces the Abbé's argument in his "Abstract" with what appears to be a sympathetic statement about Saint-Pierre's international federation. Rousseau expresses these sympathies as an emotional response to the idea of peace through confederation:

> It is even very difficult for such matter to leave a sensitive and virtuous man exempt from a bit of enthusiasm; and I do not know whether the illusion of a genuinely humane heart…is not preferable in this to that harsh and repellent reason which always finds in its own indifference to the public good the first obstacle to everything that can favor it.[27]

The first reaction that Rousseau presents to readers is sentimental rather than rational. He follows these warm remarks by contrasting his emotional reaction with the task of reading Saint-Pierre: "I could not deny these initial lines to the feeling with which I am full. Now let us try to reason coolly."[28] The Abbé's work demands dispassionate and

[27] Rousseau, "Abstract," 27-28.

[28] Ibid., 27.

rational analysis; even Rousseau's own emotional responses must be set aside before taking up the argument. Rousseau prepares readers for a wholly rational argument by saying, "I…beg the Reader in his turn not to deny anything that he does not refute; for it is not so much the reasoners that I fear, as those who, without yielding to proofs, do not want to raise any objections to them."[29] Although the argument is to stand or fall by reason alone, Rousseau indicates that the greatest critics are not those who will make logical objections to it but those who oppose it without raising rational objections. The identity of these silent objectors is obscure. One possible explanation is that they are cynics, people who are moved neither by their emotions nor by reason to think that there is anything noble in attempting to secure peace. Rousseau's own defense of enthusiasm and of the moral value of this plan support this reading. Another possibility is that the silent objectors, like Rousseau himself, are those who do not believe the problems of political life admit wholly rational solutions.

Someone could object to the Abbé's arguments from either perspective, but Rousseau makes no attempt to refute either one. These two authorial actions—distancing his own response to the proposal from the rational analysis necessary to understand it and then mentioning the (silent) objectors—have the effect of creating separation between Rousseau and the work at hand.

The Rational Argument for Confederation

Despite these qualms, Rousseau integrates himself within the Abbé's proposal by insisting that confederation is a solution that deserves consideration, and then presenting the argument in the first person. Confederation may not be a perfect solution, but it does

[29] Ibid., 28.

attempt to combine the political advantages found in both large and small states without abolishing either. Like a large state, a federation would be a formidable foe to outside powers. Because smaller states continue to exist under its auspices, the administration of local law can remain vigorous.[30] The progression of the argument is striking in its dissimilarity to Rousseau's other works, particularly in the way it uses history itself as the basis for increasing levels of political justice. Although he does not break the argument apart with section headings, it might be plausibly divided into three phases: ways in which history and fortune uniquely suit Europe for confederation, five constitutional principles that would govern the confederation, and responses to two questions regarding the practicality of a federation.

With respect to the role of history and fortune, Saint-Pierre argues that Europe's shared cultural and political heritage uniquely suit the states within it to confederation. Although a federation that encompassed all the states of Europe had never existed, there are notable examples of smaller federations that demonstrate the possibility and usefulness of the project. The Helvetian League, for instance, loosely unified the independent Swiss cantons and was instrumental for the realization of Swiss independence.[31] This and other early federations[32] did not encompass the whole of

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[30] Ibid., 29.

[31] Rousseau, "Abstract," 29. For additional discussion of the Helvetic League see, Daniel J. Elazar, "Communal Democracy and Liberal Democracy: An outside Friend's Look at the Swiss Political Tradition," *Publius* vo. 23 no 2 (Spring 1993, pp 3-18), 5. Adolph Ludvig Køppen, *The World in the Middle Ages: An Historical Geography,* (New York: D. Appleton and Co, 1854), 179-180. https://books.google.com/books?id=4bujwAigzEgC&pg=PA179&lpg=PA179&dq=helvetian+league&source=bl&ots=Ab-e3USXi2&sig=mxC138kAmQlqdqLKxtiXVEyywAM&hl=en&sa=X&ei=_3sbVbm3B7SBsQSVuoJw&ved=0CDUQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=helvetian%20league&f=false

[32] Rousseau includes the Germanic Body and the Estates General as further illustrations of federative history. Rousseau, "Abstract," 29.

Europe, but the regional effects they produce on security, transnational norms, and commerce, illustrate the potential within the solution and the difficulty of fully overcoming political ills.[33] History blesses Europe with more than mere models for collective action; it provides an informal "union of interests" holding the people of Europe together. European states interact on a regular basis; already they form a sort of international system. The system is reinforced by shared norms, particularly those derived from Roman law and Christianity. Justinian and Theodosius' legal innovations rationalized interactions between European nations despite the inefficiencies of Roman imperial administration. Even the "very barbarians who were laying waste" to the empire preserved the Roman law tradition.[34] As Roman sovereignty crumbled, the Christian religion became the unlikely refuge of imperial authority. Christianity not only made possible important elements of European society, it permitted the continued use of Roman titles.[35] Christianity promulgates a feeling of unity when other sources of shared identity are lacking. Fortune supplements history's provisions in that Europe's geography fosters the continuation of a European system of states. The proximity of states and the network of roads and rivers connecting them have rendered each state "always necessary to the others.[36]

These are strong inducements to confederation, but history and fortune are not enough. The proximity of European states "has complicated their interests and their rights

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[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid., 30.

[35] Ibid., 30-31.

[36] Ibid., 31.

in a thousand ways."[37] States must attempt to harmonize their competing interests and form an institution that protects this harmony. A formal union between the states of Europe is necessary to surpass the haphazard work of history and fortune. Federation can preserve the independence of the states of Europe and bring member states under the rule of law. Federation could abolish the independent and uncoordinated role of state violence and replace it with collective force.[38] To accomplish this, however, Europe must formally adopt a federal constitution.

Saint-Pierre's plan suggests five Articles of Federation. His goal is not to address every eventuality or the "thousand petty difficulties" in satisfying the pride of rulers when they meet in congress. He does, however, believe that these five articles provide "general rules" that demonstrate this undertaking is within state leaders' existing means and that a concise framework for federation is plausible.[39]

The first article calls for a "perpetual and irrevocable alliance" among the states of Europe. Members of this alliance submit delegates to a permanent diet that is tasked with arbitrating the grievances that member states have against one another.[40] The first task of federation, therefore, is judicial. Formalizing a court to adjudicate European conflicts is essential to achieving the peaceful administration of law. If the diet's rulings are to be effective, states must be fully committed to the diet's success; therefore, federation cannot be anything less than perpetual.

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[37] Ibid., 32.

[38] Ibid., 36.

[39] Ibid., 38.

[40] Ibid., 37.

Article two calls for sharing common expenses and establishes the principle that the office of President rotate among member states on an equal basis. The third article clarifies that the Federation is not to replace individual states and guarantees to each member "the possession and government of all the States it possess at present." Moreover, the federation has no specific expectations regarding regime type. It protects the existing form of government within each state, whether "elective, or hereditary succession."[41] From this perspective the federation is a conservative institution; it protects status quo governments and existing territorial boundaries. Saint-Pierre is more interested in preserving order than trying to establish a particular type of state. Avoiding the evils of war necessitates the acceptance of certain existing conditions as political realities.[42]

Article four establishes the protocol for dealing with member states that violate the terms of the federation or refuse to accept the diet's rulings. The federation has the power to declare rebellious states under the "ban of Europe." States placed under this ban are subject to the collective force of all other member states until they lay down their arms, following the rulings of the diet, and provide reparations for the wrongs committed.[43] The fifth and final article provides for rules of change. A plurality of votes from the plenipotentiaries in the diet can develop provisional rules for the association. These provisional rules are tested for five years, after which point they are made permanent if they are supported by a supermajority of the diet's members.[44]

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[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid., 37-38.

[43] Ibid., 38.

[44] Ibid.

After presenting the Articles, Rousseau acknowledges that the plan raises two practical concerns: can the federation provide peace to Europe and is such a federation really in the interests of sovereign rulers. Rousseau argues that the answer to both questions is a resounding "yes." If the federation were established, it would secure its members; there is no single state in Europe strong enough to oppose all the others united in combination. Furthermore, it would be very difficult even for a great power to establish a rival league that can provide as many benefits as Saint-Pierre's *and* successfully defeat the larger federation in battle. Rousseau states, "I hold it as demonstrated that, once it is established, the European Diet will never have to fear rebellion, and, although some abuses might be introduced into it, they can never reach the point of evading the object of the institution."[45]

With respect to the question of interest, Rousseau makes an arresting argument. He says the question the federation raises is not whether peace is more advantageous than war. There are always some rulers who prefer war to peace and would never say that war is contrary to their interest. Sovereign rulers like the idea of carrying out justice for themselves; the better test of interest is whether or not princes want to preserve their existing power and territory. Sovereigns want to carry out justice for themselves, but they are reluctant to accept it when other sovereigns carry out justice *against* them. Holding onto the first prerogative necessarily makes one vulnerable to the second. The condition of Europe is such that "all the Powers of Europe have rights or claims against each other" but, "they cannot ever be perfectly clarified."[46] Adopting the federation resolves these

[45] Ibid., 40.

[46] Ibid., 42.

questions by reifying the status quo as law. If states adopt the plan, they must "renounce what they desire in order to secure what they possess."[47] This exchange is squarely within rulers' interests.

In some ways this plan is appealing to Rousseau and may even satisfy the preliminary expectations set forth in *Emile* and the *Social Contract* (confederation must protect states from outside threats while leaving member states their own masters at home). The plan appears to satisfy Rousseau on both counts. It provides the states of Europe with a collective security arrangement that is strong enough to defeat outside powers and impose penalties on any member state that defies the Confederation's rulings. Although Saint-Pierre claims that the confederation provides for perpetual peace, he explicitly describes his proposal as a plan for a "European Republic." Rousseau does not oppose a limited confederation; his own remarks in *Emile* and the *Social Contract* treat confederations as partial associations to protect certain states from the aggression of others. He has no expectation of universality; shared interests are essential to for formation of any political structure. By pursuing an explicitly European federation and grounding it in Europe's shared history Saint-Pierre is accepting the limits of shared culture and common interest in maintaining an internal balance of power.[48] Rousseau is rather optimistic about the effects that confederation might have on European security. He believes "One of two things will happen: either Europe's neighbors will attack it and wage war on it, or they will stand in fear of the confederation, and will leave it in

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

peace."[49] In the first case, collaboration across Europe against a shared foe will be enough to protect the internal peace. In the unlikely event that confederation inspires peace between Europe and non-European powers, states will find themselves able to pursue peace with all of their resources.

Rousseau also appears to be satisfied with respect to his second criterion, that confederation not overshadow a state's internal sovereignty. Sovereign princes would have to yield some of their power to the confederation, but the third article of federation appears to meet Rousseau's concern. To be sure, each state sacrifices the right to declare war unilaterally or impose sanctions, but it receives important protections in return. The federation guarantees each state against foreign invasions, but it also protects existing governments against "all rebellion of his subjects."[50] Federation provides tremendous support for existing governments by protecting their sovereignty against internal revolution.[51] The modifications it makes to sovereignty apply to the "dangerous power of seizing the property of someone else" which is better understood as a sort of pernicious prerogative than a true right of sovereignty.[52] Federation limits the role of governments protecting their own interests to their administration of domestic affairs. The federation itself mediates grievances between states. This places a great deal of authority at the

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[49] Ibid., 46.

[50] Ibid., 44.

[51] This introduces a different problem for Rousseau because it ensures the rule even of princes who do not merit the authority they hold or have failed to gain the consent of the governed. Rousseau is aware that this principle may violate his principle of popular sovereignty in order to protect the sovereign authority of an existing ruler. He is especially critical of monarchical powers and questions whether or not a monarchical authority is even capable of pursuing the common interest of its people. To protect unjust authority with an international federation may very well shift sovereignty away from the people and into the hands of a tyrant. But this is a different question that is related to the problem of international right, not the problem of a stable federation. Ibid., 42.

[52] Ibid., 44.

disposal of the federation, but Saint-Pierre's plan to rotate the office of president among member states mitigates the problem of centralized power.[53] From Rousseau's perspective, Saint-Pierre's rational argument for confederation is strong. His plan is rooted in European history, invokes political and religious precedents, and provides significant economic and security benefits.[54]

Assessing the Proposal

Rousseau's "Judgment" is not dismissive of the Abbé's plan as idealistic. The search for an institution that provides international peace is one of the most worthy objects of study; should it be established it would be useful for "each Prince and for each people, and for all of Europe."[55]Adopting the federation would accomplish great moral good; nothing in Rousseau's argument indicates that he believes the federation to be outside human rational potential. Despite these approbations, the plan does not satisfy Rousseau, who expresses his objections in the "Judgment" and the *Confessions*. Both texts criticize Saint-Pierre's rationalism and his failure to see a fundamental conflict of interest between the institution of monarchy and international federation.[56] I will discuss each criticism in turn.

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[53] Ibid., 45.

[54] Ibid., 48.

[55] Rousseau, "Judgment of the Plan for Perpetual Peace," 53.

[56] These running themes are helpful in characterizing Rousseau's argument, but there are significant differences in the style and the tone of each text. I recognize that my argument presents a thematic rather than a line-by-line analysis of each text. There are certainly shortcomings to this approach, namely, it is more concerned with the underlying principles than the structure of the argument. Without denying the value of the alternative, I believe that my approach is more helpful to my argument and it brings out points of continuity that would otherwise be lost in the massive reflections that Rousseau provides in the *Confessions*.

Rationalism

Rousseau opposes rationalistic approaches to politics because they fail to grasp that non-rational sentiment is the basis of political life. This fundamental error produces several additional problems: political rationalism misunderstands the nature of international cooperation, it misunderstands the nature of states, and it misunderstands the origin and duration of federations.[57] Before turning to these errors, it is helpful to clarify what it means to call Saint-Pierre a rationalist.

The beginning and the end of the "Abstract" present Saint-Pierre's argument as one that treats politics as eminently rational.[58] International federation depends on the rationality of state leaders and assumes that this rationality guides them to understand their national objectives in terms of economic gains and stable governance. Indeed, these are the very goods that Saint-Pierre highlights as the strongest inducements to adopting his proposal. In spite of this deliberate attempt to appeal to the self-interest of European sovereigns, these rulers refuse to form such a confederation. Skeptics, observing this incongruity, are likely to conclude that federation must be inconsistent with states' rational interest. Rousseau expressing this objection saying, "If these advantages are so real why then haven't the sovereigns of Europe adopted it? Why do they neglect their own interest, if that interest is so well demonstrated to them? Does one see them

[57] My formulation of this critique owes a great debt to Hans Morgenthau's critique of rationalism in *Scientific Man Versus Power Politics*. Hans J. Morgenthau, *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), 5, 204.

[58] Christine Carter argues that this characterization is inaccurate. Based on Saint-Pierre's own manuscripts she concludes that Rousseau is deliberately omitting the Abbé's treatment of the passions. Carter explains this editorial decision as Rousseau's effort to discredit Saint-Pierre's progressivism and distance his own view of the passions from the Abbé's. Carter, *Rousseau and the Problem of War*, 150-151.

otherwise rejecting means for increasing their revenues and their power?"[59] This line of questioning assumes that the plan is not rational enough. While the governments of Europe may not be able to precisely define the part of confederation that is contrary to rational self-interest, they perceive it to be at odds with their rationally defined national aims.[60] The problem then, is not so much with states, but with the incentives that the plan offers; the implication is that greater rational incentives would produce the desired effect.

Rousseau voices this criticism in order to expose the narrowness of what is now called rational choice thinking. The ensuing discussion presents no objection to self-interested appeals; rather, Rousseau points out that this line of criticism and the Abbé's proposal share the same flawed assumptions and politics as rational behavior. Rousseau argues that rationalist arguments, both for and against the federation, fail to capture the nature of states and state interest. Political rationalism explains state behavior as a series of cost/benefit calculations.[61] It assumes that leaders have a great deal of self-knowledge, such that they understand what they want, and recognize the best way to satisfy these ambitions after making this calculation.

From Rousseau's perspective, this is not an accurate understanding of state behavior. He writes, "It is the great punishment of the excess of *amour-propre* always to have recourse to means that deceive it and the very ardour of the passions is almost always what diverts them from their goal."[62] States, and the people who lead them, are

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[59] Rousseau, "Judgment," 53.

[60] Ibid.

[61] For example, the list at the end of the "Abstract" detailing the goods that the federation would provide include many economic incentives—secure trade, reduced military budget, expansion of agriculture and population— among the most prominent. Rousseau, "Abstract," 48.

[62] Rousseau, "Judgment," 54.

subject to the influence of *amour-propre*. This form of egoism may in some sense be predictable but, in Rousseau's thought, it operates in tension with reason itself.[63] *Amour-propre* develops in conjunction with reason, but the types of desires it creates are only tangentially related to material needs. *Amour-propre* separates perceived identity and needs from material realities. Accepting national *amour-propre* as a mitigating factor brings Rousseau to this insight: "Let us distinguish, then, in politics as in morality, real interest from apparent interest; the first would be found in perpetual peace . . . the second is found in the state of absolute independence which removes sovereigns from the empire of the law in order to subject them to that of fortune."[64] Rousseau concedes that the Abbé's proposal correctly identifies peace as states' real interest, but does not provide for ways of compensating for the refraction that *amour-propre* applies to rational objectives as they enter the realm of political life.[65]

The Nature of Cooperation

Because of this rationalism, the Abbé misunderstands the nature of state cooperation. The European Federation depends on the "consent of the Sovereigns, and does not offer any difficulty at all to remove other than their resistance."[66] Saint Pierre assumes that voluntary cooperation can bring the federation into being, and that the

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[63] See the discussion of *amour-propre* in Chapter Two.

[64] Rousseau, "Judgment," 54.

[65] Michael Williams succinctly describes Saint-Pierre's misunderstanding of reason in this way: "Reason has been reduced almost wholly to instrumentality and objectification, while passion has been reduced mainly to fear, egoism, vanity, envy, and disdain. Reason as pure instrumentality and feeling as pure irrationality are two sides of the same coin, united with *amour-propre*. To contrast reason and passion (as does St Pierre) is to misunderstand how in these distorted forms they are actually related to each other within modern knowledge and subjectivity." Williams, *Realist Tradition*, 70.

[66] Rousseau, "Abstract," 48.

benefits of federation will guarantee states' continued voluntary cooperation in upholding their own responsibilities and enforcing the agreement. This would be a high level of cooperation to expect from individual people; it is an exceptional level to expect from institutions. Rousseau questions whether this degree of rational compliance is even possible:

> As for the differences between Prince and Prince, can one hope to subject to a superior Tribunal men who dare to boast that they hold their power by their sword alone, and who even refer to God only because he is in heaven? In their quarrels, will Sovereigns subject themselves to judicial paths that all the rigor of the Laws have never been able to force private individuals to accept in theirs? An offended simple Gentleman disdains to bring his complaint to the Tribunal of marshals in France, and you want a King to bring his to the European Diet?[67]

Laws can guide and restrain behavior, but they do not preclude violations. Even within the context of states, individuals violate the law despite the threat of consequences. Clear lines of authority and well-defined punitive institutions typically accompany domestic law. If violations of law persist in these circumstances, it is foolish to suppose that states would exhibit greater levels of obedience. As long as wars are fought by soldiers and not by kings, rulers will prefer violence to legal recourse. War enables each state to pursue its own account of justice and the person responsible for declaring war rarely faces the direct consequences of the decision.[68] Thus, federation may in some sense be the rational choice for the majority of states, but distinctions between rulers and warriors sway rational analysis in favor of egoism and violence rather than simple economic gains.

Rousseau identifies *amour-propre* to explain this sort of egoistic and counter-productive behavior. As the *Second Discourse* and the "State of War" illustrate, states

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[67] Rousseau, "Judgment," 55.

[68] Ibid.

develop an amplified version of *amour-propre*. Rousseau puts in this way in the "Judgment:"

> The Prince always makes his plans circularly; he wants to command in order to get wealthy and to get wealthy in order to command; he will sacrifice both of them one after the other in order to acquire whichever one he lacks, but it is only so as to succeed in possessing both of the two together in the end that he pursues them separately.[69]

The prevailing understandings of authority do not sever economic power from coercive ability. Rulers want to be able to demonstrate both; political ambition cannot be wholly satisfied with just one form of authority. This means that rulers are conditioned to understand national greatness in terms of relative gains. Any gain that is common to all is real for no one.[70] Confederation demands that states set aside this egoistic understanding of power and accept the pursuit of collective gains as preferable. Saint-Pierre's plan for confederation does not address this problem. It sees the desire for material wealth, but does not adequately address the desire to command. Rousseau's argument has the effect of indicating that a rotating presidency is another sort of collective gain. State leaders will not be fully content with an institution that privileges all equally.

The Origin of International Federations

The importance that states place on relative gains lays the foundation for Rousseau's final critique of rationalism—it fails to explain the origin and duration of international federations. Rationalists assume that cooperation occurs because it represents an optimal form of behavior. Saint-Pierre indicates that he holds in this assumption in the way he juxtaposes historic examples of federations (Germanic Body,

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[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid., 56.

Helvetian League) with the economic and cultural reasons that make federation a rational choice.[71] The "Abstract" passes over the political conditions that produced the Germanic Body and the Helvetian League. In the "Judgment," Rousseau introduces his own historic example drawn from French politics: the kingship and administration of Henri IV and the Duke of Sully who plan a federation of European states known as the "Grand Design." By turning to this example, Rousseau indicates that when international cooperation approaches success, it is a response to great power politics. Furthermore, this example shows the fragile nature of all political institutions, which are dependent on the leadership and success of a statesman, a leader with political genius and the ability to turn others' interests to his own advantage.

The example of Henri IV challenges Saint-Pierre's notion that shared interests in trade or shared religious traditions readily produce cooperation. The Abbé's view of international cooperation suggests that he believes it is possible for rulers simultaneously to share a disposition of goodwill towards one another and agree to express this will through a federation.[72] This is a very improbable hope; Rousseau writes. "Now it is asking for a concurrence of wisdom in so many heads and a concurrence of relations in so many interests, that one must hardly hope for the fortuitous harmony of all the necessary circumstances from chance."[73] An automatic harmony of interests may be rationally defensible, but it does not exist. When harmony is found, it is brought about through the will of a great power: "If a harmony does not take place, force is the only thing that can take its place, and then it is no longer a question of persuading but of constraining and

[71] Rousseau, "Abstract," 29.

[72] Rousseau, "Judgment," 56.

[73] Ibid.

what is necessary is not to write books but rather to raise troops."[74] The historic foundation for confederation and international harmony is not a rational appeal to state interest, but the force of a strong state. This force produces harmony either by organizing a federation itself, or by polarizing other states against itself, such that they band together in opposition to the great power. It is this political condition that lurks in the background of the Abbé's examples. Rousseau makes this danger explicit by explaining Henri IV and Sully's efforts behind the "Grand Design."[75] Rousseau believes that although Saint-Pierre regards himself an heir of these statesmen he fails to recognize the coercive basis for their federative plan.[76]

Like Saint-Pierre's plan, Rousseau describes the "Grand Design" as "very great" and "admirable in itself."[77] But this plan is inaugurated through conflict and steeped in ambition. Henri IV intended this federation to be a counter to the Holy Roman Empire and used "this pressing motive" to build support for an alliance that "common utility alone" could not generate. The "Grand Design" approached success because of many states shared an interest in combining against the Hapsburgs. But they had to be brought to recognize this interest and accept King Henri's plan for achieving their goal. Persuading other rulers to adopt the plan was an act of statesmanship that only someone

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[74] Ibid.

[75] The author and the intent of the "Grand Design" is a matter of debate in the historiography of the twentieth century. Rousseau approaches the subject as though the "Grand Design" were a joint project of Henri IV and his minister the Duke of Sully. Some historians question the king's level of involvement, pointing out that it is more likely to be Sully's independent work. Some go even further, pointing out that Sully presented the "Grand Design" after Henri's assassination. The King never explicitly identified why he was building an army and why he planned to march up the Rhine into Austria. J. Michael Hayden argues that the ambitions were more likely driven by amorous jealousy than a clear political vision. J. Michael Hayden, "Continuity in the France of Henry IV and Louis XIII: French Foreign Policy, 1598-1615," *Journal of Modern History* 45 No. 1 (March, 1973).

[76] Rousseau, "Judgment," 57.

[77] Ibid., 57-58.

with Henri's abilities could accomplish. Henri IV surpassed the other leaders of Europe in his ability to plan for the distant future and patiently accomplish his objectives over the course of many years.[78] His leadership abilities uniquely suited him to the task of combining England, Italy, and the Netherlands against the Austrian Hapsburgs.[79]

This diplomatic accomplishment relied on a measure of free will and reason, but neither altruism nor rationality persuaded states to join Henri's Christian Republic. Rousseau writes, "What is it then that favored this general movement? Was it perpetual peace which no one foresaw and about which few would have cared? Was it the public interest, which is never that of anyone? The Abbé St. Pierre might have hoped so! But really each worked only in the aim of his particular interest which Henri had possessed the secret of showing to them all under a very attractive side."[80]

Henri obtains international support for his plain, not by appeals to reason or a collective good, but by appealing to the *amour-propre* of each state. This self-interested appeal goes beyond the economic benefits of cooperation and speaks to the desire for relative gains. Co-opting national *amour-propre* for the purposes of international federation demonstrates a more complete understanding of political behavior. Rousseau commends this form of leadership as successful, but unity on the basis of *amour-propre* is dangerous, for it blinds rulers to their true objectives by dividing ambition from genuine need. To feed this sentiment, the sovereigns of Europe will risk their own independence for the sake of satisfying an egoistic objective. Rousseau puts it in this way: "In sum, aside from the common interest in bringing down a prideful power that

[78] Ibid., 58.

[79] Ibid., 57.

[80] Ibid., 58.

wanted to dominate everywhere, each had a particular one, very avid, very tangible, and which was not at all balanced by the fear of substituting one Tyrant for the other."[81] The hope of overthrowing the Austrian Hapsburgs distracted leaders from the fact that each state would be giving a great deal of power to Henri as the head of the federation. Henri IV's statesmanship, because it skillfully manipulates states' passions, is more compelling than Saint-Pierre's and could likely succeed in forging a federation.[82] Rousseau praises the efficacy of Henri's leadership, but warns that it is a dangerous basis for international politics. The hegemony that would result from Henri's success is too high a price to pay for a European federation. The plan cannot be accomplished "except by means that are violent and formidable to humanity. One does not see federative Leagues established by any way other than by revolutions…Perhaps it would cause more harm all at once than it would prevent for centuries."[83]

Such an ambitious plan cannot be effected by just any leader. A leader's personal characteristics are important to an act of statesmanship of this scale. Despite his prowess as a leader, Henri IV fails and the "Grand Design" dies with him.[84] This twist in fortune illustrates that even when the mechanics of an institution are brought into place, and even when states recognize an interest in pursuing a common objective, success is highly contingent. Neither statesmanship nor common interest is a guarantee of political viability. Exclusively rational arguments do not capture the fragile balance between the irrational lust for power that *amour-propre* generates and the rational institutions that

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[81] Ibid., 59.

[82] Ibid., 60.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid.

codify and support cooperation. Rousseau summarizes the plight of Saint-Pierre's approach to political solutions: "This rare man, the honor of his century and his species, and perhaps the only one since the human race has existed who had no other passion than that of reason, nevertheless did nothing but proceed from error to error in all his systems, out of having wished to make men similar to him, instead of taking them as they are and they will continue to be."[85] This is not to suggest that Rousseau denies the place of reason in human nature. Rather, he believes that reason is subordinate to the passions and for this reason he reflects this subordination into political life by subordinating rational proposals such as international federation to the sentimental attachments human beings have to their particular communities. Until there is a way to attach human sentiment to an international community, it is impossible for such a plan to succeed.

Monarchy

The other major criticism that Rousseau levels against Saint-Pierre is that he fails to see the incompatibility between monarchy and international cooperation. The internal characteristics of states have direct bearing on the degree of cooperation they are willing to offer other states. Rousseau presages his reservations about monarchy even in the "Abstract," saying, "I would not dare respond along with the Abbé de Saint-Pierre: That the genuine glory of Princes consists in procuring the public utility, and their Subjects' happiness."[86] This thinly veiled criticism suggests that the monarchy itself may be at odds with the project of federation. Statements in the "Judgment" and the *Confessions* substantiate and expand on this passing remark. The "Judgment" speaks to the

[85] Rousseau, *Confessions*, 355.

[86] Rousseau, "Abstract," 42.

institutional conflict between monarchy and federation whereas his statements on this aspect of the plan in the *Confessions* criticize Saint-Pierre for failing to recognize monarchical government as a problem.

"The entire occupation of Kings," Rousseau writes, consists of two objects, "extending their domination abroad and rendering it more absolute at home." Even when kings invoke some benevolent justification for their policies, every act is concerned with the maintenance of their power. The notions of "public good," "happiness of the subjects," and "glory of the nation," are fig leaves that kings arrange to obscure their true ambitions.[87] The European diet, as Saint-Pierre formulates it, stands at odds with the lust for power that is bound up in kingly ambition. The economic advantages of federation are nothing when compared to the egoism that princes would have to sacrifice by adopting this plan. Rousseau says, "Ceaselessly deceived by the appearance of things, Princes thus would reject this Peace, even if they weighed their interests by themselves."[88] Monarchical interests depend on war and these bellicose interests are amplified by the traditions of court life. Kings' Ministers understand that their places are more secure when there are crises to manage. But even if these bureaucratic influences could be

[87] "Every other intention is, either related to one of these two, or serves on as a pretext for them. Such are those of *public good*, of the *happiness of subjects*, of the *glory of the nation*, words forever proscribed from chambers and so clumsily applied in public edicts that they never herald anything but disastrous orders." Rousseau, "Judgment," 54.

[88] Rousseau, "Judgment," 56. Georg Cavallar is quick to point out that Rousseau participates in all three of Waltz's "images of analysis." Rousseau's concern with the danger of tyranny, especially the tyranny of monarchs illustrates what Waltz would call "second image" solutions. Cavallar, *The Rights of Strangers; Theories of International Hospitality, the Global Community, and Political Justice since Vitoria* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishers, 1988), 294.

removed from the presence of kings, the way kings understand demonstrations of power requires them to wage war.[89]

Christine Carter offers a sympathetic reason to explain why Saint-Pierre does not perceive monarchy as such a formidable obstacle. The Abbé, for many years, held a position in the court. Because he had the attention of court ministers, he presented his solution to the problem of war in terms favorable to his audience, treating them as if they were the best hope to bring about these political transformations.[90] Carter sees evidence in Saint-Pierre's writings for a hope that reason could bring even tyrants to behave in an enlightened way. Just as kings sponsor the fine arts and mechanical sciences, so they might sponsor the rational study of politics, applying new ideas to their own states.[91] Rousseau however, makes no allowances for even this rhetorical posture. He remains committed to the notion that a state's internal form influence, and may even determine, its foreign policy, and that the form of monarchy inclines states to war.

These criticisms illustrate Rousseau's underlying concern for maintaining consistency between the solutions to domestic political problems and the resolution of international political strife.[92] These levels of order are not severable from one another. Hereditary monarchs are generally more concerned with their own wealth and power than

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[89] Michael Williams concurs in reading this "second image" as integral to the critique of Saint-Pierre. Williams, *The Realist Tradition and the Limits of International Relations*, 68-69.

[90] Saint-Pierre's position in the court seems to be one of the harmless idealist. Rousseau notes that ministers did not esteem the Abbé and the Abbé, in turn, regarded them as "children very proud of playing with big Dolls." Rousseau, "Fragments and Notes," 112.

[91] Carter, *Rousseau and the Problem of War*, 152.

[92] Georg Cavallar reads this link as Kantian in nature. It is true that both thinkers insist on the connection between the good of the individual and the good of the broader community, but the ways they build this connection are fundamentally different. Kant's belief in the progress of reason is much more similar to Saint-Pierre's political thought. Cavallar, *The Rights of* Strangers, 295.

they are with the financial wellbeing of their community. In a Europe dominated by monarchies, the personal *amour-propre* of kings is bound up with the *amour-propre* of nations. As the *Second Discourse* illustrates, a central problem in domestic politics is constraining *amour-propre* within the rulers and among the ruled. The institution of monarchy empowers rather than constrains this sentiment. The Abbé's federation attempts to provide international restraints by appealing to princes' economic sensibilities. His solution appeals to rational economic decisions and assumes that financial gain is the chief political motivation. Financial gain is a strong incentive for any government, but Rousseau's account of political life claims that financial wealth is regarded as a good because it is a way expressing power over others. The non-rational longing for domination cannot always be satisfied with money, but especially not when financial gains fall broadly across the international community. Rousseau's objection may target monarchical governments, but the implications of his argument apply to all regimes. Unconstrained *amour-propre* is a danger for any state that lacks the internal institutions to check it. One might claim that economic rationalism is such a constraint, but Rousseau's argument suggests this nothing more than a utilitarian ethic, the terms of which *amour-propre* defines.[93]

A successful confederation must appeal to more than reason. Confederation must address the problem of national *amour-propre*. The satisfaction of rationalizing international politics will not be a sufficient restraint on leaders' ambitions. Political solutions, whether they are domestic or international, must be grounded in sentiment. It is more probable that this type of attachment can come into being within states. As the

[93] Williams, *Realist Tradition*, 69.

discussion of lawgivers in the *Government of Poland* illustrates, laws, myth, and civic rituals can build sentimental attachments between individuals and their community. An effect of civic participation in things like national games or electoral competition is that this participation turns the desire for status towards the service of the community. Domestic politics serves to limit *amour-propre* by harnessing it for the public good. A rationally based federation of the sort that the Abbé proposes can offer more efficient administration, but nothing in the federation's articles build the sort of participatory attachments that turn the *amour-propre* of a nation to the service of a common good. The federation speaks almost exclusively to the material interests of state leaders. It is possible for them to participate, but no aspect of the proposal connects the citizens of one country with those of another.

The success of Saint-Pierre's plan, therefore, depends entirely on the instrumental rationality of state leaders. Rousseau alludes to the danger of this type of rational model in the closing lines of the "Abstract" itself. Although the Abbé has attempted to take human beings as they are, "unjust, greedy, and preferring their self-interest to everything," he has assumed that this self-interest will guide rulers to see "what is useful to them" and endow them with "enough courage to bring about their own happiness."[94] The plan itself may be good, but to provide wholly rational solutions to problems stemming from *amour-propre* is to attempt to be wise in the midst of fools. This, Rousseau concludes, is its own kind of insanity.[95]

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[94] Rousseau, "Abstract," 49.

[95] Ibid.

Short-term Alliances

These deep hesitations about Saint-Pierre's plan and Rousseau's belief that federation comes about through the machinations of an ambitious statesman support the view that Rousseau diagnoses problems without providing solutions for them. It is true that he does not offer an alternative plan for confederation, but there is one remaining possibility—short-term alliances. He suggests this possibility in the remarks that conclude the *Considerations on the Government of Poland*, where he advocates an alliance with the Turks. To examine this possibility in the context of Rousseau's hesitations regarding confederation reinforces the point that Rousseau is open to the possibility for international cooperation, but regards it as an imperfect solution. To suggest an alliance with Turkey is to suggest an apparent departure from other advice in the *Government of Poland* and in the "Judgment."[96] Because these comments are exceptional, they provide insight into the occasions that Rousseau thinks necessitate international alliances and the limits that Rousseau sees for collective security institutions.

As I have argued, Rousseau's primary objective in the *Government of Poland* is to empower Poland for independence and self-rule. Rousseau understands that any constitutional changes will make Poland vulnerable because constitutional transformations result in a period of weakness as citizens learn to function within new institutions. It is, therefore, imperative for a fledgling country to secure a period of tranquility during which it can work on itself without interference and "rejuvenate one's

[96] Rousseau, *Government of Poland,* 256.

constitution."[97] Because this period of tranquility is essential to political development, Rousseau suggests that the Poles carefully explore the possibility of a military ally: "Although I set no store by the external security acquired by treaties, this unique set of circumstances may perhaps force you to lean as much as possible on this support, if one is to gauge the present disposition of those who will be dealing with you."[98] It may be possible to find a reliable military ally to help Poland buy the time it needs to establish its new government. Rousseau emphasizes that this is not a broad endorsement of all alliances, and he is especially concerned that Poland not overestimate the reliability of its immediate neighbors. Rousseau says, "Do not count on alliances and treaties to be of any consequence. All this is worthless with Christian powers. They know no other bonds than those of self-interest."[99] An alliance is never an altruistic arrangement. It is successful when all members to the agreement accurately predict the others' interests and behaviors. An alliance may signal shared objectives, but states break their promises as soon as they find their interests have changed.

Having issued these caveats, Rousseau suggests that Turkey will be Poland's most likely source of assistance. The Sultan's court is vulnerable to the same types of intrigues as European monarchies, but at the time Turkey was fighting Russia. For this reason, it may be interested in supporting Poland's rebellion in order to deplete further Russia's economic and military resources.[100] With these shared interests in mind, Poland should court Turkey's immediate assistance in a twenty-year treaty with Turkey, proposed in

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[97] Ibid., 255.

[98] Ibid., 256.

[99] Ibid.

[100] Ibid.

terms that are "strong and as clear as possible."[101] This may not prevent Russia from invading, but it is the best chance that Poland has to discourage an attack and secure the time necessary to implement the new constitution. If the alliance succeeds in providing Poland with a twenty-year respite, Rousseau believes that Poland will be able to defend itself with its own militia and compel an invader to leave in frustration.[102]

This argument sheds additional light on Rousseau's opinions about international cooperation. Alliances are useful when they have limited aims and there is little chance of accomplishing essential national goals apart from outside support. This alliance would have both political and temporal limits; it is intended as a short-term counter to Russia that expires after twenty years. Poland's goal during these years is to achieve domestic political stability and develop its militia. Poland is not seeking a perpetual alliance or to resolve a universal political problem like the existence of war. Furthermore, the proposed alliance appeals to Turkey's ambitions, especially those related to its enmity with Russia. Shared enmity makes cooperation more likely, but Rousseau warns that court ministers define national objectives in capricious and irrational ways. Even clear political advantages may not be sufficient to secure Turkey's help. Despite these uncertainties, this advice shows that Rousseau understands and accepts the importance of turning other nations' *amour-propre* to the good of one's own state. This advice differs from Saint-Pierre's in that Rousseau explicitly connects the possibility for cooperation to particular security interests within a specific time horizon. This is not a perpetual alliance based on

[101] Ibid., 257.

[102] Ibid., 258.

apparent commonalities like religious and cultural similarities; rather, this alliance reflects the more powerful and binding interest in national self-preservation.

There are, therefore, occasions when Rousseau acknowledges that an alliance can help meet essential domestic security or economic goals. Discerning when one's own state is in such a position is a matter of political prudence, not a condition that Rousseau explicitly defines. Even in these situations, Rousseau emphasizes that cooperation with other states is not a panacea; total security is inaccessible and transparent cooperation nonexistent. He writes, "But except for this one case and, perhaps at different times, for a few commercial treaties, do not wear yourselves out with vain negotiations…and do not count on alliances and treaties to be of any consequence."[103] If this is the case, then states should primarily pursue self-reliance and look to other states for supplemental aid when necessity compels them. There may be rare occasions in which outside assistance contributes to a state's independence but this is the exception, not the rule. Rousseau places little faith in diplomacy, because maintaining ambassadors is financially exhausting and an unreliable method of obtaining peace or security.[104] This rejection of diplomacy is not an endorsement of egoism and war; it is better understood as a critique of the institutions of international society and, perhaps, a dismissal of the concept of international society itself. Cooperation between states occurs when there is a convergence between the *amour-propre* of two or more nations; both feel that they are no longer self-sufficient or capable of protecting their own autonomy. Cooperation is a way to appear stronger than one actually is; it is an attempt to extend the power of one's own

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[103] Rousseau, "Government of Poland," 256.

[104] Georg Cavallar also interprets Rousseau to be skeptical of diplomacy as an institution that "degenerates into a tool of tyranny." Cavallar, *The Rights of Strangers*, 295.

state through the assistance of another. This type of behavior tends towards the dangerous forms egoism that Rousseau criticizes rather than the acts of self-assertion that he endorses. It may be necessary for state leaders to venture into these dangerous waters on behalf of their state, but Rousseau's presents alliances as temporary and partial solutions. The twenty-year limit on the proposed alliance with Turkey suggests that the objective is for the state to secure its autonomy and conclude its dependence on another power. International institutions, including alliances, are insufficient to resolve the grand problems of international politics and they distract from participation in domestic political life.

Thus, alliances are not even potentially a solution to the problem of war; they are an expression of the miseries of an international politics marked by *amour-propre*. Alliances are an expedient to which states may be driven by the threat of war, not a sign of international transformation. Rousseau's construction of international politics is firmly rooted in the notion that all political life is flawed. Political innovations and transformations can improve the lives of individual human beings and cultivate shared interests between states, but they cannot eliminate *amour-propre*, nor constrain it indefinitely. To the degree that solutions exist for the problems of international politics, they are short-term and confined to particular problems.

Conclusion: Rousseau and Realism

Instead of perfecting international political institutions, Rousseau searches for ways to improve domestic politics and attempts to subordinate foreign policy to domestic political goals. Poland seeks an alliance with Turkey not for the sake peace with Turkey, but because it needs the opportunity for constitutional transition. International

cooperation is not something that Rousseau thinks about as a good in itself; it is a buttress for the domestic life of states. Rousseau's commitment to civic engagement may at least partially explain the secondary role for international relations. People are self-governing citizens when they participate in the political life of their community. Rousseau expects a very high degree of participation, not just in elections, but also in the process of ruling and creating a shared political identity. He realizes that this approach to politics is very demanding and becomes increasingly difficult in geographically large states. What is difficult in a large state is nearly impossible at the international level. International political institutions do not admit wide participation. Citizens must trust their leaders to represent their interests. Because participation is so limited, citizens cannot develop the same type of attachment to international institutions as they can to domestic ones. For most citizens, the state will always mediate their understandings of obligation to outsiders. Rational interests, even shared ones, are not enough to build strong attachments between people who otherwise do not share a common life.

Recognition of these limits helps to explain Rousseau's objections to Saint-Pierre's plan and his insistence that international agreements be directed towards short-term goods. Rational calculations, particularly financial calculations, are the central political motive for states to join the permanent European diet. Only a select few from within state bureaucracies have the opportunity to participate in this diet. General financial gains are not a strong enough form of attachment to bind competitive states to one another. For a confederation to approach success, its leader must appeal to states' *amour-propre*, their desire for relative gains over other states. Alliances between two states, however, are not mass appeals to a universal rational interest. They attempt to

coordinate the national *amour-propre* of two states, not a multitude of them. Furthermore, the type of alliance that Rousseau urges upon Poland will not produce an external political body over which the citizens of Poland have little influence. An ad hoc alliance with Turkey includes more possibilities for the citizens of Poland to influence the terms of the agreement and deliberate as to whether or not it advances their national interest. Rousseau, therefore, treats alliances as instrumental goods that exist for the sake of particular states, not a sense of international community or an identifiable global common good.

Finally, Rousseau insists that political solutions are temporary. The alliance with Turkey would be set to expire in twenty years; the Abbé's plan would claim to exist for perpetuity. There are limits to what human institutions can accomplish: "All the works of men are imperfect, transitory and perishable, as they themselves are."[105] Any solution that claims to be perpetual or universal is one that does not understand the nature of politics. By turning away from the international towards life within the state, Rousseau focuses attention on the types of political solutions that are accessible to many citizens. There are times when international problems have direct bearing on domestic political concerns, and these are the types of matters that Rousseau thinks can be resolved. At least in part, this is because there is no possibility for a genuine community among states, solutions to international problems must begin at a lower level of political order.

These features of Rousseau's international thought further qualify Rousseau's similarities to the school of Constructivism and reveal important foundations for Classical Realism. The Abbé Saint Pierre's hope for peace is not altogether different from

[105] Rousseau, *Government of Poland*, 260.

the one that Wendt articulates. For Wendt, as for Saint-Pierre, history and political identity are important elements of international politics. Shared history provides the context for understanding political objectives. To put Saint-Pierre's argument in Wendt's terms, the states of Europe, with their shared legal and religious history, mutually participate in the construction of one another's national identities and political expectations. This "intersubjective" relationship can be improved by formalizing institutions to protect the status quo and pave the way for cooperation in the future. A collective security arrangement, like the one the Abbé suggests, facilitates a relationship in which states regard one another as friends. According to Wendt, international friendship comes about when a group of two or more states accept one another as legitimate sovereign actors, resolve to settle disputes through arbitration rather than violence, and support one another against third party attacks. Furthermore, Wendt argues that a high level of order such as this comes into being through international progress. States, when they arrive at a point of international friendship, find it so beneficial that it is extremely unlikely for them to forsake these benefits and revert to a less cooperative relationship.

Rousseau, although he agrees with the notion that human institutions are the work of history and human ingenuity, rejects the notion of political progress and questions whether any institution can overcome *amour-propre*. Time and human nature present serious limits to any political solution. Decay is always part of the human experience, even the political experience. Even the best institutions will fall apart and their good effects become lost within the storm of rival ambitions. Politics remains a struggle for power. Rousseau's argument, therefore, resonates with the classical realism of Hans

Morgenthau, particularly the critique of rationalism and defense of statesmanship in *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*. While they offer similar criticisms of rationalist institutions, they provide very different visions for how international politics might be tamed. Morgenthau creates room for international statesmanship to build an international community and balance the rivalries that exist between states. Rousseau also looks to the prudence of a statesman, but he does not identify an international community; a statesman's greatness seems to be related to the ability to hold international ambitions at bay and return energy to the internal life of a state.

Morgenthau's *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* confronts the problem of political rationalism in the early twentieth century. He associates the rationalism of his day with the League of Nations, the Treaty of Versailles, and the intellectual milieu that gave rise to these institutions. Versailles and the League both exalted peace, cooperation, and democratic self-determination as rational and economically beneficial goals that should guide the lawful conduct of international affairs. The international community secured the promises of the great powers to venerate these ideals as law and to set aside non-rational and aristocratic forms of diplomacy that prevailed up to this point.[106] The underlying assumption was that conflict derived from aristocratic ambition. Democracy checks this ambition and open communication between states prevents the senseless misunderstandings that might otherwise produce wars. The newly coined discipline of Political Science hailed the treaty for its democratic sensibilities and the mathematical precision its solutions provided to historic conflicts.[107] Much like Saint-Pierre's plan for

[106] Morgenthau, *Scientific Man*, 78-81.

[107] "The struggle for markets, disarmament, the relation between the "haves" and the "have-nots," peaceful change, and the peaceful organization of the world in general—these are not "political" problems

the peace of Europe, these efforts assumed that Europe's history paved the way for peace; all that was needed was a coordinating institution to reduce disagreements to rational propositions and then harmonize the competing interests between states.

Morgenthau, however, argues that these are the very reasons Versailles and the League proved to be so ineffective.[108] These institutions failed to recognize that political problems are not wholly rational and do not admit of wholly rational solutions. Morgenthau argues that remedies to political problems must begin with the recognition that the lust for power, common to all people, is bound up in social life. The lust for power cannot be eliminated, but human reason and ingenuity can limit its destructive effects.[109] Statesmanship, the ability of a leader to evaluate political problems, weigh the consequences of his or her actions, and make prudent decisions with respect to state interests, is one of the most important ways he sees to curb the destructive tendencies of political life.[110] Morgenthau's account of statesmanship, like Rousseau's discussion of international politics, emphasizes the significance of short-term remedies to international problems. Both thinkers, therefore, look to the domestic realm and the insights of particular leaders as way to limit nations' international objectives and ameliorate the struggle for international power.

There is, however, an important distinction between Morgenthau's statesmanship and the type of statesmanship that Rousseau advocates in the lawgiver. This distinction

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to be solved temporarily and always precariously on the basis of the respective distribution of power among quarreling nations and of its possible balance. They are "technical" problems for which reason will find one, the correct solution, to the exclusion of all others, the incorrect ones." Ibid., 92.

[108] Ibid., 94-95.

[109] Ibid., 9-10.

[110] Ibid., 10.

qualifies Rousseau's relationship with the realist tradition. For Morgenthau, statesmanship necessarily entails participation in the creation and maintenance of an international balance of power, whereas, for Rousseau, a statesman is one who judiciously engages the international realm without becoming part of it. The statesman's fundamental identity and loyalty is to the domestic good of his or her state. From Rousseau's perspective a balance of power system requires acts of leadership that necessarily draw leaders into the international realm in ways that excite his or her *amour-propre* and distract from the community's internally established identity and objectives. In effect, Morgenthau's statesman makes possible international society while Rousseau's promotes states that are internally ordered such that they can exist as autonomous and self-defined wholes.

"Since," Morgenthau writes, "the balance of power is the essence and stabilizing factor of international relations, the distribution of power is here never permanently settled but always precarious and subject to continuous fluctuations. In the international sphere the reduction of political problems to scientific propositions is never possible for the problem of distribution of power is ever present and can be solved only by political decision and not by scientific devices."[111]Statesmen are those who have the ability to create and preserve this balance. The process of balancing international interests is what serves as a check on the lust for power. To balance international power is to voluntarily submit oneself to checks imposed by other states. This is not to say that the national

[111] Ibid., 103-104. This interpretation of statesmanship is further supported elsewhere in Morgenthau's writings. For instance, he writes, "International politics can be defined as a continuing effort to maintain and to increase the power of one's own nation and to keep in check or reduce the power of other nations." Statesmen and diplomats, not technocrats or political scientists, are the best hope for conducting politics with a view towards moral principles, even if these principles cannot be implemented perfectly. Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Twilight of International Morality," *Ethics* Vol 58. No. 2 (January 1948), 80.

interest is given over to the control of other states, but that statesmen must consider national objectives within the context of international expectations.[112]

Rousseau's "Judgement" acknowledges that plans for international cooperation can perform useful balancing functions, but his theory does not leave room (or create room) for a durable international community either among leaders or between states. These external influences distract from domestic political life and encumber the types of institutions like those that Rousseau suggests for Poland. When other states carry out the responsibility of imposing limits on one's own national and political ambitions, the identity and appearance of one state becomes dependent upon the identity and appearance of others. Being and appearing may be one thing domestically, but take on a different or less resolute role internationally.

Perhaps this is because Rousseau does not treat international politics as a political framework in its own right and is skeptical that an international balance of power can be an act of nobility or moderation. The example of Henri IV illustrates the formation of a coalition to balance the Hapsburg Empire. This coalition might have the effect of checking Hapsburg ambitions, but it also amplifies King Henri's *amour-propre* by expanding his power over others. From Rousseau's perspective, the way to mitigate international strife is to turn ambitions inwards towards the domestic life of the state and maintain consistency between the being and appearing of one's own state. International coalitions serve to extend the national self, inflating the self-worth of both the strong states that originate them and the smaller states that seek protection.

[112] Morgenthau, "Twilight of International Morality," 82.

On this point, the idea of *amour-propre* contributes something important to a classical realist understanding of the relationship between human nature and international politics. *Amour-propre* describes both the human tendency to measure the self in terms of others and the salutary possibility for human pity and compassion. Rousseau sees clearly that these two tendencies spring up together and manifest themselves first in trivial ways—the unhealthy comparisons with others dancing around the camp fire, or the visceral reaction against seeing other creatures suffer. But these trivial responses give way to actions and institutions with far greater consequences (the federation of Henri IV or the *Social Contract's* civil religion, for example). The paradox of *amour-propre* is that it is both natural and continually in the process of social construction. It is concerned for others and concerned for self. In this concept, Rousseau provides a term for classical realism's attempts to explain the complexity of the human experience by attributing both problems and remedies to the same source—human nature.

Amour-propre is more than a term to justify the seemingly circular nature of a realism based on human nature. Rousseau's argument has the effect of holding classical realists to a greater level of consistency by insisting that human ambition and desire for status over others may differ in degree but cannot differ in kind. *Amour-propre* explains the dynamics of the pettiest rivalries between individuals and the grandest projects of international relations. This consistency further qualifies his relationship with Morgenthau's classical realism. Morgenthau also describes two forms of self-interest: selfishness and the *animus dominandi*. His description of these concepts is not as developed as the one between *amour de soi* and *amour-propre*, but they play a similar role in explaining political conflict. Selfishness, like *amour de soi* is related to bodily

needs and desires for material comforts. Because it is fundamentally related to materials, Morgenthau argues that there will always be limits to human selfishness. The *animus dominandi* does not know such limits; its realm is the imagination and its objectives are never fully satisfied by any material acquisition. Wars and other forms of international conflict are related to the *animus dominandi*.[113] At first glance the effects of "will to power" are quite similar to those of *amour-propre*. Morgenthau describes it in these terms: "This lust for power manifests itself as the desire to maintain the range of one's own person with regard to others, to increase it, or to demonstrate it. In whatever disguises it may appear, its ultimate essence and aim is in one of these particular references of one person to others."[114] Both produce a will to dominate others and experience personal validation through the creation of a hierarchy between self and others between your own state and other communities. Both Morgenthau and Rousseau contend that these dispositions distort or at least tinge every social interaction.[115]

There are two differences between the two that suggest a deviation between Rousseau's realism and that of Morgenthau. The first is slight. One might be inclined to argue that it is more rhetorical than genuine, but it has significant implications. Employing the "will to power" to explain the moral problem of political life invokes Nietzschean rhetoric; this sort of problem affects the few and the great, not all of humanity. To a degree this tendency appears in Morgenthau's own writing. Morgenthau

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[113] Morgenthau, *Scientific Man*, 192.

[114] Ibid.

[115] "There is no social action which would not contain at least a trace of this desire to make one's own person prevail against others. It is this ubiquity of the desire for power which, besides and beyond any particular selfishness or other evilness of purpose, constitutes the ubiquity of evil in human action." Ibid., 194.

acknowledges that the will to power taints all social action, but he emphasizes its role in ambitious leaders (Stalin, Hitler, and Alexander the Great), strong states (Imperial Britain), fictional characters remembered for their short-sighted commitment to their own erotic longings (Don Juan and Faust).[116] These are defensible illustrations, but these examples are of great men whose actions seem to transcend the appetites and ambitions of all others. For these reasons, the will to power appears to be different from *amour-propre*.

Rousseau describes *amour-propre* as a danger accessible to everyone, and explicitly acknowledges that evil tendencies accompany even the best-constituted states. *Amour-propre* influences all people, even the ideal characters in Rousseau's writings. It is a problem for Emile, it is a danger in the state created in the *Social Contract*, and it creates serious obstacles to Polish independence. While Morgenthau appears to agree with Rousseau on the pervasiveness of the desire for relative status, Rousseau articulates more precisely why conflict is inherent to social life. *Amour-propre* begins in petty ways and is a danger to all people; the dangers that it creates for social life appear before every member of the community. For both states and individuals, this form of self-love drives a wedge between what one is and what one would appear to be. The deeper this wedge grows, the more unstable social relationships become.

Second, this distinction becomes even more apparent in the contrast between how each thinker would resolve the problem. Again, there is a superficial similarity between the solutions, for both authors underscore the importance of a national leadership in resolving the problem. Morgenthau would turn the will to power against itself, and makes

[116] Ibid., 193, 194.

the case that stable international politics depends on leaders who work to balance their will to power and are willing to formalize this balance with international institutions. Rousseau, by contrast, has argued that the limits to *amour-propre* take the shape of institutions within states; international institutions do not create a participatory community and cannot reliably check leaders' ambitions.[117] Statesmen are capable of navigating the international realm, but insist on turning the states focus inward so that its domestic institutions have the opportunity to limit international ambitions.

Morgenthau leaves room for the will to power to express itself; the prudent and self-aware leader is the one who uses this passion to establish his or her own authority domestically but then accepts moderate international aims. A statesman is one with the ability and the willingness to check his or her own international ambitions and pursue an international order that preserves a balance between national wills to power. From this perspective, the statesman's efforts are rightly directed toward the international realm; the checks on the will to power exist within a diplomatic community of statesman and the statesman's ability to discipline his or her own ambitions.

Rousseau is more critical of human beings' ability to hold power and avoid the evils of their own *amour-propre*. Human beings desire the power to command and no institution can wholly eliminate this desire. The checks to this danger are not entrusted to other states or state leaders, but must develop within one's own community. Statesmen, therefore, do not pursue an international society; they pursue an independent and self-sufficient state. Nothing in Rousseau's argument indicates that human beings can ever

[117] Morgenthau is no fool; he recognizes that rulers and diplomats employ moral pretexts even for unscrupulous actions. Morgenthau, more so than Rousseau, is prepared to accept this as a necessary part of political life. Rousseau, intent on reconciling being and appearing, does not make this concession to necessity. Morgenthau, "The Twilight of International Morality," 79.

move beyond the pursuit of these goals. It is tempting to call this a national idealism because he places so much hope in the content of domestic politics. One might more charitably choose to describe this posture as one of responsibility. If the conduct of international politics can be made more just and less egoistic, it is by changing or even re-forming the expectations and ambitions of international actors. Rousseau would make these changes in accordance with an ideal—the natural goodness of man. To hold this ideal as a standard of judgment is different from being an idealist. Rousseau is not imposing a vision of political life that is oblivious to the historic and political obstacles between the standard and the reality.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

Statecraft and Statesmanship

Rousseau calls his own political thought a "sad and great System"; perhaps this is because it acknowledges both the potential for human greatness and the inevitable demise of all political institutions.[1] The implications of his thought, while tragic, are not reluctant; they are the result of critical reflection not exasperation. To be sure, Rousseau offers a sustained critique of political life, including the possibilities for genuine knowledge and progress, and the conduct of international relations. Politics, for Rousseau, is tragic because it carries within itself the causes of its own destruction. But to acknowledge the tragedy of political life is not to abdicate responsible political action or minimize the importance of well-founded communities. For Rousseau, the study of politics enables human beings to become good for themselves and good for others. Human efforts to protect this goodness produce imperfect institutions that eventually fail, but within this struggle is the opportunity for expressions of dignity and greatness as human beings engage in the struggle for individual and political wholeness.

The goals of my project have been to show the consistency of Rousseau's international thought with his other political writings, and to place his arguments in conversation with the international theories of realism, constructivism, and occasionally liberal institutionalism. Rousseau provides significant insights to each of these schools of

[1] Rousseau, "Preface of a Second Letter to Bordes," *The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, ed. and trans. Victor Gourevitch (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 108.

IR theory because he is not explicitly an international theorist. He is, above all, a political philosopher interested in illustrating and protecting that natural goodness of human beings. The good life of the individual cannot be isolated from the pursuit of a just state or of a just international realm. Rousseau, therefore, explicitly places the goodness of the individual in conversation with the study of international politics. All politics, even international politics, is for the sake of human goodness; human judgment and choice are important to the formation of just communities and to the dynamics of the international realm. The competitive and egoistic dynamics that exist between states are not immutable conditions, but social dynamics that Rousseau traces back to the formation of *amour-propre* within individual human beings. Because Rousseau understands *amour-propre* as a socially constructed feature of human nature, he regards the problems that arise from it as results of habituation rather than immutable attributes of social life. He is, therefore, hopeful that manipulating individual and national expressions of this sentiment can diminish the egoism and rivalry common to social life. Because the root of social egoism is open to change or manipulation, citizens and governments are not driven by necessity but retain moral agency over their political actions, even international ones. International politics is not given over to the tyranny of necessity but remains within the realm of human agency and choice.

To conclude my analysis of Rousseau's international thought, I summarize my interpretation of his argument, consolidate the implications for IR theory, and consider the ongoing significance of Rousseau's approach.

Summary of the Argument

In *Emile* Rousseau explicitly connects the study of international relations to the search for human beings' natural goodness. The appearance of international politics in this text demonstrates the importance of international politics in Rousseau's thought but, more importantly, it provides an answer to the question of why international relations matter to individual human beings. Dependence on other human beings is an unavoidable problem of social life; Rousseau calls this social dependence that alienates the natural self from the social self *amour-propre*. Under its influence, to be and to appear become different things and our social interactions expand our appetites beyond our ability to satisfy them. Even Emile's physical isolation and natural education do not free him from biological and sentimental attachments. Through his betrothed wife, Sophie, Emile learns that even the smallest and most natural of social bonds, like those found in the life of a family, give rise to wider networks of attachment, including attachments to a political community. Political life is dangerous in part because it creates additional dependencies between Emile and others; these political attachments give rise to occasions that draw Emile further out of himself and may compel him to act as others wish him to behave—perhaps as a soldier doing the bidding of his state.

The tutor sees that Emile cannot escape social obligations or the dangers that arise from them, but the tutor can prepare Emile to meet the complexities of social life without losing himself. Emile's education begins in isolation so that he learns to understand himself in relation to his physical needs and abilities. After Emile is grounded in this self-knowledge, the tutor leads him to study politics and to seek a community that can be his country if not his fatherland. The tutor's goal for Emile is that he might remain good for

himself and become good for others, even as his network of social obligations expands. Emile's political education illustrates that individuals remain responsible for their actions, even when these actions are bound up in the larger historical process of socialization. Human beings have choices as to where they live and the types of obligations they develop with others. Emile studies politics that he might learn how to make these choices well. The study of politics, then, is carried out for the sake of the individual and intended to protect the good of the person even as the individual becomes a member of an imperfect community.

Emile articulates the problems that *amour-propre* presents for individuals, but Rousseau is clear that this form of self-regard has dangerous effects on all political institutions. *Amour-propre* features prominently in Rousseau's thought because he uses it to connect individual corruption with the corruption of political life. *Amour-propre* corrupts because it destroys self-sufficiency, rendering human beings dependent on the opinions of others, extending human need and the concept of the self beyond what the individual needs and can secure on his or her own. The problem of the divided self is not limited to individuals. Collective bodies such as states develop a similar problem; states understand their purpose and the interests, not by looking inward to the will of the community (the collective self), but by referring to the opinions and ambitions of other states. By presenting the problem in this way, Rousseau connects the individual's sentiment of *amour-propre* with the egoistic actions that take place between states. Rousseau attempts to deal with this problem on the individual level by cultivating an understanding of the self that is independent from the opinions of others. His solution is to balance *amour-propre* with other passions. Although proposing this solution requires

the use of reason, Rousseau deliberately avoids making a purely rational argument to illustrate the need to limit *amour-propre*. Rousseau applies a similar approach to the problem of national *amour-propre*, checking national egoism with sentiments of self-sufficiency and self-assertion rather than by condemning egoistic behavior as irrational.

The features of human nature that Rousseau uses to check individual *amour-propre* are related to another form of self-love that he calls *amour de soi*. This type of self-regard exists prior to human social life. Self-preservation and pity are the two sentiments that Rousseau mentions in conjunction with this dimension of human nature. These sentiments differ from the egoism born out of *amour-propre* because they define one's own good without referring to others' opinions and do not necessarily regard one's own wellbeing as standing in conflict with the good of others. Self-preservation is a natural desire that Rousseau describes as a natural law and a duty to oneself. Obeying the law and satisfying this personal duty may bring people into conflict with one another, but these conflicts do not produce war or a systemic desire to harm others. These struggles may be violent, but they are related to self-assertion for the sake of limited biological needs like food, shelter, security, or a mate. This is not a struggle to establish power or a hierarchy over others. This explanation of human nature is not idyllic in the sense that human being exist in automatic harmony, but presents an understanding of conflict in which it is possible to assert oneself without participating in an egoistic struggle for relative power. To understand self-preservation as a natural form of conflict is to explain strife without embracing aggression as a necessary facet of human life.

Pity is a way of comparing oneself to others without feeling envy or jealousy. Rousseau associates it with self-love because one pities those who are in a worse position

than oneself. Recognition of this situation requires one to abstract from the self and imagine the feelings of another. The result of this abstraction and comparison is not jealousy or a desire for the esteem of others, but satisfaction and joy in one's own position. Pity illustrates a way to engage others without losing the quality of contentment. Rousseau suggests that its effects may transcend the sentiments and produce acts of compassion towards those in need. Rousseau never claims that these two sentiments represent the spectrum of human reactions or that they prevent the *amour-propre* or its dangerous tendencies. He argues, however, that these pre-social forms of self-regard may be cultivated to make possible a way of life that leads to greater self-sufficiency and self-definition.

The need for self-preservation, even in the state of nature, indicates that conflict cannot be eliminated from the human experience, but the fear of others' success that emanates from *amour-propre* is not a biological or even social necessity. Although some level of social insecurity and competition is unavoidable, these patterns of thought and behavior are learned through interactions. Individuals learn to be ambitious and learn to seek power over others. States also take on competitive or egoistic characteristics, in part because of the *amour-propre* of those living within them, but also through the social experiences they have with other states. Political enmity and war are social developments that form through relationships with other states; they are not imposed by the structure of social life itself.

Rousseau, by viewing conflict and egoism in these terms, suggests that a way to check or perhaps reduce conflict is to limit the expressions of *amour-propre*. *Emile* indicates that the problem at the individual level can be mitigated through a particular

kind of education that reinforces sentiments to counter *amour-propre*. Rousseau is less explicit on how to address this problem at the national level. The *Second Discourse* and the "State of War" claim that national *amour-propre* differs in degree rather than kind from that experienced by the individual, but political institutions do not have naturally countervailing sentiments. States' passions must be limited by artificial means. The guidance that self-preservation and pity provide to human beings in the state of nature must be mimicked with conventional institutions whose effects are similar to those of self-preservation and pity. In the *Social Contract* Rousseau explicitly takes up the challenge of excavating the features of human nature that can guide political life. In so doing, he provides a sort of education for states that illustrates the political principles necessary for states to check their own *amour-propre* and pursue political self-sufficiency.

The *Social Contract* begins with an account of political authority as a type of power that is established through the mutual consent of ruler and the ruled and in which rulers exercise authority for the good of the ruled. Unlike parental authority, political power exists only by convention; the principles of consent and governance for the good of the ruled limit the political convention. Although states form a "common self," Rousseau is clear that this collective body operates under important constraints, even when the state establishes its own authority or defends itself against other states. State action is not self-justifying; the exercise of power and political rule depends on establishing legitimate foundations for this authority. Consent and benevolent authority limit the internal life of a state, but they also serve as guides to the state's international

affairs. These limits appear as Rousseau discusses the just role of war and the relationship between war and political authority.

In an argument that parallels Rousseau's discussion of self-preservation, the *Social Contract* identifies appropriate uses for war but also insists that it cannot generate authority. War is a necessary means of self-defense. Militaries provide important and even noble opportunities for citizens to assert their right to their own community and protect this community from outside threats. War can preserve a state's life but Rousseau insists that military victory is not a legitimate basis for authority over another community. This understanding of war acknowledges the responsibility for communities to preserve themselves, but separates victorious self-preservation from political rule. War justly protects the "common self" but it does not expand the self. In this way, Rousseau brings the understanding of war closer to the natural role of self-preservation.

The possibility for national pity is a bit more complicated. Rousseau does not identify an institutional analogue for the sentiment of pity, but the effects of this sentiment bear important similarities to the effects of the *Social Contract's* civil religion. The existence of pity in the state of nature suggests that human beings are capable of interacting without falling into dangerous comparisons. To pity is to compare oneself to another and be thankful for one's own position. But pity may transcend benign comparison; it is a sentimental response to another's suffering in which one person recognizes his or her own vulnerability by witnessing another's pain. At its most basic level, it cultivates awareness of shared sentience. Pity makes one aware of shared humanity and the responsibility to show concern for the lives of others because they are human and we recognize that we, too, are vulnerable to misfortune.

Rousseau describes the civil religion of the *Social Contract* in terms of its desired effects, which he opposes to other religious forms that either dehumanize those outside of a particular community or claim to transcend earthly communities altogether. He advocates a national religion that supports state authority and that teaches people reverence for the laws of the state without dehumanizing those outside of it. The tenets of this religion are few in number. Adherents to the faith acknowledge a powerful and beneficent Deity who rewards the good and punishes the wicked; they hold the laws of the social contract to be inviolable, and renounce all forms of civil and theological intolerance. The last tenet of faith is especially significant as an analogue to pity because it speaks to the relationship between one community and another. To embrace civil and theological toleration is to insist on the need for pluralism. Pluralism may begin within a particular state, but to apply the principle consistently, it must extend beyond national boundaries. The national religion that Rousseau presents in the *Social Contract* calls citizens to respect laws and theologies different from their own. To disrespect, dehumanize, or war against another community because its theology or its regime is different from one's own is to violate the fundamental principles of consent and benevolent governance that support the social contract state. These principles of foreign policy are consistent with Rousseau's understanding of legitimate political authority. Although these principles forbid certain forms of aggression and call for civil and theological pluralism, Rousseau simultaneously affirms hearty devotion to the laws and to vibrant cultural forms within the state. His opposition to empire and to violent forms of political and religious orthodoxy is not designed to generate timorous self-criticism. Rather, he hopes to liberate political life from the sorts of comparisons that induce strong

states to impose their politics on others. Imperialism is not simply unjust towards the ruled; it undercuts the legitimacy of government and thereby weakens the political authority of the stronger state. The *Social Contract*'s teachings on war and civil religion affirm the need for a clear national interest, and they insist that this interest be consistent with the principles of legitimate governance and focus on the internal life of the state. Imperial rule obscures both of these political objectives: it produces an expansive national interest to which only a limited number of citizens may contribute and it violates the principle of consent which is a basic test of political legitimacy.

Rousseau's international thought addresses the problems of anarchy and aggression by proposing changes to the domestic constitutional structure and political self-understanding of independent states. Rousseau argues the way states understand themselves and their relationship with the international realm can moderate states' perceived need to behave egoistically. To use Kenneth Waltz's terms, Rousseau presents a second image solution to the problem of international politics. He focuses on states because states exist within constitutional boundaries and answer to particular rulers while the international realm does not. This posture acknowledges the power of international anarchy without agreeing that in the context of anarchy egoism must determine national behavior. Reforming the basis for political authority will not eliminate war but it can alter the way nations and their leaders perceive their own international roles. Thus, the manner in which states define and cultivate national identity and interest is tremendously important in Rousseau's thought. With realists, he accepts the durability of the nation-state system. But in his attempts to limit the lawful role of war and in advocating the principle of pluralism, he distances his own account of national interest from the

accusation that realism leads to an unscrupulous politics of *raison d'état*. In *Considerations on the Government of Poland* Rousseau identifies and advocates ways that a carefully defined national interest can empower a weak state and help it avoid confrontation with an imperial power. Rousseau presents national interest as a concept that can direct states towards a foreign policy of contentment rather than competition, and peace rather than confrontation. To achieve such outcomes is not easy, and Rousseau presents this project as a tremendous challenge. It requires acts of statesmanship that envision the content of national interest as well as institutional forms that translate political ideals into the ongoing civic practices.

Rousseau discerns Poland's national interest as he considers both domestic political needs and international pressures. The Poles' hope for maintaining a free community depends on their ability to distinguish themselves from their imperial neighbors, and be wholly devoted to the freedom of their state. Poland's national interest should reflect these two things as the community's highest political goods. From Rousseau's perspective, this interest is largely a restraining force. Organizing the state with respect to these principles demands tremendous sacrifice on the parts of rulers and the people. The rulers of Poland must set aside all hope of international prestige. They must not pursue the finery of their Russian neighbors and are to forego any plans to increase their status through alliance. The people as a whole also take on tremendous responsibility. They will have to give up bourgeois comforts and embrace an agrarian way of life that minimizes economic dependence on other states. Furthermore, it is through the will and participation of the people that the objectives of liberty and self-governance truly become *national interests*. Through participation in self-rule, the people

produce shared ideas about their identity, pursue these ideas on a daily basis, and in so doing, resist outsiders' attempts to undermine Poland's freedom. To reach these political objectives requires the insight of statesmen and the committed work of citizens. As in the *Social Contract*, Rousseau attempts to establish and support this interest through institutions, namely law and democratic participation. This attaches the idea of national interest to Poland's constitution.

Constitutions and the laws flowing from them need popular support, but their inception is the work of a statesman in that it both presents a political vision and translates this vision into practice. A constitution does not generate a common good *ex nihilo*, but it binds people together in pursuit of a common end under agreed upon laws and serves as an institutional demarcation. A constitution, therefore, has a role in the preservation and maintenance of a nation's identity and objectives. By studying and revising Poland's constitution, Rousseau attempts to re-enforce the basis for Poland's freedom and illustrates the types of statesmanship necessary for Poland to succeed as a nation. Up to this point Poland has been free; although there are significant problems in the existing constitution, Rousseau is hesitant to make obviously drastic change to a body of laws that has been successful. Instead, he attempts to work within existing constitutional forms; he modifies what is corrupt and broken, but attempts to retain the names and the helpful intentions of the organs of government. As he makes his revisions, he encourages the Poles to consider what they really want: ease of administration or freedom. He is willing to help them protect their freedom, but warns that a constitution is not a formula for political rest. As the framework within which a community struggles to maintain political order, laws generate activity not repose.

The role of a statesman, as Rousseau presents it, is to turn the nation's focus inward; Poland is to define its own political good without reference to the values and practices of other nations. Poland does not need more territory; rather, it needs a different way of understanding both itself and itself in relation to other countries. Poland needs a lawgiver and statesman to accomplish this work. Rousseau invokes the accomplishments of Moses, Lycurgus, and Numa as examples of the forms of statesmanship necessary to defend Poland's autonomy and avoid wars with neighboring states. These rulers are unique examples in that each founded domestic institutions that directed the community's political focus inward, turning civic energy towards the realization of a domestic political identity. The laws and institutions each founder gave to his people became the basis for a national identity rooted in shared ideas and communal practices. It is these shared understandings of identity and justice that become the basis for the enduring success of each founders' community. Shared ideas and shared ways of life make it possible to speak of a type of interest that transcends particular individuals or groups, and encompasses a whole nation.

Poland needs to accomplish something deeper than improving laws; it needs citizens who are committed to the ongoing struggle of political life. This requires citizens who love and support the laws that rule them. This more fundamental transformation requires a new way of thinking about community and civic obligation. The reformers' task, therefore, is not simply to revise the constitution, but to "re-found" Poland's old constitution so that the people bring a new vigor to the existing political framework. The confederation must renew the conscious pursuit of both domestic and international

freedom. Domestic freedom exists when all citizens can participate in self-governing political institutions.[2]

National interest, then, is found through the insight of a statesman and the willing participation of citizens in national institutions. Local political commitments provide individuals with an account of justice and an opportunity to share obligations with others. Through these experiences citizens come to subordinate their own *amour-propre* to the good of the community and, Rousseau suggests, recognize limits to the national self. For Rousseau, self-governance requires participation in civic life. He emphasizes the possibility for various levels of participation and leadership, but even the extensive network of public offices that Rousseau proposes has limits. Not all candidates can hold office; it is possible for a population to expand so much that people lose the opportunity to participate in governance. The limits of participatory governance suggest broader limits to the state itself; Rousseau's objective is to coordinate the possibility for participation with the extent of the state.

The national self can extend only so far as the participation for self-governance. This takes the standard of individual wholeness, understood as parity between desire and ability, and applies it to the political community. A nation's size, institutions, and common interest, work together to support self-governance. Balancing the conditions that support self-governance functions as a check on expressions of national *amour-propre*. To check national *amour-propre* is part of the ongoing work of politics, not something accomplished once and for all. Rousseau underscores the ongoing nature of this objective

[2] Jeffrey Smith, "Nationalism, Virtue, and the Spirit of Liberty in Rousseau's 'Government of Poland,'" *The Review of Politics* 65 no. 3 (Summer 2003), 434.

by requiring and teaching people to participate in distinctive cultural forms, to accept an economic status that their state can sustain without external trade networks, and to commit their national defense to a decentralized citizen-militia. These political strategies promote a national identity that is not contingent on the opinions of other states. If these things can be accomplished, if Poland can develop and assert a national identity and interest that it can sustain without the support of outside powers, it is then possible for Poland to avoid competition with other states and devote itself fully to the common life of its own people

Rousseau's argument confronts Russian tyranny and the necessity of power politics by emphasizing the possibility for choice even in the face of coercion. Nothing Poland does can *prevent* the strong from exploiting the weak, but Poland can frustrate exploitation by the way it conducts its internal politics. If Poland abstains from participating in regional power struggles, the Poles can devote themselves to deterrent strategies that may allow them to maintain self-rule. States can choose to define their community and understandings of political success in ways that do not support the political structures of the great powers.

While a national interest accomplishes good things for a community, Rousseau questions whether a genuinely national interest can exist for modern states. Widespread participation is central to Rousseau's plan for generating a national identity, teaching citizens to hold certain interests in common, and defending these interests above all else. Because participation is necessary, it will be difficult or even impossible for large states to realize a unifying national interest because the people with such a large state may not recognize the interests they share with one another. This is an important disparity

between Rousseau's theory and the practice of contemporary politics, but recent scholarship on national interest suggests that it is possible for such an interest to exist and limit international aims. But without the extensive network of citizens who participate in governing institutions, the burden of identifying and pursuing national interest falls primarily on national leaders. Rousseau places great importance on active citizenship but this is no substitute for the insight and prudence of national leaders who are responsible for the wellbeing of their people and for the maintenance of political institutions.

In these ways Rousseau believes that national institutions and the character of state leaders can influence the dynamics of international politics in ways that check aggression and limit competition. From this perspective, the study of international politics should focus on the preferences of states and their leaders; the implications of the anarchic international system appear to be of secondary importance. When states adopt aggressive and egoistic postures towards one another this is more a reflection of their internal characteristics and political will than it is a political necessity imposed by international life without a sovereign. This perspective, however, does not lead to any form of political progressivism, short term or teleological. Peace, justice, and political order, if they come into being, exist only in a fragile balance within particular states; they are preserved through the prudence of statesman and the devotion of citizens. Thus, Rousseau's political constructions are limited by the nature of political life itself; the historic process is not wholly determined by the will of the actors.

The limits of Rousseau's hope for politics become especially apparent in his writings on the Abbé Saint-Pierre. The "Abstract" and "Judgment" of the *Plan for Perpetual Peace* illustrate the underlying consistency of Rousseau's thought on the

problems of war and international cooperation. Furthermore, these texts critique international institutions as creatures of great powers and the ambitious men who lead them. On the rare occasions that these organizations succeed in providing peace, this peace comes at the expense of national autonomy; small states submit themselves to one or another of the dominant international actors. The substance of these arguments is frequently consistent with Morgenthau's realism, but in the final analysis Rousseau's views on statesmanship and his rejection of international society do not readily fit within any school of IR theory. Let us re-visit each of these distinctions briefly.

Statesmanship requires a sort of dual-vision. A statesman keeps the people's gaze fixed on the internal life of the state and turns public life towards a common good. Paradoxically, because the statesman is focused on the internal good of the state, his view must also encompass the international realm without drawing him into it. Like Rousseau in the *Government of Poland*, he shapes the state's common good by reference to international politics without becoming caught up in the struggle for international power.

The statesman's responsibility to his own community, combined with Rousseau's understanding of political obligation, rules out the possibility for an international society among state leaders. A statesman's obligations are to his own state, which is held together more by shared sentiments than by an alignment of rational aims. Political obligations develop and persist because of sentimental attachments to specific political institutions; these sentiments do not transcend particular states because the political institutions that generate them cannot be expanded to a universal level. For this reason, Rousseau's statesman does not pursue long-term international organizations. Without the participatory institutions that turn *amour-propre* towards a common good, reason and

self-interest are the only basis for participation within an international organization. Reason is not sufficient to generate a true community in which members are attached to one another; without sentimental bonds, there is no clear way of turning self-interest towards a common good. Interest may counter interest, but this represents an uneasy balance between the *amour-propre* of rivals, not a true society. Rousseau understands international organizations as partial social bonds that will provide both the opportunity and the means to continue the struggle for relative power.

From this perspective, to build a cooperative international organization or to proclaim a society among states is dangerous because the result cannot be more than a political façade masking an ongoing struggle for private gain. Because of these limitations, the statesman's task must remain two-fold: first, to keep the people's focus inward on establishing a common good independent from outside influence, and second to retain an awareness of the outside world and prudently form temporary associations with other states for the sake of preserving his own community. While it may be necessary to form these associations, it is always dangerous both for the statesman and for the independence of the state. Rousseau would mitigate the danger that international cooperation presents by insisting that the organization directly advances a domestic good and that it is of limited duration.

Rousseau and IR Theory

Rousseau shows himself to be a thoughtful observer of international affairs and a severe critic of international politics as it is currently practiced. His work produces insights into the dominant categories of contemporary international relations theory—

constructivism, liberalism, and realism. I will summarize his implications for each of these schools of thought.

Rousseau and Constructivism

Like Alexander Wendt, Rousseau recognizes the social construction of all political life, including international politics. Both authors agree that the constructive process implies that agency and responsibility for the institutions and norms of international relations continue to exist within individuals and states.[3] The absence of an over-arching political authority does not prescribe any one form of behavior.

While both agree that egoistic behavior is acquired through the social process, they differ as to when this behavior is learned and how the problem may be overcome. For Wendt, national egoism develops as a result of interactions between states. One reason that Wendt prefers this explanation of egoism is that he believes it avoids making assumptions about human nature.[4] If the source of international aggression is in state interactions, then the social construction of international politics can be altered by changing national policies in ways that modify the expectations that states have for one another. States, then, engage one another as enemies, rivals, or friends based on their experiences with one another, not based on the disposition or ambitions of leaders within the state. It is possible but not necessary that an initial interaction between states will reflect competition and the desire to overcome one another. With this framework in mind, Wendt suggests it is possible that egoism as the typical posture toward the international

[3] Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It," *International Organization* 46 no 2 (Spring, 1992), 402, 403.

[4] Ibid., 410.

realm developed in response to a minority of states that aggressively engaged one another. The aggression of a few, or even of one state, resulted in an international realm in which it was typical for states to regard one another as enemies.[5] This competitive logic of anarchy is not, however, the only possible outcome of the social process. Repeated interactions between states make it possible for states either to confirm the possibility that another state is their enemy or modify this expectation when states cooperate peaceably with one another. For Wendt, therefore, the process of international social construction takes place primarily at the national level.

In Rousseau's thought, this process begins with individuals. Individuals acquire patterns of behavior and dispositions as they move from the state of nature into political society. *Amour-propre* is the dimension of human nature that becomes the basis for social egoism and the accompanying fears about one's perceived status. Individuals bring these patterns of behavior into their political institutions and these institutions take on their own amplified forms of *amour-propre*. The process of social construction, therefore, tends towards corruption not perfection. The roots of this corruption are bound up in the very process of human association, although their effects change through interactions between communities.

Rousseau's argument, then, presents an alternate view of the source of egoism and aggression. They are not spontaneous responses to interactions between a predator state and other communities; the problem is bound up in human nature itself and latent within social life. Rousseau's argument, therefore, begins by addressing problems in human nature in order to understand and confront the problem of national aggression. Rousseau

[5] Ibid., 407, 408.

operates under the acknowledged assumption that human beings are naturally good.[6] Human goodness provides the standard by which he evaluates and modifies political institutions. He would protect natural goodness by cultivating particular aspects of human nature, countering *amour-propre* with *amour de soi*. He applies this understanding of human nature to political life by creating domestic political institutions that provide a similar check on national *amour-propre*. These divergent foundations produce radically different structures. Two features of Rousseau's construction are particularly important in this context. First, in Rousseau's view of international politics, the problems of international relations cannot be isolated from the problems of individual and state behavior. It is possible for international politics to become less competitive, aggressive, and egoistic, but for Rousseau these changes must begin at the levels of action subject to the clearest lines of authority—individuals and states. Second, to take human nature as a standard of goodness introduces normative standards of judgment into a theory of international politics. To argue for political institutions that allow one to be good for both self and others is to make ethical judgments about political life.[7]

There are also important differences between the international transformations that each author presents. The changes that Rousseau envisions are much more limited than those Wendt holds out as possibilities. Wendt argues that interactions between states

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[6] Wendt may find this unscientific, but it is implausible that Wendt's theory of international relations can be free of assumptions about human nature, particularly since he sees some forms of international politics as better than others. To answer the question of what is good, one must have an idea about the nature of the sentient actors involved. Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 378.

[7] Michael Williams also raises this point and contends that the acknowledged need for an account of ethical standards makes the tradition of realism important and distinctive from other schools of IR theory. Williams, however, focuses on Hans Morgenthau and Max Weber as the quintessential illustrations of those who advocate standards for international responsibility. Michael Williams, *The Realist Tradition and the Limits of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 169.

produce three broad categories of expectations for international dynamics: enmity, rivalry, or friendship. These relationships develop through repeated interactions between states and may be stabilized as a result of coercion, self-interest, or a principled commitment to certain dynamics within the international community.[8] These "logics of anarchy" are independent of regime type; changes within the logic of anarchy typically reflect shifts in international behavior, such as increased instances of cooperation or acts of aggression. When changes take place, Wendt argues that they tend to favor higher levels of cooperation over higher levels of aggression. Cooperation, both economic and military, provides ways for states to satisfy their domestic political goals and reduces the friction of international communication. For these reasons, Wendt not only contends that the Hobbesian state of nature no longer applies to the international realm,[9] he also suggests that there are strong incentives to move towards Kantian logics of anarchy.[10] This condition may be brought about through coercion orchestrated by strong states, the self-interest of states that recognize material benefits of peaceful cooperation, or a genuine commitment to principles of international pluralism and harmony.[11]

In Rousseau's political thought, the possibilities within the social construction of international politics are more limited. First, restraining national *amour-propre* requires states to become more self-sufficient, that is, to restrict their dependence on the ideas and

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[8] Wendt, *Social Theory*, 254.

[9] Ibid., 279, 285.

[10] Wendt insists that he is not making an argument for international progress towards a Kantian system of world politics, but unlike Rousseau, he insists that international progress along these lines is possible. Wendt qualifies his disavowal of progressivism by stating that the culture of international politics "will not move backward." In effect, progress may not be necessary, but it is highly unlikely that any system of states becomes less ordered or less cooperative. Wendt, *Social Theory*, 311-12.

[11] Ibid., 268-273.

material resources of other states. Rousseau's hope for change is not found in repeated instances of cooperation; he sees identity and interest as principles that are formed within states by members of particular national communities rather than norms established though international action. It is important to consider the relationship between one's own state and its neighbors, but he employs these considerations to restrict national ambitions rather than build a shared identity between one nation and another. This is not xenophobia on Rousseau's part, but the recognition that trans-national identities introduce new forms of dependence and create economic or cultural needs that a community cannot support on its own. These types of entanglements are what enlarge national *amour-propre*, muddle political identity, and make conflict more likely. His solution is to engage the international realm selectively rather than to seek out a friendly international community.

Second, Rousseau articulates that all political institutions are not only temporary but they carry within them the seeds of their own destruction. It is possible, through the vigilant work of statesmen and the commitment of citizens, to preserve and even reform a state so that its life is prolonged. But no state is eternal and the work of history appears to be destructive rather than progressive. History alienates human beings from what is good in their nature. Political life is part of this history. It is not wholly evil; indeed, politics can help recover human beings' natural goodness, but these recoveries are partial and temporary. They apply to individuals and not to the species. Furthermore, because Rousseau's understanding of politics is rooted in sentimental attachment and his standard of a just regime requires participation, international politics does not exist as a subset of political life in its own right. It is always for the sake of states or individuals within

states; because these institutions become corrupted, so will international politics. Progress is not simply difficult; it is contrary to the nature of politics.

Finally, the process of social construction is deeper than interactions between states. In order to improve or even modify international structures, it is foolish to think that international behavior can be isolated from the rest of social and political history and modified apart from changes at the individual and state levels. Wendt claims that his theory of constructivism restores importance to individual leaders and to particular states or regimes. But he does not take up the role of the individual and leaves normative questions to others. In comparison with Rousseau, Wendt's constructivism is not simply vague, it attempts to explain international politics without providing an account of the human actors within it.

Rousseau and Liberal Institutionalism

Although this school of thought does not feature prominently in my argument, it is helpful to mention it as I conclude because Rousseau's liberalism is a departure from the branch of IR theory known as liberal institutionalism. Rousseau's thought is decidedly liberal. Concern for the wellbeing of individuals pervades his political writings; he is persuaded of the natural goodness of human nature and wishes to recover and protect this goodness. Furthermore, he argues vehemently in favor of democratic institutions and is critical of monarchic forms of government. Moreover, he understands the problem of war to be related closely to the type of regime within a state, and believes that the egoism of kings makes monarchic states particularly inclined to wage wars unjustly. These ideas, particularly the connection he draws between aristocracy and war,

are compatible with some of the subsequent goals that liberal internationalists have advocated.[12]

Rousseau, as illustrated in the analysis of the *Government of Poland*, is concerned with individual freedom and the creation of participatory institutions, but separates the political dimensions of these goods from their economic effects. The relationship between political freedom and economic wealth is, in his estimation, one of conflict rather than harmony. He urges Poland to refrain from integrating its economy with other European states. Integration reduces self-sufficiency; it distracts citizens from the labors of public life by creating a private sphere in which wealth replaces the desire for public honor.

This line of argument contradicts the school of thought in IR referred to as liberal institutionalism. Instead, liberal institutionalism holds much in common with Abbé Saint-Pierre's writings on Perpetual Peace. Despite Rousseau's critique, the Abbé's thought produced an extensive legacy that arguably includes Kant's *Perpetual Peace*, Woodrow Wilson's internationalism, and the Kellogg-Briand Pact. More recent iterations are found in Charles Beitz's study of international distributive justice, Robert Keohane's examination of international regimes, pro-globalization literature, and perhaps even Robert Jackson's discussion of international society as a "global covenant."

For these thinkers, international regimes—organizations that establish international norms, facilitate cooperation and communication around specific policy objectives, and impose sanctions on member states guilty of violating the agreed upon

[12] Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points and the League of Nations Covenant are probably two of the classic examples of this view.

norms—are capable of ameliorating many of the problems of international relations.[13] In part, this harmonious result occurs because regimes facilitate clear communication so that governments can reliably know what to expect from one another. Furthermore, regimes also facilitate the acquisition of wealth by distributing financial gains across the international community. Many believe that this distribution reduces the incidence of conflict and promotes peaceful cooperation or negotiation. The evidence for this claim is that states have measurable financial interests in cooperating with one another and formalizing opportunities for cooperation through regimes.

Liberal institutionalists would likely acknowledge that this cooperation often takes place under the guidance of a hegemon.[14] Great powers, much like France under Henri IV, are able to bear the costs associated with building cooperative institutions and have the military resources necessary to coerce obedience from other states. Regimes, therefore, provide ways for self-interested states to advance their individual interests without necessarily damaging the interests of other members in the international community.[15] Accepting the preeminence of hegemonic states is simply the price for tranquility.

Rousseau's liberalism does not favor these sorts of institutions, regardless of whether they are trade communities (as Poland considered) or security communities (as Saint-Pierre and Henri IV proposed). Rousseau's opposition to these types of institutions

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[13] Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984, second publishing 2005), 8.

[14] Stephen Krasner, "Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables," *International Regimes* edited by Stephen D. Krasner (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 15.

[15] Robert Gilpin, *Global Political Economy: Understanding the International Economic Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 84.

is related to the hegemonic stability that scholars like Keohane, Krasner, and Gilpin regard as one of the most common foundations for such arrangements. Rousseau's liberalism is tied directly to the possibility for self-governance; to submit voluntarily to the authority of a hegemon for the sake of material wellbeing is to jeopardize the autonomy of one's own state. In effect, this is to substitute material wealth for political freedom.

Instead, Rousseau explicitly advises weak actors to cultivate principled foundations for their communities that are autonomous from and perhaps even opposed to the notion that wealth is necessary for independence. He advocates an account of political life that holds public honor above material wealth and that privileges traditional government forms over administrative efficiency. Furthermore, he regards these economically irrational commitments as profoundly human forms of attachment. A political community is worth building and defending because it provides people with a way to understand themselves and to share in rule. From Rousseau's perspective, these reasons are the most compelling reasons one can have to participate in the domestic life of a state or to mobilize for war. He believes that this republican vision is more satisfying than the economic liberalism that liberal institutionalism would provide.

Rousseau and Realism

To address the relationship between Rousseau and realism is particularly difficult because scholars from within this tradition have been so willing to claim him. In many ways the tradition of realist scholarship on Rousseau has been fruitful and insightful. A significant qualification that this project suggests for realist scholarship is that Rousseau does not understand international anarchy to justify unequivocally a balance of power

system. In this respect he is not, as Waltz claims, a founder of structural realism. To be sure, structural realism is an appealing category in which to situate Rousseau. Although he argues that the international structure exists by convention and can be altered, Rousseau's tacitly acknowledges that without efforts to modify this structure, international political life will be a ceaseless competition between states. International structure itself places no check on egoism or violence.

There are, however, two major reasons to reconsider his place in this group. The first is Rousseau's affinity with Constructivism. He believes that limiting *amour-propre* and rooting political authority on principles of consent rather than force can alter the dynamics of international anarchy. To work towards this change is not simply a possibility; it is a responsibility. In the second place, structural realism argues that states are rational actors who respond to disparities within material power. From Waltz's point of view, states operate as functional units in the international realm; leaders' characters and political principles have little if any effect on international outcomes. Rousseau wholly disagrees with this approach. He grounds politics in sentiment rather than reason and his arguments depend on the existence of prudent statesmen and regimes founded on consent. The importance of non-rational action, national institutions, and individual leadership are essential features of his international thought that do not appear as significant elements of Waltz's analysis.

Any qualification on the relationship between Rousseau and classical realism is much more limited because Rousseau holds much in common with this tradition. Like classical realists, Rousseau accepts the permanent relationship between power hierarchies and social life, and he works to make these hierarchies more just. The concern with a just

hierarchy is bound up within the tradition of classical realism.[16] Furthermore, scholars like Michael Williams, who understand realism as a tradition rather than a doctrine, invite contributions from diverse thinkers who are not in complete agreement with one another. It is quite plausible to argue that Rousseau participates in the realist tradition, even as he participates in traditions of liberalism and constructivism.

Without minimizing these points of continuity, this project contends that it is also worthwhile to identify and consider ways in which his thought is a departure from what might be regarded as typical within classical realism. These departures qualify the relationship between Rousseau and realism but do not exclude him from the tradition. Rousseau's account of statesmanship, for instance, is an important departure from the one that Morgenthau offers. Two other distinctions are also worth mentioning—his understanding of human nature and his views on the balance of power.

In looking to nature for standards of justice, Rousseau calls his audience to refer to humanity's natural goodness rather than the corrupted forms that civil society typically presents. This natural goodness leads Rousseau to argue that human beings can become good for themselves and good for others. In simple terms, Rousseau secures this goodness by checking egoism and reinforcing self-sufficiency. This work takes place within individual people and individual communities, not by pitting the egos of one person or state against another person or state. The possibility for change begins within the individual and extends to the community.

This approach to the problems of competition and aggression has implications for the balance of power. Rousseau seeks international stability in two ways. First, he would

[16] Williams, *Realist Tradition*, 178.

reform the internal structure of states so that the norms of self-governance and pluralism are woven into their constitutional fabric. Second, he argues for satisfied states, communities that have brought their identities and ambitions into harmony with their internal abilities. Rousseau acknowledges that there are exceptions to these rules. He identifies times when states might interact with one another on the basis of *amour-propre* or egoism rather than for the sake of an explicitly shared commitment to a principle of justice. This is the case with the alliance he suggests between Poland and the Sultan. The interests that Poland and the Sultan hold in common do not reflect an underlying commitment to similar political principles. Even it could be established, the goal of the alliance is not a general peace among the states of Europe or even among the states of Eastern Europe, but simply Poland's survival during the time of reform.

Strikingly, Rousseau does not suggest that Poland seek out a similar relationship with another state if the Sultan dismisses the proposition. So while the practical effect of such an arrangement would be similar to achieving a balance of power, Rousseau does not present the idea to Poland as a strategy with broad applicability. Poland's goal is independence and autonomy. A longstanding alliance or ongoing attempts to create an alternate balance of power may undermine this goal by leading Poland to exchange the Russian master for another. Turkey, however, may be an exception to the general tendency of power politics to co-opt the will of small states because the Turks are already engaged in a war with Russia. Furthermore, Turkey is on the opposite side of Russia as Poland. A shared cause with Turkey is likely demonstrate the sincerity of Poland's claim to independence without reducing the Poles to servants of the Turks. To join this enemy of Russia is to insist that Russia engage them as "one Power to another" rather than as a

petulant client state that might be soothed.[17] This is not, therefore, an attempt to balance power by *any* means necessary, but an emboldened calculation intended to protect very particular objectives. Domestic political considerations about self-governance and independence qualify the types of alliances that Rousseau encourages. Power politics may force states to acknowledge the limits of their own self-sufficiency, but as Poland makes concessions to power, Rousseau searches for ways to preserve as much independence as possible.

This position opens Rousseau to the accusation that he is duplicitous—on the one hand he denounces the egoism of the balance of power system, but on the other, he acknowledges there are times when states must participate in this very system if they are to survive. If there is any difference between this position and realism it is this: Rousseau thinks it possible for states to make use of the balance of power without adopting it as their primary or even customary approach to international strife. He places greater weight on the role of *internal* politics, seeking to ameliorate international strife by internally limiting state ambitions instead of relying on international powers to check one another. Nevertheless, Rousseau's advice to the Poles seems to acknowledge (at least tacitly) that complete independence is impossible. Even the most prudent and modest statesman comes to rely on the balance of power. Small powers have a degree of choice in the ways they avoid or engage great power conflicts, but it may be a choice between lesser evils rather than a clear political good.

[17] "Considerations on the Government of Poland and on its Projected Reformation," in *The Social Contract and other Later Political Writings,* ed. and trans. Victor Gourevitch (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 256.

Significance of Rousseau's Theory

Rousseau provides his audience with ways of thinking critically about themselves and their own political institutions. Even if his solution is politically improbable, it is still relevant to us as readers who experience obligations to our own communities and countries. By engaging his texts and considering the standard he identifies in human nature, we participate in the process of education and reflection that Rousseau designed. To reap the benefits of this education, however, one must be open to the possibility that Rousseau may be correct. This openness requires us to re-evaluate our own motives, the way we think about our responsibility to our states, and the way we understand obligations to others in the international realm. Rousseau's institutional solutions may be inaccessible from our position in history or too extreme for our tastes, but in considering why we have adopted different international structures, we may come to a greater understanding of ourselves. Perhaps this deeper self-knowledge equips us to be more thoughtful citizens who understand more clearly our own good and how to be good for others. Rousseau's critique of mainstream IR theory facilitates self-reflection and points out tensions and inconsistencies within the political institutions of our own time. Recognition of our own inconsistencies makes it possible for us to engage in the work of political reform. Our model may not be Rousseau's natural man, but Rousseau shows us the difficulty of presenting a consistent model for political life.

One may object that Rousseau is at once overly critical of our political institutions and overly hopeful that human nature may be perfected to overcome the ills these institutions introduce. But one cannot contend that Rousseau's thought is too simple or that he has not considered the problem sufficiently. He makes a case for political life that

enables individuals to be good for themselves and for others; in so doing, he connects the good of the individual with the conduct of international affairs. He does not frame this connection in terms of power or economic wellbeing, but in the possibility for wholeness, self-sufficiency, and obligations that one can embrace honorably. In making this argument Rousseau shows us the tension between the individual and the community, the state and international realm. Just as Emile will face conflict between the obligations that he has to his own virtue and the obligations he develops through Sophie, states, also, face an irresolvable conflict between the need for a self-sufficient existence and their role as actors in an international realm. Selectively formed obligations may help to mitigate these tensions, but ultimately the conflict between the part and the whole cannot be harmonized. Because of this insight and the way Rousseau incorporates it into his texts, his writings provide a model for deliberation that is useful to both citizens and state leaders. Deliberation never eliminates the need for decision, but it can equip people to consider and to pursue what is good for themselves as well as for others.

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