



AARHUS UNIVERSITET

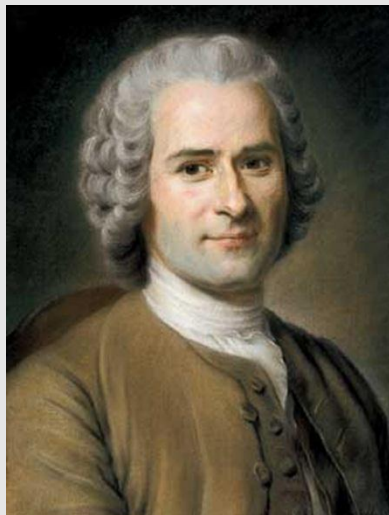
Society of Philosophy of Education (Pædagogisk Filosofisk Forening) & Department of Education (DPU), Aarhus University:

Looking for Rousseau

International conference celebrating the 300th anniversary of Jean-Jacques Rousseau



For many years Rousseau was indeed a lonely wanderer in the outskirts of the history of philosophy – never really out, and never really in. *Du contrat social* has always been a standard work of political philosophy and contractualist theory, but the rest of his oeuvre, even his main claim to fame, *Émile ou de l'éducation*, has led a somewhat obscure existence in the scholarly world of academic philosophy. His ideas have inspired thinkers, writers, and artists, but they still remain elusive.



Recent years' growing focus on education, the allegedly universal remedy for every ill of man and society, has highlighted the position of Rousseau in philosophy of education, political and social theory, history and critique of civilization etc. What is his contribution, his lesson to us? His thinking refuses a fixed place within the system of academic disciplines, it resists non-contradictory interpretations. Maybe we are wise to leave him out of the textbook and go looking for him instead. Join us!

Program

Date: 9. - 10. November, 2012,

Venue: Auditorium D174 and D170

Address: Department of Education (DPU), Aarhus University Campus Emdrup, Tuborgvej 164, Copenhagen

Friday, 9. November

13: Welcome

13.30 Roland Reichenbach: *Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Regulative Idea of Authenticity*

14.30 Andreas Gruschka: *Negative Erziehung und die Negation der Erziehung*

15.30 Coffee/refreshments

16.00-17.30 Plenary discussion

18.00 Henrik Palsmar: *Bartering love in Arcadia - music by Rousseau*

19.15 Conference dinner

Saturday, 10. November

09.30 Get-together with coffee/tee/croissant

10.00 – 13.00: Parallel sessions: Rousseau at DPU

Session 1

Anne-Marie Eggert Olsen: *Rousseau juge de Platon*

Lars-Henrik Schmidt: *The Nature of Rousseau's Narcissism*

Kirsten Klercke: *The Exclusion of Feeling and Fantasy in Rousseau's Émile*

Session 2

Carsten Fogh Nielsen: *The Origin of Evil? Morality, immorality and sociality in Rousseau and Kant*

Hans Siggaard Jensen: *David Gauthier and Rousseau viewed in a totalizing perspective*

Ove Korsgaard: *From Rousseau's Advice to Poland to Habermas' advice to the European Union*

13.00-14.00 Lunch

14.00 Peter Wivel: *Rousseau on History*

15.00-17.00: Discussion and end of conference.

17.15-18.15 General meeting 2012 in the Society of Philosophy of Education.

Speakers and papers

Prof. Dr. Roland Reichenbach, Forschungs- und Studienzentrums für Pädagogik, Universität Basel

Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Regulative Idea of Authenticity

Any enquiry into the ethical ideal of personal authenticity faces a variety of problems, among them (1) the problem of (the criteria of) authentic expression, (2) the problem of the relation between authenticity and sovereignty, as well as (3) the problem and tension between authenticity and reflectivity on the one hand and introspection on the other.

These systematic sub-aspects and questions, for which typical solutions and coping strategies have been suggested and theoretically discussed in various fields and periods, lead on to the comprehensive problem of the relation between authenticity and action. One may detect a variety of transformations of the ideal of authenticity as well as the ethos coming along with it, namely processes of (1) differentiation and subtilization, (2) trivialization and banalization, (3) fundamentalization as well as (4) ironization and further processes.

The paper focuses on the topic of authenticity in the fields of education and philosophy and attempts to provide a survey of significant questions, approaches and thoughts of pertinent authors. In following this discourse strategy there is no claim to provide solutions to any particular problems but we would rather like to raise general awareness of the problems of the ideal of authenticity and its transformations.

Prof. Dr. Andreas Gruschka, Professor für Erziehungswissenschaft, Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt

Negative Erziehung und die Negation der Erziehung - zur Aktualität des „Emile“ für eine kritische Theorie der Pädagogik

Die erste Erziehung solle negativ sein, schrieb Rousseau. Das verlangte eine bestimmte Negation aller überkommenen dominanten Erziehungsvorstellungen des ancien régime, die zum einen Teil das menschliche Vermögen degenerieren, zum anderen Teil den Menschen der Heteronomie ausliefern. Im *Emile* wollte Rousseau eine Erziehung zum Menschen entfalten, bevor die Menschen gesellschaftlich gezwungen würden, allesamt Bürger zu werden.

Das Unbehagen an und in der Kultur der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft hat dafür gesorgt, dass Rousseau immer wieder als Modell der Kritik herangezogen wurde. Dem *Emile* wurden praktischen Hinweise für die rechte Weise der Erziehung entnommen, wie er zugleich eine Negativfolie darstellte, an der das Falsche der Erziehung kenntlich gemacht werden konnte. Mit ihm wurde ein Gelingensmaßstab entfaltet, der bis heute den Widerspruch zu bürgerlicher Erziehung ermöglicht, ihr Scheitern im Widerspruch.

Der utopische Überschuss des Werkes hat in Verbindung mit der Biographie seines Autors Rousseau für alle zur persona non grata werden lassen, die Erziehung als unhintergehbare Anpassung an die gegebenen Verhältnisse betrachten. Mit Rousseau ist die Pädagogik auch deswegen nie fertig geworden, weil er in konsistenter Weise alle Widersprüche aushält, die Pädagogik überwinden will. Ist er schon deswegen als Referenz tauglich für eine Pädagogik, die in der Tradition der klassischen Kritischen Theorie die bestimmte Negation der Pädagogik betreibt?

(English summary/Danish translation will be provided)

Peter Wivel, foreign correspondent, Berlin

Rousseau on History

Rousseau was a cultural fanatic, contrary to the romantic conception of his philosophy. He makes no mistakes: "It is not an easy enterprise to sort out what is original and what is artificial in the present nature of man, and know well a state, which does not exist anymore, which has perhaps never existed, which most probably shall never exist". And he states: "They have spoken of the Wild Man and they have painted the Civilized Man". If wilderness exists, and sure it does, we are lost in its jungle. This deplorable state of things is due to history. Rousseau looked upon history with cold eyes as an ever more

dangerous challenge to the moral capacities of man. He did not intend to arrest change, which was in fact initiated by the finger of God himself. Without history we would be unable to distinguish between good and bad. Politics was his answer to the challenge of development. He said: 'Had there been a people of God, it would have governed itself democratic. Such a perfect government is not convenient to men'.

He conceived education of the individual as an unchangeable and indispensable source to core politics, which he called 'the love of the public goods'. Education is a social exercise, or it is nothing. Therefore *Émile* and the *Social Contract* is one and the same book. In them we experience the quest for justice, for legality. It is a way to give man moral liberty, the opposite of natural liberty: 'It is not the word liberty, that has no signification, it is that of necessity', necessity being the state of nature. Man acquires authority, as education delivers him of history.

The goal, the unattainable goal, is to make us happy. According to Rousseau we must learn to think, the most cultural of all cultural activities: 'Learn to think; that is to approach the first determination of this life; it is to learn to make us happy'.

What is education? What is insight? What is thinking? What is the nature of Man?

Leo Strauss calls Rousseau 'one of the two greatest minds among the theorists of democracy' and gives an answer to those questions in a comment on Rousseau's imaginary people of God:

'The act of understanding ... leads us to realize that all evils are in a sense necessary if there is to be understanding. It enables us to accept all evils which befall us and which may well break our hearts in the spirit of good citizens of the city of God. By becoming aware of the dignity of the mind, we realize the true ground of the dignity of man and therewith the goodness of the world, whether we understand it as created or uncreated, which is the home of man because it is the home of the human mind'.

Henrik Palsmar, cand.phil., organist and choir master at the Church of St. John the Baptist, Copenhagen

Bartering love in Arcadia

Rousseau's pastoral opera *Le Devin du village* is as woven in paradox as all his other works.

It was written in French by an author who claimed that there could be no music in the French language. As an artistic representation of Rousseau's harsh critique of civilization in the first *Discours* it condemns the shallow life and feelings of the nobility and the bourgeoisie. Yet it was a huge success both at the French court, where Madame de Pompadour sang the role of the young male protagonist several times and the king often was heard to hum the melody of the opening aria, and at the Paris opera, where it was performed regularly to the privileged classes for more than a hundred years. It claims that the inhabitants of the country village who are unspoiled by civilization are capable of true love and genuine emotions. But in order to help the young girl to keep the affections of her lover, the village soothsayer tells her to pretend not to love him anymore. Thus in order to retain true emotion the unspoiled villagers are recommended to resort to the classic, civilized and bourgeois un-virtues of pretense and coldness.

The paper explores some of these contradictions in an attempt to outline connections between Rousseau's music theory and social thought. To brighten up the lecture sopranos Anne-Katrine Odgaard and Carrie Becker perform excerpts from the opera and corresponding arias from Mozart's parody *Bastien und Bastienne*.

Anne-Marie Eggert Olsen, mag.art. & ph.d., associate professor of philosophy, Dept. of Education (DPU)

Rousseau juge de Platon

According to Rousseau, Plato's *Republic* was the greatest work on education ever written – on public education, that is. In contrast, *Émile* is about private education. However, it still has many references to Plato. What do they amount to? Certainly not the average picture of Plato as a stern political philosopher with little thought for the human aspect of state and society. The paper will present Rousseau's reception of the educational ideas of *Republic* (and *Laws*), discuss the tenability of his interpretation, and on this ground look at the relation between the private and the public, between *Émile* and *Du contrat social*.

Carsten Fogh Nielsen, part time lecturer, Dept. of Education (DPU), AU

The Origin of Evil?

Morality, immorality and sociality in Rousseau and Kant

It is well known that Rousseau's writings played a pivotal role in Kant's philosophical development. Kant himself explicitly acknowledged Rousseau's influence in a famous remark (Bemerkung) jotted down in the margins of his own copy of his pre-critical work: *Observations on Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*:

"I myself am a researcher from inclination. I feel the entire thirst for knowledge and the eager unrest to go further in it as well as the satisfaction with every acquisition. There was a time when I believed that this alone could compose the honor of mankind and I despised the rabble that knew of nothing. Rousseau brought me around. This blinding preference vanished, I learned to honor human beings and I would think myself less useful than the common laborer if I did not believe that this consideration of everything else could impart worth in establishing the rights of mankind." (AA 20: 44).

My talk will focus on one particular aspect of Rousseau's thought: His view that the social development of human beings into competent moral agents both presupposes and implies a necessary developmental co-dependence between morality and immorality. In my talk I will argue a) that Kant appropriates this Rousseauan idea and incorporates it into his anthropological and philosophical writings and b) that this at least partly explains Kant's somewhat pessimistic view of human motivations, emotions and inclinations.

Hans Siggaard Jensen, professor of philosophy of science, head of the Centre for School Research, Dept. of Education (DPU), AU

David Gauthier and Rousseau viewed in a totalizing perspective

In 1762 Rousseau publishes two main books - *Emile* and *The Social Contract*. They contain two complete different and nearly contradictory conceptions of the relation between the individual person and society. Also of what it actually means to be an individual person. David Gauthier - one of the most influential recent contractarians in ethics and political philosophy - tries in his book from 2006 on Rousseau - *The Sentiment of Existence* - to give a totalizing conception based on the last works, a conception which should give some

meaning to the contradiction. Is there a meaning?"

Kirsten Klercke, mag. art., part time lecturer, Dept. of Education (DPU), AU

The Exclusion of Feeling and Fantasy in Rousseau's *Émile*

In spite of the unchallenged greatness of *Émile* - its respect for the childhood in its own right and its assertion of the reality principle in education - the posterity has run into difficulties with its thoroughgoing rational approach. The Romantics and a post-Romantic thinker like Kierkegaard regard especially childhood related to fantasy, fiction and fairy-tales. Later on psychoanalysis includes affective elements between the teacher and the pupil, especially in the phenomenon of transference. Are these objections to Rousseau's apparent exclusion of feeling and fantasy fatal to his educational theory?

Lars-Henrik Schmidt, dr. phil., professor of philosophy, research center GNOSIS, Dept. of Education (DPU), AU

The Nature of Rousseau's Narcissism

"Rousseau's Narcissism" Vanity is an intellectual virtue, but few have driven it as far as Rousseau. In Rousseau's philosophy the self-centered conduct is the constitutive junction between the alienation on the one hand – i.e. to regard oneself in the eyes of others, which may be generalized to the modern critique of civilization, and the distinction on the other hand between selfishness and self-love carrying the hope of a better future and questioning the idea of progress.

It all begins with the comedy 'Narcisse ou l'Amant de lui-même', which he claims to have written as 18-year-old, but later confesses to have lied a little about. He waits in vain to see the piece directed and when the premier finally takes place years later the auteur is anonymous – and the performance bad. Rousseau leaves the scene before time.

Nevertheless he claims the authorship but declines responsibility. He reprints the comedy as a deferred action commented in the mirror of the reputation his perspective on the tragedy of morals has earned him. The self-obsession in Rousseau is unmistakable, but it is the very same traits that mark self-care (l'amour de soi) as the gateway to the social. - The thesis of the presentation is primarily that Rousseau with The Social Self maps the modern world, and secondarily that psychoanalytical concept of narcissism falls short in the analysis of the category of self-conduct.

Ove Korsgaard, dr. pæd., professor of citizenship education, Dept. of Education (DPU), AU

From Rousseau's Advice to Poland to Habermas' Advice to the European Union

Rousseau's philosophy of education is contained not only in *Emile* (1762), but also in *The Government of Poland* (1772). In each of them he emphasizes different aspects of education: How to be a human being? And: How to be a citizen? The main theme investigated by Rousseau in *The Government of Poland*, is how a minor nation surrounded by such major powers as Russia, Prussia and Austria can ensure survival? Today the question is: How to understand the concept of self-determination in the context of establishing European political unity? In his analyses Habermas directs our attention to some of the same dilemmas that Rousseau dealt with 200 years earlier.

