

Rousseau Rousseau
and et la
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The Quarrel Between Philosophy and Poetry Reconsidered: Rousseau's "On Theatrical Imitation"

Rousseau's short essay, "On Theatrical Imitation; An Essay Derived From Plato's Dialogues,"¹ purports to be little more than an abstract of Plato's thoughts on dramatic poetry, in which he has merely assembled relevant passages from the dialogues and translated them into an orderly narrative. While the essay has significant resonances with Socrates' initial treatment of imitative poetry in Books II and III of the *Republic*, and several small interpositions that are reminiscent of conversations in Book II of the *Laws*, Rousseau essentially paraphrases Socrates' conversations with Glaucon in Book X of the *Republic*: a polemic against the imitative arts. The essay looks like the work of a student who copied out his master's thoughts for further meditation or to engrave them on his mind. The insignificance Rousseau attaches to this "trifle" in his "Avertissement" has generally been accepted by Rousseau scholars.

Rousseau's casual tone notwithstanding, he himself attests to the essay's importance and its integral place in his whole body of work in the *Dialogues*. In the second dialogue, in the context of discussing whether the solitary man is good or evil, the character "Rousseau" cites "On Theatrical Imitation," in a list of works written in seclusion that testify to Jean-Jacques' goodness.² The list runs as follows: *The Letter to d'Alembert on the Theatre*, *Heloise*, *Emile*, *The Social Contract*, the *Essays on Perpetual Peace*, and "On Theatrical Imitation." If Rousseau's "system" is a whole made up of discrete parts, we may assume each of these works makes an essential and unique contribution to it. An ostensible civic intent or utility,

¹ *De l'Imitation Théâtrale; Essai Tiré des Dialogues de Platon: Par M. J.J. Rousseau de Genève* (Amsterdam, Chez Rey, 1764). For essential information about the intriguing history of this publication, see Victor Gourevitch's edition of the *Essay on the Origin of Languages* (New York: Harper and Row, 1986), p.360; Susan Jackson, *Rousseau's Occasional Autobiographies* (Columbus: Ohio State, 1992), pp. 110-111; and Robert Wokler *Rousseau on Society, Politics, Music and Language* (New York: Garland, 1987), pp.304-8. I am also most grateful for the authors' comments on Rousseau's essay.

² *Rousseau, Judge of Jean-Jacques: Dialogues, The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, Vol. I, ed. Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1990), p. 101.

moreover, ties these particular works together.

Though occasioned by the *Letter to d'Alembert*, and clearly on the same theme as that work--the need to place a ban on dramatic poetry in the healthy republic--Rousseau says in his "*Avertissement*" that the essay did not "fit...comfortably" there. In fact, Rousseau presents it as something of an accident that the essay was published at all. Without Rousseau's consent, someone gave the manuscript to a bookseller who returned it to Rousseau.³ In order not to contradict the person who originally gave it to the bookseller, he chose not to keep the manuscript private. Despite the desultory character of his report then, Rousseau's complicity in the essay's publication is clear.

Whether in this matter Rousseau acted to gratify a friend or to avoid making an enemy, his express motives point at least as much to his self-interest as to his civic concern. We note that at the time the essay was published, furor against Rousseau was at its height and he himself in exile. In this context, we also note that, apart from footnotes, the brief "*Avertissement*" is the only part of the essay in which Rousseau speaks in his own name. Has he found here a way to publish, so to speak, without publishing? Leaving aside the Savoyard Vicar's profession of faith, the most notorious and telling example of this practice, Rousseau's extract of the *Essays on Perpetual Peace* by the Abbé de Saint-Pierre is the other published writing in which he appears to be no more than a translator or secretary, the imitator or conduit of another's ideas. From his discussion of this work in the *Confessions*, however, we learn that Rousseau feels under no obligation in such a case simply to think other people's thoughts. Indeed, he assigns that particular fate to the Abbé. The Abbé followed others' models; he was an imitator. By contrast, Rousseau says of himself, "I was not prohibited from sometimes thinking for myself; and I could give such shape to my work that many important truths might be slipped in under the cloak of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre much more happily than they could under mine."⁴ Similarly, Rousseau gives a shape to his work on Plato that is his own. By imposing a specific

³ See *Correspondance Complète*, ed. R.A. Leigh, VII, 1201, p.363-4; IX, 1495, pp.131-2; XVI, 2743, pp.283-4; 2762, pp.319-20; XVII, 2812, pp.41-2; 2882, pp.167-8; 2827, pp.67-8; 2887, pp.172-7; XXIII, 3921, pp.179-182.

⁴ *Confessions*, O.C. I., ix, p.408.

structure and format on the text, introducing footnotes, and making several significant interpositions, Rousseau shows that he is not merely an imitator. It is precisely in the imitative form, however, that an author can best hide himself or obscure the fact that he is not simply an imitator, but the opposite--a maker of "laws and models," Socrates' phrase for the legislator (380c). By presenting his ideas under cover of Plato's, Rousseau imitates Plato, who never writes anything in his own name, but rather gives every speech "as though he were someone else (393c-d);" i.e., in his impersonations, Plato perfectly exemplifies, and Rousseau therefore embraces, the essence of the actor's trade.⁵

In appearing simply to defer to Plato, making it difficult to discern where Plato leaves off and Rousseau begins, Rousseau not only conceals the extent to which he opposes certain of his contemporaries, he also conceals his rivalry with his own ostensible model Plato, for which, we might say, the counterpoint between *Emile* and the *Republic* offers massive testimony. In general then, Rousseau's essay illustrates the manner in which he joins the art of writing to the art of thinking. The importance of "On Theatrical Imitation" to Rousseau should be measured by the topics it treats: who the legislator is and by what right he is entitled to rule the arts; what the meaning of legislation is; and whom the legislator must displace in order to perform his work. That Rousseau takes his bearings by Plato in his conceptualization of the legislator is corroborated by his statement in *The Social Contract* that the great legislator is the maker of the "model" that is merely followed or imitated by the prince. He also suggests there that the legislator works "in secret" on the true constitution of society--public opinion or taste. By altering public judgments about the beautiful, manipulating the imaginary objects or beings that work on hearts and minds, the great legislator effects revolutions.

Given what is actually involved in reviving the "old quarrel between philosophy and poetry"--Rousseau has good reason for wanting to obscure himself by impersonating another. In Book X Socrates completes the contest with Homer that he began in Books II and III. There he established that it is the role of the founder or legislator, whom he and his interlocutors impersonate, to dictate the "models" according to which the poets must tell their tales (379a).

⁵ *Politics and the Arts: Letter to M. d'Alembert on the Theatre*, trans. Allan Bloom (Ithaca: Cornell U. Press, 1960), p.79.

Given the comprehensive range of tragic poetry, the contest between the philosopher Socrates and Homer, the premier tragic poet, is essentially a rivalry about who is entitled to represent the gods and their relationship to human beings. For, according to Herodotus, Hesiod and Homer "created for the Greeks their theogony" and "gave to the gods the special names...and divided among them their honors, their arts, and their shapes."⁶ Socrates' disagreements with Homer in the *Republic* would seem then to hinge less on the value of poetic imagery and imitation than on the relative merits of the competing models of imagined or imaginary beings--human and divine--to be used in education, whether in the model city or, as in Glaucon's case, *via* the model city. By choosing to summarize Book X, Rousseau enters this same competition. In doing so, however, he is not so much in danger of becoming embroiled in a destructive quarrel with the modern poets, as with the true equivalents of ancient poets in modern times. In Rousseau's own times, by contrast to Plato's, the visions most affecting the imagination do not emanate from the tragic stage, but from the pulpit. The equivalents of the ancient Greek poets are not the modern French poets Rousseau ostensibly addresses in the *Letter* and this essay, but the modern priests, who are in both works his real concern. It is necessary for the modern Socrates to supervise, i.e., to displace, the authoritative interpreters of Scripture. Behind the ancient Greek quarrel between philosophy and poetry is the modern French quarrel between philosophy and the men of the church.⁷ Behind them both is the old quarrel between reason and revelation.

Perhaps Rousseau chose to leave "On Theatrical Imitation" out of the *Letter* because, mindful of enemies, he wanted to obscure the real quarrel between the philosopher Rousseau and the men of the church, whose side he seems to be on, and the real friendship between himself and the dramatic poets or men of letters, whom he seems to oppose. We should in any case read Rousseau's essay with his real opponents in mind, juxtaposing Homer and his heirs to Jesus and his. At the outset of the investigation of imitation Socrates asks Glaucon not to denounce him to "the tragic poets and all the other imitators," which phrase Rousseau replaces with "these dangerous enemies" and

⁶ Herodotus, *The History*, trans. David Grene (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press), II. 53, p. 155.

⁷ *Letter*, pp. 11n., 15.

"corruptors of the people."⁸

Rousseau's paraphrase begins where Socrates begins, but stops before Socrates does. He ends his summary just at the point at which Socrates begins talking to Glaucon about the just man's rewards on earth and after death, a topic culminating in the assertions of the soul's immortality and the story of Er's sojourn in the underworld. Rousseau thus refrains from endorsing the Socratic teaching on the soul and the afterlife, but also from providing any alternative understanding. His emphatic silence points to the subject he chooses not to address, religion and the cosmic support for the just life. By stopping where he does Rousseau also avoids confronting the fact that Socrates ends his polemic against poetry with poetry, showing the insufficiency of argument.⁹ Nor does Rousseau call attention to the fact that Socratic poetry is theology. That is, we cannot avoid concluding from the *Republic* that the true legislator is a founder of religion, or at least of the models according to which religious doctrine must be made. Rousseau seems very far from founding a religion himself, but his pointed silence directs us to the other works--his *own* works--where the lacuna in his summary of Plato would seem to be filled.¹⁰

To substantiate the claim that Rousseau's essay addresses fundamental questions about the legislator, I will consider here Rousseau's treatment of the Socratic repudiation in Book X of Homer as a legislator. At the end of Book IX Socrates treats the imaginary city "that has its place in speeches" as the perfect pattern or model for the serious individual's life. In Book X, however, Socrates inverts this lesson. Far from being able to show that imaginary beings can become

⁸ Plato's *Republic*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968). I thank Christopher Kelly for pointing out Rousseau's copy of the *Republic* is held by The British Library.

⁹ Christopher Kelly, "'To Persuade Without Convincing': The Language of Rousseau's Legislator," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 31, 2 (1987), pp. 321-35.

¹⁰ In addition to the Vicar's creed, I have in mind the "true religion" of which Rousseau speaks in his own name in *Emile*; the outline of "a sort of model" of a new catechism he presents there and the "purely civil profession of faith" that rests on what are "not exactly" dogmas. *Emile*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979), pp.378, 381; *Social Contract*, IV. viii.

the basis for real life imitations, he argues that if one cannot make real beings one is nothing--merely a deceiver and an imitator.

By opening his summary with an explicit reference to the "imaginary republic" that has been established (Socrates merely says "this city"), Rousseau indicates that Socrates' deeds contradict the speeches he is about to make against Homer. At least in one respect, the charge against Homer is equally apt against Socrates. Socrates also molds imaginary beings--cities and souls in speech--and thus exactly like the poets, he "makes what look like beings but are not" (599a). The status as legislators of Plato and Rousseau--the master creators of imaginary beings--turns on this question as well. If the argument against Homer won't stand up, neither would it tell against them. The question would not be the use of poetic imagery then, but the wisdom of the user: the criterion he possesses to judge among better and worse visions, whether found in theatres or in churches.

Rousseau's use of the term "imaginary republic" also calls to mind Machiavelli's denunciation of "imaginary republics" or invisible kingdoms (whether terrestrial or celestial) in Chapter 15 of *The Prince*. That is, he knowingly associates himself with the religious implications of Machiavelli's criticism. With it he also appropriately marks the shift taken in the dramatic conversation toward a kind of Machiavellianism, a preoccupation with *effects* in the real world, as over against the ephemera with which poets and philosophers dabble. Book X amounts to an exhortation to Glaucon to put away childish things and get on with the serious business of living. Supplanting the spirit of play running through the dialogue, in which the interlocutors were to engage one another "like men telling tales in a tale and at their leisure," imitation, and speech altogether, is now disparaged "as a kind of play and not serious (602b-c)." The shift in the argument conforms to Glaucon's own preoccupations with the wages--the potency--of justice: his desire to be reassured that it is not unmanly or effeminate to be decent. Assuming Rousseau to be fully aware that it is the character of Glaucon which calls the specific arguments against poetry forward, we are invited, both by Plato and by Rousseau, to question their objective validity.

The case against Homer turns on the inferiority of speech by contrast to deeds. Deeds are said to be the necessary proof of knowledge, and of legislative wisdom in particular. Those who truly know, do. Those who do not know, and who are, consequently, ineffectual, write poetry or "craft phantoms." Because Homer is only a speaker, i.e., unarmed, and not the ostensible or apparent lawgiver

of Greece, he is explicitly denied the status of legislator. By exposing the flaws in the argument to Glaucon that Plato deliberately fabricated, Rousseau shows Homer, eventually acknowledged by Socrates to be the "educator" of Greece, to have been as a consequence, the legislator of Greece. In the end, the essay vindicates the superiority of speeches to deeds. What Rousseau says of Homer applies, moreover, to every spiritual kingdom, notably that invisible kingdom founded by Jesus, the unarmed prophet *par excellence*. Given Machiavelli's own ambiguity on the issue of "imaginary republics,"--whether the problem is that unarmed prophets can't succeed or that they should aim at something new--Rousseau thus enters into a conversation with Machiavelli as well as Plato about whether the legislator is the one who speaks well or does well.¹¹

Homer speaks very well. Indeed, because his poetry is all-encompassing, many assume he is all-wise, though he has no "works" to prove it (598e). For his part, while apparently concurring in Socrates' disparagement of Homer's wisdom--as talk is cheap--Rousseau actually subverts the slant of the text when he documents Homer's influence. In the text he points to the unlearned appreciation of Homer's "immortal works" and, in a footnote, instead of repeating Socrates' phrase that Homer and the tragic poets make what only *look* like beings, Rousseau inserts praise precisely of Homeric making. Homer made beings like himself--Homer--imitators--among them all the tragic poets of Greece. "It was the common sentiment of the ancients, that all their tragic authors were only copiers and imitators of Homer. Someone said of the tragedies of Euripides, 'they are the remains of Homer's feast, that he, a guest took away with him.'" If Homer can be called an imitator because he did not do what his heroes did, he is an imitator in every realm but one--that of imitation or imitative poetry.¹² There he is a model, or rather *the* model, as Rousseau calls him in the essay several times. Homer's audience may mimic his characters, but his imitators or rivals mimic him.

Continuing to test the Homeric claim to wisdom in a speech

¹¹ *The First and Second Discourses*, trans. Roger and Judith Masters (New York: St. Martin's, 1964), p. 64.

¹² Rousseau accords to Homer in the realm of tragedy the honor he accords in the *Letter* to Molière in the realm of comedy, which, in the latter case, and notably, does not deter Rousseau from revising the *Misanthrope*; *Letter*, p. 36.

calculated to appeal to Glaucon, Socrates derides Homer for his impotence and consequent lack of honor (599a). If Homer were able to do anything in public and private, he would have been "serious about the deeds" rather than contenting himself with speeches. Why, as Rousseau puts it, "would he content himself with less if in fact he could do more?" For the man of *amour propre*, like Glaucon, there is no contest between speaking well and doing well; for, as he says, "the honor and the benefit coming to both are hardly equal" (599b-c).

Illustrating Glaucon's point, but in a way that vastly complicates it, Rousseau introduces an example that is not found in Plato, one of several instances in which Rousseau manages to refer in his summary to heterosexual love. Rousseau asks: "if someone were able to have his choice between a portrait of his mistress or the original, which do you think he would choose?" An easy choice, no doubt, for Glaucon, or better yet, for Emile. But Rousseau invites us to speculate that he at least might choose the portrait. In fact, Rousseau's writings on the subject lead us wonder which one he takes for the real thing. The portrait has no physical reality, but, like the city that has its place only in speeches, it is the perfect "model" of the beloved object. It is, in the first place, unchanging, neither having a will of its own nor being subject to the depredations of time. Second, the model suits the inevitably changing dispositions of the lover's own soul. Like the perfect beings intoxicating Rousseau when the real world disappointed him, the model can be manipulated in accord with his own changing will.¹³ Attachment to imaginary beings, for anyone who could live that way, gives man the experience of perfect freedom, of doing exactly as he pleases--as Rousseau portrays the man of nature, and as Glaucon describes the man with Gyges' ring (359d), or Socrates, the tyrannical dreams of the immoderate man (571c-d). Rousseau's elaboration of Socrates points to differences between philosophers and those whom they instruct, and so constrain, by models, but also to the potentially tragic difficulties that are bound to accompany every particular attachment--in politics or in private life.

The evidence against Homer as legislator would seem to be massive (599e). In Rousseau's own words, "Greece and the whole world celebrate the blessings of the great men who possess these sublime arts of which the precepts cost you so little." Again, however, Rousseau complicates the putative evidence. To Socrates' list of the

¹³ *Confessions*, O.C. I, ix, pp.427-30.

famed legislators Lycurgus, Charondas, and Solon, Rousseau adds the name of Minos, legendary legislator of Crete.¹⁴ The example of Minos is a significant one to interject just at this point, when the issue on the table is the supposed priority of deeds to speeches. In his life of *Theseus*, for instance, Plutarch is at some pains to rehabilitate Minos' reputation, which suffered so badly in Athens, where he was regarded simply as an enemy happily conquered by Theseus. It appears that Minos has undergone a revolution in public opinion from Homer's time to Socrates' that is owing entirely to the command Athens exercises through speech.

This may show how dangerous it is to incur the hostility of a city that is mistress of eloquence and song. For Minos was always ill spoken of, and represented ever as a very wicked man, in the Athenian theatres; neither did Hesiod avail him...nor Homer...; the tragedians got the better, and from the vantage ground of the stage showered down obloquy upon him, as a man of cruelty and violence; whereas in fact he appears to have been a king and a law-giver...¹⁵ In at least one other context Rousseau clearly had this same point on his mind and may have had here as well. In the *First Discourse*, his argument about the superiority of people who did well to people who only spoke well--of Sparta to Athens--is upheld by reference to descriptions of the peoples who did well in books written by those who spoke well, and without whom the former would have had no lasting memorials. In this particular instance, however, Homer is no more the arbiter of Minos' fate than the king himself. His heirs, the inferior Athenian "tragic poets," have successfully displaced his judgments. In free Athens, Rousseau writes in the *Letter*, the tragic theatre commemorates the fall of tyrants, altering the reputation of its forebears accordingly.¹⁶ In a free Paris or Geneva, both kings and armed prophets, e.g., Calvin, may eventually be remembered as tyrants owing to the eloquence of unarmed prophets in defense of liberty. By introducing a Greek legislator who is not universally celebrated, who underwent a change in reputation, Rousseau raises the question of

¹⁴ Plato, *Laws*, 624b, 706b.

¹⁵ Plutarch, *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, trans. John Dryden (New York: Modern Library), "Theseus," p.10.

¹⁶ *Letter*, p. 78.

revolution.¹⁷

When it comes to holding Homer's claim to wisdom up to the standard of the most eminent *private* educators, who have made others like themselves--imitators who follow a distinctive way of life or sect--Rousseau adds to the several kinds of sects mentioned by Socrates one he doesn't mention, but of significance to his own era. Like the spiritual kingdom founded by Jesus, "Zoroaster made magis [*les mages*]," i.e., a sect of priests, as Pythagoras made disciples and Lycurgus made his fellow citizens.

Once again evincing his concern to avoid dishonor, Glaucon reports that not only was Homer unable to form a sect, he also "suffered considerable neglect in his own day, when he was alive" (a fate made even more ridiculous by his own ridiculous friend (600c-d). Socrates picks up on this remark by saying that it is not possible for someone who knew how to educate men in all respects to be neglected "by the men of his time" (c.f.489b; 493a-c). Needless to say, Socrates accuses himself to a large extent by the standard he applies to Homer. His charge also calls to mind the life of Jesus, and may have done so to Rousseau. Above all, Rousseau himself is experiencing this very fate, which he elaborates at length, at the time he chooses to publish the essay. Thus it is especially worth noticing that the rootless cosmopolitanism of Homer, his lack of a fatherland, and the neglect he endured from the men of his times--the inconsiderable, ridiculous life of a vagabond--is introduced as a terrible fate not by Socrates, but by Glaucon. Worse things could happen to a prophet or a philosopher.¹⁸ The wanderer's life, moreover, which is free of all civic responsibility, might actually be regarded by some as preferable to the citizen's. Rousseau writes in the *First Discourse* that Socrates would not have been asked to drink the hemlock in enlightened Paris, but he *would* have been ridiculed. Given the alternative, and assuming one is free of the desire to be honored by one's contemporaries, Socrates, or his modern heir, might not find being hooted at by *le monde* an intolerable fate at all.

¹⁷ c.f., Machiavelli, *Discourses*, I.x.

¹⁸ In his first "Projet de préface" for the "Levite of Ephraim," written in flight from Montmorency in 1762, Rousseau wanted it noted, and wrote twice: "Dans les plus cruels momens de sa vie, il fit *Le Lévite d'Ephraïm*," *O.C.*, II, p.1206.

At this point, Rousseau interposes a sentence that would seem to hammer in the final nail of the poet's coffin. "In those crude centuries, when the weight of ignorance began to make itself felt, when the need and avidity for knowledge concurred to render useful and respectable every man a little more educated than the others, if those there had been as knowledgeable as they seemed to be, if they had had all the qualities they made to shine with such pomp, they had passed for prodigies; they would have been sought after by all." With this claim, Rousseau points to the ease with which simple men can be abused by the learned; a magician's sleights of hand can fool them into thinking they are seeing "prodigies." But his point also indicates that Homer had "in those crude centuries" no proper judge, no one (to apply the definition given in the essay) who could distinguish error from truth, or appreciate both the imitation and the thing imitated. Whether they vilified or celebrated him, Homer's judges could only have applied false standards. By itself, then, the solitariness of the genius cannot be taken as a sign of his lack of wisdom, nor of an evil nature. Where there are no proper judges, it is even likely that the good man who is a genius will be alone.

Although Homer's poetry must ultimately be judged by its wisdom, the fact that he is a poet is not sufficient proof that he is unwise. In the end, Socrates himself vindicates Homeric poetry, and thus philosophy as well, precisely on the Machiavellian ground of its effects. The initial immunity to poetry of Homer's contemporaries is not as important as the effects or prodigies wrought by Homer over time. Gradually, by means surer and more effective than those of a magician, a legislator who employs poetic imagery may produce effects that are more longlasting and widespread. As Socrates' need to deal so extensively with Homer and Hesiod attests, they have become the authoritative sources of knowledge about how to live and how to think about the gods, as have the heirs and self-styled imitators of Jesus. To lay claim to the status of legislator in this sense, one must of course be willing to enjoy the fruits of one's labor in an imagined future century.¹⁹ Such a legislator builds an invisible empire without boundaries: one that is not particularized as to space or time. Acknowledging the full extent of Homer's influence, Socrates describes Homer as the one alleged to have, if not legislated for Greece, then "educated Greece." And he admits to "an inborn love of

¹⁹ *Social Contract*, II.vii.

poetry" owing to "our rearing in these fine regimes," and to a friendship he has felt for Homer since childhood (595c,608a). As applied to Plato and Rousseau, the magnitude of Homer's "works" indicate that it is not necessary for philosophers to become kings in order to rule; it may suffice that they be published authors.

The difference between the Greece of Homer's times and Socrates' Athens, which is in love with poetry, points to a revolution in public opinion--opinion about Homer--that is like the revolution in opinion about Minos. Learning how to account for such revolutions and to replicate them would seem to be the fundamental study for the would-be legislator. In this case, the effects of learning combined with a long habituation to tragic poetry seem to have led to the appreciation of Homer's voice, which Rousseau and Socrates present as nearly muted in his own times. The argument seems to be a defense of enlightened ages, where men who can truly judge may be found.

But what should one say about someone being neglected or vilified in an enlightened century; where learned judges purportedly abound; where nothing but learning, talents, and the arts are valued; where even the staunchest opponents of the Enlightenment do so in ways to attest to their ability to participate in arts and letters? First, we must identify any new causes for persecution that did not exist for Homer or for Plato, such as are bred by disputing religious sects. Second, we must note that judges are corrupted when learning is desired for the sake of distinction. In such times, a genius might deliberately seek seclusion or distance from the most inflammatory quarrels--mollifying his potential opponents at some times, deliberately calling down their enmity at others.

As between the crude centuries and the enlightened ages, and as between crude and enlightened places, Rousseau interposes a new sentence indicating where he comes squarely down. However much they both genuinely mean to keep tragic poetry or theatres out of their model cities, neither Socrates nor Rousseau calls for the censorship of poetry in the cities in which they live. They are not on the side of the bookburners. Voting with his feet, Rousseau opts for the modern Athens over the modern Sparta. "Let us render this honor to truth, to respect even the image of it, and to give to everything that celebrates truth the liberty of making itself heard." Rousseau, *l'homme de lumière*, herewith makes his own contribution to the campaign to crush infamy.

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