Jean Jacques Rousseauôs Concept of People[1]

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Abstract

Rousseauôs political theory apparently leads us to choose between patriotism and cosmopolitism. The two major works published in 1762, *On the Social Contract* and *Emile*, would represent the two sides of the alternative. However, the opposition between patriotism and cosmopolitism is the ultimate development of an internal tension between two aspects of Rousseauôs political concept of people: the intersubjectivity that permits the formation of the general will; and the individualôs devotion to the state. On the one hand, the political community appears as a distributive totality. On the other hand, it is viewed as a collective totality. When generalized, intersubjectivity leads to the formation of both the social concept of people and the moral concept of humanity, while patriotism requires the individualôs loyalty to the nation. In order to maintain the coherence of the very political concept of people and to solve the main political problem ï which is to reconcile security and liberty ï it is necessary to overcome the dichotomy between cosmopolitism and patriotism. *Emile* and Rousseauôs original plan for *On the Social Contract* are consistent on that point.

Key words cosmopolitism · general will · intersubjectivity · nation · patriotism · people

In 1762, Rousseau published two major works: *On the Social Contract* and *Emile*. The first book contains Rousseauôs theory of the state. In the second book, Rousseau describes a young manôs education, from his birth to his marriage. In this book, Rousseauôs purpose is not only to put forth his ideas on education: *Emile* is a long meditation on the human condition.

Rousseau is a singular philosopher. He takes up problems in different ways, in different books, without taking much pain to relate **(394)** all these perspectives. Each book is written from a certain point of view, and from this point of view Rousseauôs reflection may be consistent. But he does not seem to care about the coherence of the results obtained from these different standpoints.

This peculiar feature of Rousseauôs thinking appears especially in the two books published in 1762. In the *Social Contract*, Rousseau develops the idea of a strongly united state, of a political community that is shaped in many respects on the model of the Greek city-states and

of the Roman Republic. Rousseau's theory of the state is nonetheless modern, inasmuch as it bases the legitimacy of the state on a common will, a social contract.

The social contract provides the only rational foundation for the state. This can be interpreted in two ways. The first interpretation would be that legitimate states are founded on the social contract, while illegitimate states do exist, established by mere force. The second interpretation is that no genuine state exists without a social contract. In this view, the social contract is tacitly admitted in every existing state, though its clauses may not be observed or even clearly understood. Every existing state reposes on the social contract, but all states are more or less deviating from the norm.

The second interpretation is the right one. According to Rousseau, no political power can be established by mere force. In every state, the citizens agree on the precise terms of the contract he formulates in *On the Social Contract*.

> The clauses of this contract are so determined by the nature of the act that the slightest modification would make them vain and ineffective; so that, although they have perhaps never been formally set forth, they are everywhere the same and everywhere tacitly admitted and recognized [2].

On the Social Contract does not deal with a purely ideal state. It deals with the rational foundation of historical (empirical) states. Surprisingly Rousseau contends at the same time, in the very first pages of *Emile*, that there is no more state in the proper sense of the word. He stresses that there is no more *patrie* (fatherland), no more *citoyens* (citizens). In the present times, there are only *bourgeois*.

> These two words, *fatherland* and *citizen,* should be effaced from modern languages [3].

The idea of a politically united people seems to be a dream of the past, a purely nostalgic ideal. This is the reason why Emile will receive a private education. He will not be educated in public institutions, which would raise him as a citizen, that is to say: as a member of a particular state. According to Rousseau the model of such an education is to be **(395)** found in Plato's *Republic*. The model is excellent but has no relevance to Emile. Emile will be brought up as a private individual, as a man in general.

Actually, this choice means more than an adjustment to the circumstances. There seems to be a strict dichotomy between bringing up a man and bringing up a citizen. To bring up a man means to preserve his natural independence and benevolence toward the others. To bring up a

citizen, on the contrary, means to make the individual feel part of a community to which he must be completely devoted. To bring up a man means to let him develop certain humanitarian feelings. To bring up a citizen means to develop a patriotism which favors the community over the rest of mankind.

> Every patriot is harsh to foreigners. They are only men. They are nothing in his eyes. This is a drawback, inevitable but not compelling. The essential thing is to be good to the people with whom one lives. Abroad the Spartan was ambitious, avaricious, iniquitous. But disinterestedness, equity, and concord reigned within his walls [4].

So patriotic virtue and sense of humanity seem irreconcilable:

> He who in the civil order wants to preserve the primacy of the sentiments of nature does not know what he wants. Always in contradiction with himself, always floating between his inclinations and his duties, he will never be either man or citizen. He will be good neither for himself nor for others [5].

Apparently we must choose between being a citizen and being a man, in other words: between nationalism and cosmopolitism, between patriotism and humanitarianism. But Rousseau himself does not choose. He does not, because he cannot. This is at least what I intend to show in this paper. Rousseau, in spite of his declarations, has to overcome this opposition for two reasons : a) it does not only oppose the concept of man to the concept of citizen, it creates a tension within the very concept of citizen, i.e. within the political concept of people; b) the structure of the political problem makes it necessary to go beyond this alternative. I will thus try to reconstruct Rousseau's concept of people and to articulate its different aspects. If I succeed, the apparent discrepancy between *On the Social Contract* and *Emile* will be reduced.

1. The political concept of people

There are in fact three concepts of people in Rousseau's political theory: the political concept of ña peopleò, the historical and cultural concept of a ñnationò, and the social concept of ñthe peopleò ï referring to the lower **(396)** classes, that is (in the 18th Century): to the overwhelming majority of laborers, farmers and artisans.

A people, in the political sense, is a community of citizens united by the social contract. The clauses of this contract are meant to solve a fundamental problem: the reconciliation of

security and liberty. Most existing states are ruled by an arbitrary power : ñMan is born free; and everywhere he is in chainsò[6]. In these states, people enjoy a sort of security, but they give up their liberty. Actually, they give up their liberty for no real security, if they are oppressed by a tyrant or if the state they live in is constantly at war. In any case, the reconciliation of security and liberty is the fundamental political problem. Rousseau gives a very precise formulation of this problem:

> Find a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before[7].

The social contract provides the solution for this problem. As Rousseau puts it, the clauses of this contract may be ñreduced to one: the total alienation of each associate, together with all his rights, to the whole communityò[8]. The exact terms of this contract are the following:

> Each of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will, and, in our corporate capacity, we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole[9].

There are difficulties with this clause. The main difficulty derives from the claim that the social contract is a convention between each individual and the community, so the community is one of the contracting parties. But at the same time, it is supposed to be the result of the contract. On the one hand, there must be some sort of community prior to the contract. On the other hand, this community is formed by the contract. According to Louis Althusser, this contradiction is one of the major flaws in the theory.

I will return to this difficulty in a while. Right now, it suffices to say that the citizen gives himself up entirely to the community. He is no longer an independent individual, he is part of a ñgreater wholeò which is the body politic[10]. He no longer has an existence of his own, he is a member of a community from which he ñreceives his life and beingò[11]. The same idea is expressed in *Emile*:

> Natural man is entirely for himself. He is numerical unity, the absolute whole which is relative only to itself or its kind. Civil man is only a fractional unity dependent on the denominator; his value is determined by his relation to the whole, which is the social body. Good social institutions are those that best know how to denature man, to take his absolute existence **(397)** from him in order to give him a relative one and transport the *I*

> into the common unity, with the result that each individual believes himself no longer one but a part of the unity and no longer feels except within the whole[12].

Each member of the body politic is at the same time subject and citizen. As a subject, he is submitted to the sovereignty of the people, he must respect the authority of the common law. As a citizen, he is part of the sovereign, he participates in the making of this law.

The law is the expression of the general will. As long as this will is truly general, it is not only the will of a people as a whole, it is the will of each citizen in particular. In the law, each citizen recognizes the formulation of what he really wants. In obeying the law, he follows his own will. Consequently, he is free in the proper sense of the word, for «obedience to a law which we prescribe to ourselves is liberty»[13]. Security and liberty are thus reconciled. The citizen is protected by the laws and the power of the entire community, but the power is exercised according to the law agreed upon by the citizens.

Now, the object of the law is the general interest. But what is exactly the general interest ? The *Social Contract* defines it in two ways. On the one hand, the general interest is the preservation and the prosperity of the state itself. On the other hand, the general interest is the interest of each individual as such. The common good is the good which every individual has in common with all the others. Here the «greatest good of all» is reduced to «two main objects, *liberty* and *equality*»[14]. So in one respect, the general interest is the weal of the community as a whole. In an another respect, the general interest is the interest of what we could name: the *universal individual*.

This polarity appears in the citizen's code of ethics. The citizen must be completely devoted to the state. He must live for the state, he must have as few private interests as possible, he must find his happiness in the welfare of the community:

> The better the constitution of a state is, the more do public affairs encroach on private in the minds of the citizens. Private affairs are even of much less importance, because the aggregate of the common happiness furnishes a greater proportion of that of each individual, so that he has less need to seek it in private interests[15].

But at the same time, the citizen must put himself in the place of any other member of the state, especially when he participates in the formation of the general will. When he takes part in a vote, each citizen must express the concerns he shares with all the others. So he must be able to identify with any of his fellow citizens.

This is a fundamental requisite for the justice of the law. The general will is never unjust, because it never decides the fate of a particular **(398)** individual. To decide particular matters is the task of the magistrates --- people in charge of the application of laws in particular cases. This is done by decrees. The general will decides general matters, and general decisions are laws properly speaking. These decisions can never be unjust, because every citizen knows that he will be submitted to the very law he wants to be enacted. A citizen will never propose or vote for a law which would restrain the freedom of others, because the same law would apply to him. Under such conditions, the citizen necessarily wants the happiness of all the others, as long as he wishes his own happiness. Thus he must be conscious that he shares the same condition with any other member of the state, he must ñuniversalizeò his views, he must think as an individual *in general*.

> Why is it that the general will is always upright, and that all continually will the happiness of each one, unless it is because there is not a man who does not think of ñeachò as meaning him, and consider himself in voting for all ? This proves that equality of rights and the idea of justice which such equality creates originate in the preference each man gives to himself, and accordingly in the very nature of man[16].

So civic virtue consists in devotion to the nation and the state. At the same time, it implies ñthe act of identifying with oneôs fellow citizensò[17]. On the one side, the citizen is a member of a united body politic, the community is viewed as a collective totality. On the other side, the community is a distributive totality, it is a community of ñsympathizing individualsò ï where ñsympathizeò means to put oneself in the place of the other.

2. The historical and cultural concept of people

When Rousseau refers to the historical and cultural development of a people, he prefers to use the word *nation*. Strictly speaking, a *people* is a community of citizens instituted by the social contract. In this respect, a *people* is a legal institution. In some places, however, Rousseau uses the word *people* to mean *nation*, especially in Book II of the *Social Contract*, where he discusses the role of the legislator who proposes a constitution to a people resolved to form a state.

The point is that the social contract does not create an association of previously isolated individuals. These individuals are already engaged in a form of society. They already live together. They have a language and a certain way of life in common. In a word, the social

contract is the political institution of a people which already exists in the historical and cultural form of a nation.

Rousseau describes the origins of nations in the *Second Discourse*. **(399)** These origins are purely accidental. Earthquakes, floods, all kinds of natural events, conditions, have forced human beings to live together in delimited areas. Habits of reunion, first cooperations, development of language and technique, and finally settlements are consequences. A community of culture, a national character derive from this process. The features of a nation result from the way people adapt to their natural, geographical conditions.

Here lies the solution of the aforementioned difficulty. This difficulty was the fact that some sort of community must exist before the contract, whereas the community is formed by the contract. There is no contradiction in these statements. The contracting parties form a people ñalready bound by some unity of origin, interest or conventionò[18]. In other words, the community already exists as a ñpre-politicalò community, i.e. as a historical community, as a nation. Each individual contracts with the nation in which he already lives. This contract is a transformation process. It transforms the individual into a citizen and the nation into a body politic. In Rousseauôs terms, it is the ñinstitutionò of a nation as a ñpeopleò in the political sense.

According to Rousseau, this transformation is needed in two major cases: when social violence ends up in a complete lack of security and when a nation faces the danger of loosing its liberty and its identity. The first case is described in the *Second Discourse*, the second appears in Rousseauôs writings on Corsica and Poland.

3. The social concept of people

Considering *Emile*, Book IV, we can speak of a social concept of people. In this book, Rousseau deals with Emileôs moral education. There are two important points: Emileôs development of pity and the religious faith expressed in the ñProfession of faith of the Savoyard Vicarò. I will concentrate on the first.

Pity (or compassion) is a natural feeling. Along with *love for oneself* (*amour de soi*)[19], which is the principle for self-conservation, pity is one of the two feelings that characterize man in the state of nature. In the state of nature, which is described in the *Second Discourse*, pity is a repulsion that a man feels when facing the suffering of another human being. It prevents him from doing harm to the other. For Emile, the man of nature living in a society, pity becomes something different: itôs a feeling in which imagination and reflection take part.

It is an ability to put oneself in the place of another human being, of imagining what he feels. It is a kind of sympathy in the literal sense of the word. What makes Emile feel compassion for another man is not only the extent of the other man's problems or miseries. He can imagine how the other **(400)** perceives his own situation, how he remembers the past and anticipates the future. Emile sympathizes with another man's consciousness, with the consciousness of a human being confronted with the limits of his condition: illness, mortality, hardships.

This feeling is connected with love for oneself. Love for oneself is at first a mere instinct of self-preservation. Then it extends to everything that matters: parents, friends, and so on. Human existence is not confined to the limits of a physical body. It extends to every place in the world to which an individual can transport himself in imagination, any place to which he can be attached. I have a feeling of my own existence in any place, in any moment of the past, or of the future, to which I can transport myself and feel concerned. So, when I put myself in the place of another human being, when I experience the consciousness he has of his own situation, the sympathy I feel for the other is an extension of love for myself. It means that I include him in the sphere of my own existence.

This faculty of sympathy plays a great role in Emile's moral education, because it accounts for the formation of the general idea of humanity. This formation is due to the progressive extension of Emile's sympathy from people close to him to human beings in general. Speaking of Emile's growing sense of humanity, Rousseau writes:

> In directing his nascent sensibility to his species, do not believe that it will at the outset embrace all men, and that the word *mankind* will signify anything to him. No, this sensibility will in the first place be limited to his fellows, and for him his fellows will not be unknowns; rather, they will be those with whom he has relations, those whom habit has made dear or necessary to him, those whom he observes to have ways of thinking and feeling clearly in common with him é It will be only after having cultivated his nature in countless ways, after many reflections on his own sentiments and on those he observes in others, that he will be able to get to the point of generalizing his individual notions under the abstract idea of humanity and to join to his particular affections those which can make him identify with his species[20].

In other words, Rousseau elaborates a "genealogy" of the idea of humanity as a result of the expansive strength of the sentiment of pity. But here humanity is not viewed as an indistinct whole, as an abstract collectivity; it is the universal concept of the individual human

being. Emile acquires the idea of humanity when he conceives of the mere possibility of another consciousness experiencing the same human condition, the same *finitude*.

It is important to understand that in Rousseauôs view compassion is not a manifestation of weakness --- as it is for instance in Mandevilleôs *Fable of the bees*, which Rousseau knew very well. On the contrary it is a manifestation of strength. People need a surplus of energy to go **(401)** beyond the limits of their own self, to extend the sphere of their own existence so that other people become part of it. In fact compassion results from a double projection: the projection of oneself into the place of another human being, and the ability to imagine what the other feels when he faces his finitude, especially when he remembers the past and anticipates his own future. By means of this projection the otherôs experience becomes part of the individualôs own experience. It is then possible for him to identify with the other, whom he now recognizes as another human individual.

Moreover, this capacity of sympathy accounts for the development of intersubjectivity. Intersubjectivity is related to affective life because passion, be it love or hatred, is in its essence a relation between two consciousnesses, between two free wills or desires:

> What transforms this instinct (*attachment*) into sentiment, attachment into love, aversion into hate, is the intention manifested to harm us or to be useful to us. One is never passionate about insensible beings which merely follow the impulsion given to them. But those from whom one expects good or ill by their inner disposition, by their will --- those we see acting freely for us or against us --- inspire in us sentiments similar to those they manifest toward us. We seek what serves us, but we love what wants to serve us. We flee what harms us, but we hate what wants to harm us[21].

This ñintersubjectivity of passionò explains why sympathy leads to friendship. When the individual puts himself in the place of the other, he imagines how the other experiences his own insufficiency. He thus anticipates the appeal addressed to him by the other, because he knows that the awareness of oneôs own insufficiency produces the desire for human relationships. This anticipation of the otherôs inner disposition, of the otherôs readiness for relationship, makes possible the transformation of sympathy into friendship.

> It is manôs weakness which makes him sociable é Every attachment is a sign of insufficiency. If each of us had no need of others, he would hardly think of united himself with them é It follows from this that we are attached to our fellows less by the sentiments of their pleasures than by the sentiments of their pains, for we see far better in the latter the identity of our natures with theirs and the guarantees of their attachment to us[22].

Intersubjectivity is thus based on a common experience of human finitude. This feature is essential for Rousseauôs conception of morality. All moral problems arise in the relation of the individual to the others. Speaking of Emile, Rousseau says: ñSo long as his sensibility remains limited to his own individuality, there is nothing moral in his actionsò[23]. But moral law is not based on a rational imperative, as it is the case in Kantôs ethics. Morality does not consist in respect for reason in oneself and in the other. It is not based ï at least not in the first place ï on **(402)** respect of the other considered as a reasonable being. It is rooted in a common experience of sensitive life.

> It appears, in fact, that if I am bound to do no injury to my fellow-creatures, this is less because they are rational than because they are sentient beings[24].

The development of Emileôs sympathy for human beings is not only important for his moral education. It is also of great importance for his social and political education. In order to become a true citizen, he must be able to understand his fellow citizens. He must in particular be able to understand ñthe peopleò in the social sense of the word. ñPeopleò in this sense means the lower classes, the large majority of peasants and artisans as opposed to the minority of the nobles. It is also the people living on the land, close to nature, as opposed to the bourgeois living in big cities. Emile is a noble, he has goods and lands, although he is not tremendously rich. He must feel what he has in common with this people. Otherwise he would be a cynical and cold aristocrat. He must feel what he has in common with people from other social classes, beginning with the lower ones. It is obvious that a true body politic cannot exist, where there are classes at war, such as the rich and the poor. Political equality among citizens requires limitation of economic and social inequalities. As Rousseau puts it in the *Social Contract*, no citizen should ñever be wealthy enough to buy another, and none poor enough to be forced to sell himselfò[25]. But apart from this limitation of inequalities, it is also necessary that every citizen identifies himself with any other of his fellow citizens, whatever the social conditions of the fellow citizen might be.

4. Two types of logic

To sum up, there are three concepts of people: the political concept of a people, the historical and cultural concept of a nation, and the social concept of the people (the majority of farmers and artisans, whom Emile recognizes as fellow human beings). These concepts are

intimately connected. A state is a people, politically instituted by the social contract. Yet it must already exist as a nation and it is mostly composed of ñ the peopleò in the social sense of the word.

Within the very political concept of people, we have two logics: the ñcollective totalityò logic and the ñdistributive totalityò logic. On the one hand, the citizen is nothing but an element of the state viewed as a united body. He must be ready to sacrifice his life and goods, all his personal interests, for the benefit of the community as a whole. On the other hand, the citizen is related to the community by his ability of putting **(403)** himself in the place of any other citizen. The unity of such a community of citizens reposes on the ability of each of them to be involved in the fate of the others, whatever their social conditions might be.

The ñcollective totalityò logic is obviously the logic of nation-building. In the *Considerations on the Government of Poland*, Rousseau analyses the situation of Poland before the first partition (in 1772) and gives some advice to his Polish interlocutors. In order to resist its neighbors, Poland should build up a strong national identity. Young generations should be taught national history, national geography; they should always be reminded of the deeds of national heroes, and so on. The young Polish citizens must consider themselves as Polish and nothing else[26].

The ñdistributive totalityò logic plays also an important part in the political process. In order to participate in the formation of the general will, as we have seen before, the citizen must apply the word *each* to himself, he must universalize his selfconsciousness. In other words, the sense of justice is rooted in the feeling of *love for oneself* extended to every other fellow citizen:

> If this were the place for it, I would try to show how the first voices of conscience arise out of the first movements of the heart, and how the first notions of good and bad are born of the sentiments of love and hate. I would show that *justice* and *goodness* are not merely abstract words --- pure moral beings formed by the understanding --- but are true affections of the soul enlightened by reason, are hence only an ordered development of our primitive affections[27].

These two logics are related to the two sides of historical time. When he follows the ñcollective totalityò logic, Rousseau appeals to the past. He refers to the ancient Sparta or the Roman Republic. When he follows the ñdistributive totalityò logic, he anticipates the future. If it is so important for Emile to identify with ñthe peopleò in the social sense of the word, it is not only for the sake of his moral integrity. He must be able to do it because the social

hierarchy is fragile. Forecasting the coming revolutions in Europe, Rousseau insists that Emile should be prepared to live in any kind of social class:

> You trust in the present order of society without thinking that this order is subject to inevitable revolutions, and it is impossible for you to foresee or prevent the one which may affect your children. The noble become commoners, the rich become poor, the monarch becomes subject. Are the blows of fate so rare that you can count on being exempted from them ? We are approaching a state of crisis and the age of revolutions. Who can answer for what will become of you then ?[28]

This is another reason why Emile should understand and respect people in difficult circumstances **(404)**.

> Do not accustom your pupil to regard the sufferings of the unfortunate and the labors of the poor from the height of his glory; and do not hope to teach him to pity them if he considers them alien to him. Make him understand well that the fate of these unhappy men can be his, that all their ills are there in the ground beneath his feet, that countless unforeseen and inevitable events can plunge him into them from one moment to the next[29].

Rousseau stands at the crossroads between ancient and modern times, between past and future. His concept of the state represents an attempt to reconcile the ancient ideal of patriotic virtue and the modern desire for individual independence.

Conclusions

Now we can answer the questions posed in the Introduction. There are two reasons why the opposition between man and citizen, between human rights and patriotic solidarity, is an oversimplification. The first reason is related to the very structure of Rousseau's political concept of people, in which civic virtue and human solidarity are combined. The second reason is related to the fundamental problem of politics.

Civic virtue and human solidarity

Civic virtue and human solidarity cannot be opposed because the one implies the other. In other words: intersubjectivity is a necessary condition of the formation of the general will. The elaboration of the general will entails a process of identification with others. This

identification is not reducible to ethnic similitude. It requires the recognition of the other as a human being.

In this respect, it is interesting to notice the argument used by Rousseau to advocate, in the case of Poland, the extension of political rights to all social classes. Although he stresses the importance of a strong national identity, Rousseau refers to the natural rights of mankind to sustain his plea for the extension of political rights. All Polish citizens should have the right to vote, not because they are Polish, but because they are free human beings:

> ñThe power to make laws belongs exclusively to the knightly order é Such is, or appears to be, the law of the Polish state. But the law of nature, sacred and imprescriptible, which addresses itself to manôs heart and manôs reason, does not permit us to confine the legislative authority within such narrow limits or to make the laws binding upon any person who has not cast his vote on them either in person, like the deputies, or at least through chosen representatives é Nobles of Poland, be more than nobles, be men; only when you are men will you be happy and free. But do not flatter **(405)** yourselves that you are either so long as you keep you own brothers in bondage[30].

Civic virtue does not exclude sympathy for mankind. On the contrary, it implies understanding for ñthe peopleò, meaning the lower classes, which in each particular state represents mankind in general.

> It is the people who compose humankind. What is not the people is so slight a thing as not to be worth counting. Man is the same in all stations é Respect your species. Be aware that it is composed essentially of a collection of peoples; that if all the kings and all the philosophers were taken away, their absence would hardly be noticeable; and that things would not be any the worse. In a word, teach your pupil to love all men, even those who despise men. Do things in such a way that he puts himself in no class but finds his bearings in all. Speak before him of humankind with tenderness, even with pity, but never with contempt[31].

Consequently, Rousseau does not give up the idea of cosmopolitism. When he describes the state of war between the states in the *Second Discourse*, he speaks respectfully of the few ñgreat cosmopolitan spirits, who, breaking down the imaginary barriers that separate different peoples é include the whole human race in their benevolenceò[32]. Of course, there are passages in which Rousseau criticizes cosmopolitism. In these passages, however, Rousseau criticizes an *abstract* love for humanity because such a love does not lead to positive action. It may even be an excuse for doing nothing to help the real ñothersò, oneôs neighbors. Thatôs

precisely the case with philosophers, who are much interested in the fate of humanity and have nothing to do with the problems of the man living next door.

> Distrust those cosmopolitans who go to great length in their books to discover duties they do not deign to fulfill around them. A philosopher loves the Tartars so as to be spared having to love his neighbors[33].

Again, Rousseauôs political concept of people combines two types of logic. The ñcollective totalityò logic implies complete devotion to the state viewed as a united body. The ñdistributive totalityò logic implies sympathy with oneôs fellow citizens. This sympathy is not only based on a community of interest, it also derives from the recognition of others as human beings, as individuals sharing the same human condition. This combination creates a tension within the concept. According to the ñcollective totalityò logic, the citizen is separated from other human beings. They are considered as aliens. According to the ñdistributive totalityò logic, identification with oneôs fellow citizens is a first step toward identification with the rest of mankind.

In order to solve this problem, we must keep in mind that Rousseau considers the national community in two different ways. In some cases, **(406)** the national community is opposed to the rest of mankind. In some others, it is considered as the portion of mankind in which the individual may be truly useful. The sense of humanity leads to positive action when it concentrates on oneôs fellow citizens, otherwise it is a weak and sterile feeling. As Rousseau puts it in his article on *Political Economy*:

> It appears that the feeling of humanity evaporates and grows feeble in embracing all mankind é It is necessary in some degree to confine and limit our interest and compassion in order to make it active. Now, as this sentiment can be useful only to those with whom we have to live, it is proper that our humanity should confine itself to our fellow-citizens, and should receive a new force because we are in the habit of seeing them, and by reason of the common interest which unites them[34].

As regards Emile, his political education overcomes the opposition between bringing up an man and bringing up a citizen. Emile has received a private education, but he will have wife and children. He will have a house, he will have lands, and his existence will depend on the state he lives in. He will eventually become a citizen. Consequently, he must prepare himself to take part in public affairs. That is why he is taught a digest of the *Social Contract*[35]. This digest provides him with the pure concept of the state --- i.e. of the Republic according to the

terminology of the Social Contract[36]. During a trip over Europe, Emile uses this rational concept as a criterion in choosing the country he wants to settle in. When he comes back from the trip, he has added some practical experience of human affairs to his education in political theory. Of course, he has come to the conclusion that a state worthy of the name is nowhere to be found. There is no existing state that fully complies with the norms of the social contract. The state of affairs described by Rousseau in a footnote of Book IV has become a part of Emile's own experience:

> The universal spirit of the laws of every country is always to favor the strong against the weak and those who have against those who have not. This difficulty is inevitable, and it is without exception[37].

Nowhere is the law the true expression of the general will. It always helps the rich to dominate the poor. All the existing states are counterfeits. Therefore, Emile sees no point of defining himself as a citizen. A moral revolt against a deceptive reality leads him to take the opposite standpoint, that of a stoic cosmopolitism. He defines himself simply as a man:

> What difference does it make to me what my position on earth is ? What difference does it make to me where I am ? Wherever there are men, I am at the home of my brothers; wherever there are no men, I am in my own home[38].

(407) But things are more complicated. As Emile's tutor (Rousseau himself) points out, Emile is right in his criticism of human societies and political institutions. But he will have a family and for the sake of his children's future, he must be interested in the public affairs of the country he lives in. He may not live in a state governed by laws which really express the general will, but he nevertheless has a "country" in which he was born and to which he is indebted. Although he has received private education apart from urban society, he has enjoyed in his country relative security, a peace which made this education possible. He could be raised as a man, because the law of the country, although imperfect in many respects, sustained a relative order and gave him the idea of what true laws should be.

> If I were speaking to you of the duties of the citizen, you would perhaps ask me where the fatherland is, and you would believe you had confounded me. But you would be mistaken, dear Emile, for 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 ?[39]

The rule of the law may be imperfect, it nevertheless accounts for the development of Emile's moral virtue. For virtue is not natural goodness. Virtue is the capability to make one's will prevail over one's desires. The emergence of virtue and moral conscience is due to life in society[40]. It is due to the fact that laws compel men to submit their personal interest to the common weal.

> O Emile, where is the good man who owes nothing to his country ? Whatever country it is, he owes it what is most precious to man --- the morality of his actions and the love of virtue. If he had been born in the heart of the woods, he would have lived happier and freer. But he would have had nothing to combat in order to follow his inclinations, and thus he would have been good without merit; he would not have been virtuous; and now he knows how to be so in spite of his passions. 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. It is not true that he draws no profit from the laws. They give him the courage to be just even among wicked men. It is not true that they have not made him free. They have taught him to reign over himself[41].

At this point, Emile's private education is reconsidered within the political framework in which it developed. The existence of the state, **(408)** imperfect as it is, appears to have made Emile's private and individual education possible. Emile has been brought up as a man because he happened to live in a state which is not totally irrational. This state is neither the antique *polis*, nor the true republic of the social contract. It nevertheless incorporates the social contract, although in a twisted manner. The clauses of this contract are tacitly, maybe unconsciously, accepted. Otherwise the community would not be united and the state would fall apart. However these clauses are partially or seemingly observed. In a word, the existing state is more or less adequate to its concept. That is the reason why it is more or less united and strong. Still, the rationality of its laws and political institutions, limited as it is, contributes to Emile's moral and civic education insofar as he takes them seriously. This apparent rationality accounts for Emile's demand of justice. It explains Emile's wish that laws and institutions be truly just.

The concept that applies to this empirical historical state is the "modern" concept of "country" (*pays*), as opposed to the ideal (and "antique") republican fatherland (*patrie*). Emile is indebted to his country for the possibility he was given to grow up as a man. The awareness

of this debt will make him try to be useful to his fellow countrymen in two ways. On the one hand, his humanitarian feelings will lead him to positive action within his neighborhood, in the everyday life of the rural community to which he belongs. On the other hand, he will be ready to hold public office whenever he is asked to, although he will never seek such an opportunity.

Consequently, Emile will be a man and an citizen. He will develop a kind of civic virtue which incorporates human solidarity and which renders the solidarity efficient. Does this conclusion contradict the first pages of *Emile*, with its assumption that one has to choose between being a man and a citizen ? In order to answer this question, we must read carefully the entire passage:

> He who in the civil order wants to preserve the primacy of the sentiments of nature does not know what he wants. Always in contradiction with himself, always floating between his inclinations and his duties, he will never be either man or citizen é To be something, to be oneself and always one, a man must act as he speaks; he must always be decisive in making his choice, make it in a lofty style, and always stick to it. I am waiting to be shown this marvel so as to know whether he is a man or a citizen, or how he goes about being both at the same time[42].

These lines take place in the passage in which Rousseau compares his own enterprise with Platoôs *Republic*. The term ñmarvelò echoes the miracle of the philosopher-king in Platoôs ñfableò. Here the miracle is Emile himself, and the whole book leads to the point where it becomes possible to decide whether Emile, the natural man living in a society, is a man or a citizen. Of course he is both. Contrary to Platoôs *Republic*, **(409)** the miracle is not the philosopher-king who sets up a city-state as close as possible to the ideal *polis*. The miracle is that ordinary man who manages to be a citizen in an imperfect state and who still remains a man.

The fundamental political problem

The opposition between man and citizen is overcome when it appears that being a man does not prevent Emile from being a citizen. Reciprocally, being citizens should not prevent people from being men. It should be possible to reconcile state membership and sense of humanity in the framework of a peaceful international order. As a matter of fact, the solution of the fundamental political problem requires such an order. But we are here reaching the limits of Rousseauôs political theory.

The fundamental problem of politics is only partly resolved by the institution of the state. The problem, recalled at the beginning of the paper, refers to the conciliation of security and liberty:

> Find a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before[43].

The social contract provides a solution. But this solution is not sufficient, as long as the different states remain in a permanent state of war, that is to say in the state of nature as Hobbes sees it. Rousseau analyses this situation in *Emile*, Book V, when he describes Emileôs political education:

> Once we have thus considered each species of civil society in itself, we shall compare them in order to observe their diverse relations: some large, others small; some strong, others weak; attacking, resisting, and destroying one another, and in this continual action and reaction, responsible for more misery and loss of life than if men had all kept their initial freedom. 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 ills 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 é Is it not this partial and imperfect association which produces tyranny and war; and are not tyranny and war the greatest plagues of humanity?
>
> 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. 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[44].

(410) The citizens may be at peace within the walls of the state, but there is no real security as long as the state itself can be destroyed. It can be destroyed by war, tyranny or by a combination of both. War is an accidental cause of death. The main factor is tyranny, or more precisely: despotism, which is usurpation of the sovereign power by the government[45]. In principle, the government --- the ñPrinceò, according to Rousseauôs terminology --- should simply enforce the laws agreed upon by the people. But inevitably, the government will gradually impose its own will on the people. This is the way states die: the social contract is broken when the executive power is no longer subject to the sovereignty of the people, that is to say to the legislative power. The Prince becomes more powerful than the general will,

decrees become more important than laws. War accelerates this process, because it requires a stronger governmental power.

So the social contract is only partly the solution to the political problem. In other words, the institution of a republican state does not suffice. International peace must be achieved so that individuals could reach security and liberty. The solution is to build confederations. Rousseau goes on:

> 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? These investigations lead us directly to all the questions of public right which can complete the clarification of the questions of political right.

You will have war and tyranny unless you build up federations or confederations. At this point however, we are confronted with a serious difficulty. For the solution to the problem is a problem in itself. Rousseau had thoroughly studied the Abbé de Saint-Pierre's project for a European confederation. He thought that the project was excellent, but unfeasible. He thought that it was not possible to bring all the European monarchs together to accept such a confederation. If the project was to be realized, it could only be done by force, and this was also not possible. That may be one of the reasons why Rousseau never wrote the last chapters of the *Social Contract.* We must remember that it is an unfinished book, as Rousseau himself says. He never wrote the last part of the book, which was meant to deal with the external relations of the state. In this part, he would have had to answer the questions posed in Book V of *Emile*: how is it possible to create an association of states? And if it is possible to do it, how can we make it last? Most probably, Rousseau did not know how to answer these questions. He knew that the problem of mankind would not be solved until such an association **(411)** of states is instituted. But he did not see how this goal could possibly be achieved.

[1] I am grateful to my colleagues of the University of Columbia (Missouri), John Kultgen and Paul Weirich, who were kind enough to read this paper and make suggestions for the final English version.

[2] *On the Social Contract*, Book I, ch. 6, tr. G. D. H. Cole, revised by J. H. Brumfitt and John C. Hall, Everyman's Library, London, 1973, p. 191.

[3] *Emile or On Education*, Book I, tr. Allan Bloom, Basic Books, Inc., New York, 1979, p. 40.

[4] *Emile*, I, p. 39.

[5] *Emile*, I, p. 40

[6] *On the Social Contract*, I, 1, p. 181.
[7] *On the Social Contract*, I, 6, pp. 190--191.
[8] *Ibid.*
[9] *Ibid.*
[10] *On the Social Contract*, II, 7, p. 213.
[11] *Ibid.*
[12] *Emile*, I, p. 39-40.
[13] *On the Social Contract*, I, 8, p. 195.
[14] *On the Social Contract*, II, 11, p. 223.
[15] *On the Social Contract*, III, 15, p. 262.
[16] *On the Social Contract*, II, 4, p. 204.
[17] Roger D. Masters, *The Political Philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Princeton University Press, 1968, p. 51.
[18] *On the Social Contract*, II, 10, p. 222.
[19] Rousseau opposes *amour de soi* and *amour propre*. *Amour de soi* is the principle for self-conservation. It must be distinguished from egoism and can be extended to other human beings. *Amour propre* is the principle for vanity and conceit. It develops within the framework of society: each individual compares himself with the others and wishes regard and praise. Hence, a kind of ñstruggle for symbolic recognitionò, which leads necessarily to frustration. ñ*Amour propre*, which makes comparisons, is never content and never could be, because this sentiment, preferring ourselves to others, also demands others to prefer us to themselves, which is impossibleò (*Emile*, IV, pp. 213--214) **(412)**.
[20] *Emile*, IV, p. 233.
[21] *Emile*, IV, p. 213.
[22] *Emile*, IV, p. 221.
[23] *Emile*, IV, p. 219.
[24] *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality among Men*, tr. G. D. H. Cole, revised by J. H. Brumfitt and John C. Hall, Everymanôs Library, London, 1973, p. 47.
[25] *On the Social Contract*, II, 11, p. 223.
[26] See *The Government of Poland*, translation of *Considérations sur le gouvernement de Pologne* by Willmoore Kendall, Hackett Publishing Company, 1985 : IV. ñEducationò, pp. 19--24.
[27] *Emile*, IV, p. 235
[28] *Emile*, III, p. 194.
[29] *Emile*, IV, p. 224
[30] *The Government of Poland*, p. 29.
[31] *Emile*, IV, pp. 225--226.
[32] *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality among Men*, p. 99
[33] *Emile*, I, p. 39
[34] *A Discourse on Political Economy*, Everymanôs Library, London, 1973, p. 142.
[35] See *Emile*, Book V, pp. 458--467.
[36] Book I, ch. 6
[37] *Emile*, IV, 236.
[38] *Emile*, V, p. 472.
[39] *Emile*, V, p. 473.
[40] See *On the Social Contract*, I, 8

[41] *Emile*, V, p. 473
[42] *Emile*, I, p. 40.
[43] *On the Social Contract*, I, 6, pp. 190--191.
[44] *Emile*, V, p. 466.
[45] See *On the Social Contract*, III, 10, p. 256.