

## The Poetics of History

PHILIPPE LACOUÉ-LABARTHE

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During the course of the winter term 1934-1935, in the circumstances we all know, Heidegger introduces Hölderlin into his teaching programme for the first time. He chooses - no doubt intentionally - to undertake a commentary on two among the great finished hymns: *Germania* and *The Rhine*. Bearing upon the anxious, archi-political question "Who are we?" (i.e. we Germans), the preaching is unequivocal: Hölderlin, alone, holds the secret of Germanicity (to translate *das Deutsche*); only listening to his Poem could serve to rectify the national-socialist derailment and to found in truth the abortive Revolution. This is because it is supported by a philosophical proposition which is equally plain and through which, with regards to History, the properly transcendental status of Poetry (*Dichtung*) is established: Poetry, that is to say, art in its essence, indissociably both language and myth (*Sprache und Sage*), is the condition of possibility, or the origin, of History as such - or, if one prefers, of the disclosure of Being according to existence. A few months later, in the lectures on 'The Origin of the Work of Art', this proposition will acquire its canonical form: the work of art is the thesis of truth (of *aletheia*). From the courses of 1934-35 I offer, as example, the following lines:

The historical [*geschichtlich*] *Dasein* of the peoples, their ascension, their apogee, and their decline, springs from Poetry, and [...] from it also springs authentic knowledge, in the sense of philosophy; and from both at the same time pours out the actualisation of the *Dasein* of a people by the State - politics. This originary, historical [*geschichtlich*] time of the peoples is consequently the time of poets, of thinkers and founders of state, that is to say of those who, in fact, ground and justify the historical [*geschichtlich*] existence of a people.

Or yet

Poetry institutes Being. Poetry is the originary language of a people. In this language happens the exposedness to beings which thus open up. Man, as accomplishment of that exposedness, is historical [*geschichtlich*]. Man does not "have" a History but only inasmuch as, and because he is historical [*geschichtlich*]. Language, far from being an invention produced in the course of a creative history of cultures, is the ground for the possibility of History.<sup>1</sup>

It is not too difficult to see here, operating under the preoccupation with History and historicity (or historicity<sup>2</sup>), a thorough re-elaboration of the Greek problematic of the relation between *phusis* and *techne*: "Nature and Art", as Hölderlin also says, Saturn and Jupiter, or, in a vocabulary he shares with Schelling, "aergic" and "organic"; Heidegger will himself say Earth and World. It is also true that, right after the passage I have just quoted, Heidegger continues an investigation devoted, since this is the subtitle introduced by the editors, to "the absence of language in the animal and in 'nature'" – a theme which recurs in his thought and is linked, as we know, to the determination of man as mortal, which is to say, as solely capable of death: "The originary origin of language, as essential ground for human *Dasein*, nonetheless remains a secret. Most of all when one considers that even where there is 'life' (plant, animal) language does not happen automatically, even if it appears sufficient to eliminate some residual inhibition for the animal to speak. And yet! The leap from living animal to speaking man is as great, if not more, than the one from inanimate stone to living being." And a bit further he adds, leaving no doubt as to the fundamental aim of the remarks:

But this simultaneity of an apparent proximity and an essential distancing between man and animal becomes a true question only if we consider the absence of language proper to the whole of nature, without, however, forgetting, that nothing is capable of

<sup>1</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin Hymnen – "Germanien" und "Der Rhein"*, Gesamtausgabe (hereinafter GA) 39, (Frankfurt: V.Klostermann, 1980), p.51, p.74-75. [Translations from the *Gesamtausgabe* are my own - trans.]

<sup>2</sup> ['Historical' is the common French translation of the German *geschichtlich*, as opposed to *historisch*, 'historique' – trans.]

'speaking' in a more pressing manner than the dominance of nature, from one to the other end of the spectrum.

Which means: we will not get through if we simply place speechless nature and speaking man side by side like things of different complexion. We do not come close to the question unless we take fundamentally into account the way Poetry, as fundamental event in the historical [*geschichtlich*] *Dasein* of man, stands in relation to *nature* – and before any science of nature – if one is allowed to speak like this. All the sciences of nature – as indispensable as they are within certain actual limits [...] – leave us, despite their exactitude, fundamentally stranded with regard to the essential: for they de-'nature' nature.<sup>3</sup>

I will defer, for the moment, any commentary. However, what holds my attention to begin with is this: it is on the basis of such an affirmation, absolutely paradoxical one might say, of the originary or transcendental character of *techne* (Language and Poetry, or Language as Poetry) that Heidegger takes up the reading of the poem *The Rhine*, and, in this poem, the reading of its tenth stanza. This stanza is famous for being one of the most remarkable instances in which Hölderlin invokes the name of Rousseau.

Of demigods now I think  
 And I must know these dear ones  
 Because so often their lives  
 Move me and fill me with longing.  
 But he whose soul, like yours,  
 Rousseau, ever strong and patient,  
 Became invincible,  
 Endowed with steadfast purpose  
 And a sweet gift of hearing,  
 Of speaking, so that from holy profusion  
 Like the wine-god, foolishly, divinely  
 And lawlessly he gives it away,  
 The language of the purest, comprehensible to the good,  
 But rightly strikes with blindness the irreverent,  
 The profaning rabble, what shall I call that stranger?<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 76.

<sup>4</sup> Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, translated by Michael Hamburger, (London: Anvil, 1966), p.439.

Yet here is Heidegger's commentary:

That of which this stanza speaks is only a question, remains solely question, to wit a question seeking the stranger. Who is this stranger who remains foreign (*dieser Fremde und Fremdbleibende*)? In this stanza there is the name of 'Rousseau'. We know his name was placed later, replacing that of Heinze, Hölderlin's friend <author of *Ardinghello* and the person to whom the elegy *Brot und Wein* is dedicated – P. L-L.>. Equally, in stanza 11, line 163, "by lake Bienne" was added later, in relation to the fact of naming Rousseau, since it was a place where he stayed. The original interpretation of the stanza has therefore to be rid of the reference to Rousseau. What is more: it is only inversely, that is starting from the meaning of the stanza, that the reason why the poet can here equally name Rousseau be understood.<sup>5</sup>

*Quod erat demonstrandum*, one may say; and in fact we will learn nothing more on this. No doubt, in the context of the Thirties, this exclusion is frequent. In any case, it punctuates Heidegger's teaching quite regularly. It is that Rousseau is the (contemptible) representative of so-called "liberal" thought (Rousseau, in other words, leading to Cassirer, if I may be allowed this shortcut). There can also be no doubt that Heidegger takes the precaution of alleviating the brutality of his gesture: after having established that "the being here named in the questioning" is to do with "Nature", he specifies: "The unfolding of a Being to this intact and original point in its naturalness makes one think of Rousseau and his doctrine. But here, there remains to be considered that that age (for example Kant and German Idealism) saw Rousseau differently to how we see him now. Nevertheless, that is not what is primarily important".<sup>6</sup> No matter, the exclusion is irrevocable - and we see all too well that the gesture of repentance (hardly sketched, and in what terms(!): Rousseau and his "doctrine") in reality does nothing but aggravate matters. The

<sup>5</sup> Op. cit., pp.277-278.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p.278. For the criticism of Rousseau see in particular the analysis undertaken by Jeffrey Andrew Barash of the (unpublished) seminar held in 1934-1935 in collaboration with Eric Wolf: Heidegger opposes the "abstract" conception of the State and "individual freedom", on which lies *The Social Contract*, to the properly historical, in the sense of the History of Spirit, conception that Hegel has of the political (of the *polis*) in the *Philosophy of Right*. J-A Barash, *Heidegger et son Siecle* (Paris: PUF, Paris, 1995).

exclusion is well and truly repeated; and if we pay any attention to its reasons, it is clear that it is not, like is often the case elsewhere, merely a political one (due to the hatred of the French Revolution, of democracy, of the state of justice etc.), but properly philosophical: not even the interpretation of Rousseau by Kant and German Idealism can save him from his doctrinal, if not dogmatic, weakness, which is to say from the metaphysical insufficiency of his thought of "Nature". The concept of "Nature" that Hölderlin largely inherits from Rousseau is actually - Heidegger will often return to this - what nearly led him astray and forbade him a "more originary" thought on *phusis* or the Earth. The 'salvaging' of Hölderlin (his *Rettung*, to speak like Benjamin) is at the price of this unequivocal denial of his solidarity with Rousseau. And we can easily grasp what is at stake in such a manoeuvre: that which is at stake in all of Heidegger's thought, inasmuch as this thought is fundamentally a thought of the originary character of *techné*, therefore inasmuch as this thought cannot lean on a derivative, feeble, much too elementary and "naïve" determination of *phusis* - of 'Nature', in inverted commas, according to its Latin (and French) concept.

The thesis that I therefore propose to uphold is that, in what concerns Rousseau, there is blindness. The prejudice, the ill-will, the little credit accorded to Rousseau (while such great efforts were consented to and deployed in order to tear Kant and Hölderlin, even Schiller, all of whom were indebted to Rousseau, away from the "Enlightenment spirit", or away from their misinterpretation by the 19th century, and by Schopenhauer in particular),<sup>7</sup> in short, the refusal to read, are not the only issues. In truth, Heidegger does not notice Rousseau. And if he doesn't notice him, it is because his historiography prevents him from doing so. Twice.

First, because it profoundly depends on the Hegelian historiography which situates the destinal turn of the Modern in the Cartesian or Gallileo-Cartesian moment (installation of representational certainty, identification of being with the subject as *ego cogito*, objective mathematisation of physics as the science of nature, programming of the techno-sciences, etc.). That Rousseau belongs to this age of thought is evident, as attested to by, for example, his loyalty to Malebranche, his profession of ethico-theological faith, or his political theory of the general Will. Everything hinges upon knowing whether Rousseau belongs only to this age, whether ties more secret connect him to an ancient world which

<sup>7</sup> See especially the first course on Nietzsche, *Der Wille zur Macht als Kunst* (1936-1937), GA 43.

is not solely that of Plutarch and Augustine,<sup>8</sup> or if the “retreat” of which he makes himself the example without example tears him decisively away from his age or even places the very heart of his thought in “epokhe”.

Second, because in this historiography inspired by Hegel, the only destinal event that Heidegger recognises as being part of Modern Times is the (German) invention of History and the thought of historicity, that is to say of the historical character of being and of truth. Several times, he calls to mind Winckelmann, whose *Gedanken* are exactly contemporary to the second *Discourse*, and Herder,<sup>9</sup> he obviously invokes the whole of German Idealism, up to Burckhardt and Nietzsche. Nonetheless, it is from Herder that he retains the guiding idea on the origin of languages and the essence of language as originary poetry of the peoples. He is not at all interested in Rousseau being at the source of such a thought of history (or, which amounts to the same, of origin), or in that he was recognised as such by all German philosophy. Rousseau has nothing to do with the invention of the thought of History, and in any case is probably not a “thinker”.

This blindness – such is then my thesis – would in fact be Heidegger’s blind spot.

This thesis should, as is proper, be supported by two hypotheses.

The first one, which has guided my work for a long time, rests on the suspicion that it is a reinterpretation of *mimesis*, unavowed or denied, which underlies the Heideggerian thought of *techne*, whatever the disdain brutally professed, here and there, for the concept of *mimesis* – judged, as we know, to be late and derivative, subordinated to the understanding of truth as *homoiosis*, burdened by its Latin translation as *imitatio*, etc. The clearest indication of this dissimulation lies in the simple fact that, if, in the end, it is to Aristotle – always, it is true, placed under the authority of

<sup>8</sup> Rousseau, for example in the *Essay on the Origin of Languages*, but this is merely an example, refers constantly to Greek music, and the Greek age before the sophists and the philosophers. Jean Starobinski, in the presentation of his edition (Paris: Gallimard, “Folio Essais”, 1990) rightly insists on this point. It is exactly this “hellenophilia” that Hölderlin recognises in Rousseau, often associated, in his mythology, with Dionysus, and in fact thought of as “mediator” between past and future, Greece and Hesperia. It is remarkable that Heidegger cites several times the famous lines: “... in hints from / Time immemorial the gods have spoken” [Hölderlin, op.cit., p.124 – “hints” is Hamburger’s translation of *Winken*; P. L-L translates as “Signs” – *trans.*], without ever indicating that they come from a version of the ode precisely entitled *Rousseau*.

<sup>9</sup> Cf., among many examples, *Parmenides*, GA 54, p.103-104 and 134-135; *Die Grundfragen der Philosophie*, GA 45, p.43; and of course *Nietzsche I*, already cited. Humboldt is equally counted with the “thinkers of History”.

the canonical saying of Heraclitus: *phusis kruptesthai filei* – that Heidegger always addresses himself in order to get to the secret of the originarily Greek understanding of *phusis* and its relation with *techne* (I am thinking of the great, detailed reading of the *Physics*, B 1, conducted in 1939-1940, which shall remain decisive for all later texts),<sup>10</sup> he never refers, to my knowledge, to the *Poetics* or even, within the *Physics*, (B 2 and B 8) to the two major propositions concerning *techne* which remain decisive for all western understanding of art and technics.

I recall them because, just as much as *phusis kruptesthai filei*, they govern, in a very precise manner, knowingly or not, Rousseau’s thought. Most of all the second (199a), of which it is usually said that it explicates the first: *he techne mimeitai ten phusin* (194a), and which states: *techne ta men epitelei ha he phusis adunatei apergasasthai, ta de mimeitai*.<sup>11</sup>

This can be translated (here I am using the translation by Jean Baufret which refers to this proposition precisely in order to interpret the Hölderlinian thought of the relation between “art” and “nature”): “On the one hand, art brings to completion <we could also say: finishes> what nature is incapable of working through, and on the other hand, it imitates”. And we can already see clearly that all the difficulty lies in the use of the verb: *apergasesthai* (to work through, complete) with regard to *phusis*. The word *ergon* – and the concept of *energeia* – without doubt hold the attention of the Heideggerian commentary on the *Physics*. But everything happens – and herein, then, lies the suspicion – as if Heidegger is passing over this difficulty all too quickly, as if he is hurrying on to conclude and decide that *ergon*, with regard to the essence, is not a matter of doing and making (*machen*) but of producing and installing (*herstellen*), ontologically determined as “bringing into presence”.

There is much to say on Heidegger’s haste; I will come back to it later. For the moment, provisionally and simply as an indication, I will limit myself to mentioning that it is probably this haste which dictates to Heidegger his riskiest statements on poetry or the essence of the artwork (which, as we know from the lectures of 1935 and 1936 on “The Origin of the work of Art”, should be thought not as *Darstellung*, which is to say *mimesis* or (re)presentation, but as putting-to-work and thesis, installation

<sup>10</sup> “Vom Wesen und Begriff der *phusis*”, *Wegmarken*, GA 9 [English translation in *Pathmarks*, ed. by W. Mc.Neil, (Cambridge: CUP, 1998)].

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Aristotle, *Physics*, translated by Robin Waterfield, (Oxford: OUP, 1996), 194a, p.37 (“design imitates nature”), and 199a, p.51 (“human skill either completes what nature is incapable of completing or imitates nature”). [In both cases, the word rendered by “design” and “human skill” is *techne - trans.*].

– *Gestell* – of truth, of *aletheia*, of *phusis* inasmuch as it likes to “encrypt” itself.<sup>12</sup> I will only recall one, which leaves us in the proximity of Hölderlin – and, as a result, of Rousseau. It can also be found in the commentary on *The Rhine*. Heidegger is seeking to understand the content of the verb *ahnen*, to divine, which Hölderlin uses when speaking of a “divining” Nature or when he says that “poets can divine”; so he is wondering about this fundamental tonality or disposition, of this *Stimmung* which “exalts whilst being restrained, [...] in which the secret opens up as such, springs out in all its vastness yet folds back up into One”. He says:

As the poets are not in relation to nature as to an object, but on the contrary, ‘Nature’ as Being institutes itself in the saying, the poets’ saying, being nothing other than Nature saying itself, is of the same essence as Nature itself.<sup>13</sup>

The second hypothesis concerns Rousseau; this is the hypothesis I will work towards justifying to begin with. The political or archi-political reasons which lead Heidegger to scorn the “liberal” thinking which claims Rousseau as, in some way, its founder, are more than suspect (I have written elsewhere of Heidegger’s archi-fascism).<sup>14</sup> It remains that they put the stress, at least in part, on what remains notoriously insufficient in the classic interpretation of Rousseau (be that rationalist or not, in either case it matters little): for as long as we envisage Rousseau from the point of view of what he himself calls, from the beginning or almost, his “system”; for as long as we see this system culminate, beyond the pedagogical project or the profession of ethico-metaphysical faith, in the political theory of *The Social Contract* (or alter itself, which amounts to the same, in the autobiographical and novelistic project, producing, however, an all new *possibility* for Literature); for as long as, in fact, we do not question with sufficient rigour that which is abyssally problematic in the Rousseauistic concept of “nature” (and, correlatively, in that of “existence”), we risk misunderstanding, by varying degrees, that which

<sup>12</sup> Cf. the text [unpublished in English or German-trans.] of Heidegger’s lectures on “*The Origin of the Work of Art*” (ed. by E. Martineau, Authentica, s.l., 1987) and “*The Origin of the Work of Art*” (1936), *Holzwege*, GA 5 [English translation in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge, 1978)].

<sup>13</sup> Heidegger, GA 39, op.cit.

<sup>14</sup> “Le Courage de la Poésie” (Les Conférences du Perroquet, 39, Paris, 193) and “L’Esprit du national-socialisme et son destin” (Freiburger Kulturgespräche im Marienbad, 1995).

makes for the absolute originality of Rousseau’s thought, and which is precisely his thought of the *origin*.

Certainly, as Heidegger concedes, German Idealism read Rousseau more profoundly than French revolutionary thought did at the time, or than so-called “liberal” thought did later. But to discover, for example, that “Kantian morality” presupposes Rousseau, or, more decisively, that Kant’s philosophy of history (and then that of Schiller, with all that it entails)<sup>15</sup> is indebted to the (pre-) dialectical logic controlling the relation between Nature and Culture established by Rousseau, is, without a doubt, not to go deep enough. That which is, in fact, at stake in the *thought of origin* is precisely that which Heidegger, *at the same time*, both denounces and allows to be noticed, and this *primarily* in his teaching on Hölderlin: namely, that the thought of origin is at the origin *both* of transcendental thinking (in the Kantian sense) *and* of the thinking of negativity (in the dialectical-speculative sense). Or, to formulate it more rigorously, that it lies at the origin of transcendental thinking *as* the thinking of negativity. In fact, therein lies the heart of the *Auseinandersetzung*, of the controversy between Heidegger and “great German philosophy”, as he says, and behind it, all of western metaphysics.

To take measure of what is at stake here we must try to grasp the thought of origin at its origin. Even in its starting blow.

I wager that this blow is struck, or given, in the very first pages of the *Discourse on the Origin and the Foundations of Inequality among Men*. Definitively, but, so to speak, imperceptibly or in a hardly audible way. And that beyond, within this same text as well as in the later elaborations (those of the *Essay on the Origin of Languages* as well as those of *The Social Contract*), in the problematic of origin such as Rousseau can thematise, indeed systematise it, the starting blow will resound only in a very muffled way under the clamour of “doctrine”, as Heidegger says.

What then happens exactly at the beginning of the second *Discourse*? (I am condensing, no doubt abusively, an analysis which would demand more ample and detailed treatment and justifications).<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Cf., for example, Kant, ‘Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History’, in *Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); and Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, ed. Elizabeth M. Wilkinson & L. A. Willoughby (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), *On the Naive and Sentimental in Literature*, trans. Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly (Manchester: Carcanet, 1981).

<sup>16</sup> P. L.-L. hereafter refers to the edition of Rousseau established by Jean Starobinski, (Paris: Gallimard, ‘Folio Essais’, 1985). I have provided references to Rousseau, ‘A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality’, in *The Social Contract and the Discourses*,

To begin with we must take well into account, and in all seriousness, that Rousseau sets his response to the Academy of Dijon as a *properly philosophical* one. He does this twice: from the first paragraph of the Preface, where the explicit reference to Buffon (the subject of a note) and the implicit one to Malebranche, should not mask what is essential, namely the recollection of the delphic-socratic precept inaugural to philosophy as such, and the allusion to the statue of Glaucus in Book X of *The Republic*. When Rousseau, after having executed with one blow “all the huge volumes of the Moralists”, writes that he regards “the subject of the following discourse as one of the most interesting questions philosophy can propose”, he is not thinking of the “Philosophes” (his contemporaries) but of all philosophy since its supposed beginning. Then, in the introduction, where he reports on the, until that point, strictly aporetic character of the question of origin (“The philosophers, who have inquired into the foundations of society, have all felt the necessity of going back to a state of nature; but not one of them has got there”, p.50) and when he announces, in a manner which Kant will remember, his intention – which is indeed critical - to put an end to the infinite conflict between hypotheses and unfounded extrapolations. It is clear that in this case there is no restriction to the field of so-called “political philosophy”, but that Rousseau is taking head-on one of the founding oxymorons of philosophy, Aristotle’s *Zoon politikon phusei*, which he will in any case associate, in all rigour, with *Zoon logon echon* (I will come back to this). We should not misjudge the declaration of intention which precedes the final address to “Man” in the introduction: it is the affirmation of the *philosophical* itself:

As my subject interests mankind in general, I shall endeavour to make use of a language adapted to all Nations, or rather, forgetting time and place, to attend only to men to whom I am speaking, I shall suppose myself in the Lyceum of Athens, repeating the lessons of my Masters, with Plato and Xenocrates for judges, and the whole human race for audience (p.51).

All this then goes towards saying, and this is the first conclusion, that the question of origin – “one of the thorniest questions Philosophers may

trans. G. D. H Cole (London: Everyman, 1973); here, p.43 –trans.] The analyses that follow are grounded upon work began at Irvine in 1979 on the mimetology of Diderot and Rousseau (Cf. ‘Diderot: Paradox and Mimesis’, in *Typography*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989)) and followed at Berkeley in 1983 and 1985. A more recent seminar (Strasbourg, 1995-1996) lies at the origin of their present presentation.

attempt to solve”, which we ought to understand as: the most difficult question – is simply *badly put*. And such is then the task that Rousseau gives himself from his opening pages: to pose, in different terms, and on a different basis, the question of this question. This preliminary gesture, no doubt inscribed in the Cartesian tradition of the return to foundations and the search for a primary certainty (we know that this will always haunt Rousseau) is *also*, in an as yet unknown way, a true “step back” in the question – which in any case will be grossly misinterpreted and caricatured by his contemporaries, without seeing that it is an abyss opening (and which will not stop opening) at Rousseau’s feet. But Rousseau himself is perfectly conscious, as he will always be (“I form an enterprise which has never had an example”) of innovating. The imposed modesty of the project cannot hide at any moment this total clairvoyance:

Let not my readers therefore imagine that I flatter myself with having seen what it appears to me so difficult to discover. I have here entered upon certain arguments and risked some conjectures, less in the hope of solving the difficulty, than with a view to throwing some light upon it, and reducing the question to its true state. (p.44)

Consequently, what does *origin* mean?

In order to arrive at a rigorous response it is necessary to be aware of a certain terminological instability (source, beginning(s), principle, foundation, nature, state of nature, primitive state, early times, etc.); since it will obviously be necessary to recognise at which point this instability actually betrays the impossibility for Rousseau to maintain the register he has imposed on himself from the start, and which constrains him to consent to a fiction of origins (lacking an empirical deduction of beginnings). This is of relatively secondary importance, apart from, probably, for the future of literature – I mean for the *literature* which Rousseau thus inaugurates, perhaps, *as such*.

Origin, in a word Rousseau does not use, designates purely and simply *existence*.

By attacking the oxymoron of *Zoon politikon phusei*, by giving himself the task of breaking it up, Rousseau asks the question of what *man is phusei*, in his “nature”, as he says, or in his “original constitution”. We cannot forget that the general epigraph of the *Discourse* is taken from Aristotle’s *Politics* and says – I quote the translation proposed by Stenobinski: “We should look for what is natural not in depraved beings but in those who behave according to nature”. The gesture has an entirely

classical appearance, and it is just that, classical, even more so because, once again, it overlaps with a search for a foundation or, under the problematical horizon which inevitably is Rousseau's own (that of political philosophy or the philosophy of rights), with a search for an anteriority, for a "State" which is pre-social, pre-political, or civil, pre-conventional, pre-historical etc., which will inevitably lead to the historical-genetic inquiry (that is to say, to a relatively feeble interpretation of the inaugural oxymoron, as is witnessed by, at least on first reading, the famous sentence: "Man is sociable by nature, or at least made to become so").<sup>17</sup> And besides, doxography has clearly shown that Rousseau repeats, sometimes verbatim, statements taken from his wide readings, from Cicero to Hobbes and Montesquieu, from Herodotus and Pliny to Pufendorf or Grotius.

If, however, I have translated origin as essence, in the Heideggerian sense of the term, it is not only in view of the strange resonance of the word "source" within Hölderlin's and Heidegger's *Ur-sprung*;<sup>18</sup> it is in order to take into account the radicalisation undertaken by Rousseau in the rediscovery of the question of the origin *as a question*.

This radicalisation can be approached in three ways:

1. According to the logic of essence itself, which is to say according to the logic which demands that the essence of a thing is *nothing* of that thing. – That man can define himself – it is of the order of an acknowledgement of facticity – as a social, or historical, or political being is precisely what forbids him to be thought as such in his essence or in his nature, in the Aristotelian sense. It is this logic which serves as the principle of the properly *critical* intention governing the Preface and the Introduction, organised around the demand to "distinguish properly between what is original and what is artificial in the actual nature of man" (p.44): hence the description of the *Kampfplatz* of theories of natural rights or their attempts at "metaphysical" foundation; hence the declaration of the inanity of the concept of "Natural Law" (p. 45-46); hence the idea of a restless subtraction from all that is acquired, indeed of a deconstruction of the "Edifice" of "human establishments" (p.47); hence, also, the denunciation of projections, prognostications, *petitio principii*, extrapolations, etc. In the search for a *pure* nature, there is this pure paradox: the essence (the origin) is *absolutely* anterior, logically and

<sup>17</sup> *Emile*, IV ("Profession de foi du Vicaire savoyard").

<sup>18</sup> The question posed by the Academy of Dijon contained the word "source": "What is the Origin [*source*] of Inequality Among Men, and Is it Authorized by Natural Law?"

not only chronologically, to all determinations of man as a being of culture, including those that appear the most "natural": family, morality, language or reason (understanding). The essence of culture (of *techne*) is nothing cultural, or technical. An abyss – a hiatus – separates nature from culture. This is what will lead, infallibly, to this denaturing of human nature that has frequently been remarked upon, if only because it opens up the possibility of an ontologising of history.

2. According to the logic of the *arche*, or archaeologic. – Because of its ab-soluteness itself, the origin is decreed inaccessible, *de facto* if not (totally) *de jure*; indeed purely hypothetical. Where Pufendorf, for example, being relatively prudent, was content with saying of the state of nature that "it has [...] never presently existed but in part, and with a certain constitution", Rousseau speaks of "a State which no longer exists, perhaps never did exist, and probably never will exist" (p.44); nevertheless quickly adding: "[...] and of which it is, nevertheless, necessary to have true ideas, in order to form a proper judgement of our present state." As he will later write to M. de Beaumont: "this <original> man does not exist [...]; so be it. But he can exist by way of supposition." It is obeying this logic that Rousseau states having "risked some conjectures" or some "hypothetical and conditional reasonings" (p.50). We must be well aware that no empirical or even experimental route can be used here (hence the challenging of "all facts"); and that the supposition is a matter of a true leap into the origin, with no other hold – if that is a hold – but oneself, which is to say nature itself: inner evidence or feeling, assurance of the heart, "lived" experience. The gesture – exactly like its later corollary in the "Second Promenade" of the *Reveries*: the pure seizure of existence – is without precedent precisely because no certainty, as in the Cartesian doubt, no assurance of reason either directs or stops it. The intuition of the origin (of nature) is properly vertiginous.

3. According to transcendental logic. In actual fact, no logic of this kind precedes Rousseau's gesture, but it is more this gesture itself, which produces it – and which, historically, will have produced it. That which Rousseau seeks in the origin (nature), is the possibility of that which forbids it, or has forbidden it. There can be no doubt that this possibility is also then that of its other or others (culture, institution, reason, history; in brief, all that emerges from *techne*). But it cannot be its cause. In its very absoluteness, in other words, the origin is not without relation to that of which it is the origin, or it would not be the origin and its absoluteness would not be such (this is Hegel's argument against Kant). But it is not related to that of which it is the origin as if it were its effect or consequence. From itself as origin to that of which it is the origin there is

a rupture, a hiatus. The origin is nothing of that of which it is the origin. This amounts, all too simply, to saying that the origin was thought of neither as cause, nor even, in fact, as foundation (at least in the most radical register held by Rousseau), the origin is thought of as *condition – de jure* and not *de facto*. This is why it is (it can only be) the *negative* of that of which it is the origin. What Rousseau discovers or invents is the transcendental as negativity itself, or, if you prefer: transcendental negativity. Hegel, over and against Kant, will remember this; but the problem will resonate just as much even in Heidegger's finite transcendence.

In its greatest generality, the law established by Rousseau states that *phusis* is the condition of possibility for *techné*. This law – the transcendental law itself – produces in its turn a fundamental thesis: man, in so far as he is originarily *technites*, is not an animal, that is a creature additionally blessed with this or that quality. Or, if you want: man is not a being of nature but a being originarily at fault with nature. He is, according to an oxymoron altogether different from that bequeathed by the tradition, a denatured animal.

It is true that Rousseau backs away from his own discovery, that is, before this abyss. His formulations, in any case, betray, not a prudence as is usually said, but a confusion. It is altogether too difficult to think of the human without the animal. However, it is just on the margins of this thought that he remains. After having said, for example, from the beginning of the First part:

If we strip this being, thus constituted, of all the supernatural gifts he may have received, and all the artificial faculties he can have acquired only by a long process; if we consider him, in a word, just as he must have come from the hands of nature, we behold in him an animal weaker than some, and less agile than others; but taking him all round, the most advantageously organised of any (p.52).

He specifies, a bit later:

Savage Man, left by nature solely to the direction of instinct, or rather indemnified for what he may lack by faculties capable at first of supplying its place, and afterwards of raising him much above it, must accordingly begin with purely animal functions (p.61).

Twice, as we can see, Rousseau defines the human negatively: an animal less strong and less agile (though the comparative tempers the negativity), an animal short on instinct, which is to say, short on animality. But twice the statement vacillates: for the human, a more advantageous "organisation" (we are within the vocabulary exploited by Aristotle, of *ergon* and *organon*), or an originary faculty of "supplementing" [*supléer*] is immediately supposed. And we enter, in fact, into the register of the "quasi-transcendental", into the logic of the supplement that Jacques Derrida had so rigorously analysed, and which we can see, without the slightest difficulty, inscribe itself completely into the mimetology issuing from Aristotle. *Techné* is here thought only as an excess of *phusis*.

Besides, this is what constrains Rousseau, between a transcendental deduction (which he fears producing) and an empirical deduction (which he refuses), to choose the middle path of the fiction of origins, that is to say of the beginning and the passage, should this moment – in all rigour – remain unassigned or be referred, miraculously, to some natural accident (if not simply to divine will).<sup>19</sup> One would, from this angle, have to study with precision how the transcendental present is constantly submitted to the modalisation of the narrative past; or how, and this amounts to the same, the hiatus between nature and culture is reduced to being no more than "so great a gap" (p.62).

But this is, once again, what produces the weak version of the transcendental which will remain – inevitably – the major theorem of the doctrine: the human is absolutely distinguished from the animal by those two original qualities or virtualities which form something like the *vis dormitiva* of his humanity, freedom and perfectibility – even though the affirmation of "freedom" is explicitly directed against the determination of the human as *rational animal* (pp. 61-62). There can be no doubt that it is essentially from this that transcendental reflection on history, in any case that of Kant, will come to organise itself. But there can also be no doubt that, as regards the question of origin, this is not the decisive moment. Freedom and perfectibility, these are notions Rousseau appeals to when he is already speaking the language of results and taking the path leading to the "system". It is not by chance that they support the construction of the *Contract*. Previously however, in the first intuition, Rousseau speaks a wholly other language, differently radical. And it is obviously this language that interests me, because in it appears, by virtue of the primitive audacity, the transcendental problematic, and this is

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Jean Starobinski, 'L'inclinaison de l'axe du globe', in *Essais sur l'origine des langues*, op.cit.

where this problematic comes to be a problematic of originary *techne* – and not of originary morality or civility. What is more, I will, for this reason, permit myself to speak of *onto-technology*.

Man's animality is not really what holds Rousseau's attention. In the order of the narrative, or the conjecture, the whole thing is quickly dispatched with. There is little to say on the supposed "State of Nature" other than that in the immobility of a null time, the human-animal, simply the living being (the *Zoon*), as a being of need, is immediately satisfied: "I see him satisfying his hunger under at the first oak, and slaking his thirst at the first brook: finding his bed at the foot of the tree which afforded him a repast; and, with that, all his wants supplied" (pp. 52-53). The very dense discussion Rousseau has here with Malebranche, Buffon, Condillac, La Mettrie – among others- on the animal-machine, sensations, passions, the birth of ideas, etc. matters little here. What does matter, instead, is that if the state of nature is thus the state of immediate satisfaction, the human-animal, compared to the "Beasts", is no less absolutely inferior for that. It is even precisely because he is inferior (in short, he is a sub-animal) that he can satisfy his properly animal or vital needs. With only this provision, that this is in the manner, not of elementary or *physical* life, but of what has to be called survival,<sup>20</sup> that is to say *metaphysical* life, or, it is the same, *technical* life.

When he introduces the idea of an originary lack in the human, of an essential want of nature – it is of course the lack of any *proper instinct* -, Rousseau immediately undertakes two analyses:

One, which in fact comes second, treats the "body of the Savage Man", that is to say of the animal whose very nudity constrains it to force and robustness, to *energy* which is the first condition of survival. Rousseau then speaks of the body of the savage man as "the only instrument he knows", machine (in the Greek sense) and industry (in the Latin sense), before any machine and any industry: primitive, paradoxical *techne*, naturally a-natural; which defines the originary skill and dexterity of the human – what Hölderlin would translate with the word *Geschick* (and we are not unaware of the speculative fortune that this world will have). Man, in other words, is originarily a being of *techne* in the sense of *know-how*. It is this, besides, which allows Rousseau to refute at the same time the position of Hobbes (man is a bellicose animal) and that of Montesquieu, confirmed by Cumberland and Pufendorf (man is a fearful animal). The savage man is neither aggressive nor scared, for the good reason that "living dispersed among other animals, and finding himself

<sup>20</sup> [in French, *la survie*, both "survival", and "afterlife"- *trans.*]

betimes in a situation to measure his strength with theirs, soon comes to compare himself with them; and perceiving that he surpasses them more in adroitness than they surpass him in strength, learns to be no longer afraid of them" (p.54).

For this (instrumental) first stage of *techne* we must then presuppose an originary faculty of comparison, which, if we think of Aristotle's *Poetics* (22, 59a), but also of his *Problemata* XXX, 12, is nothing other than the metaphorical faculty (*to metaphorikon einai*) as originary theoretical faculty (the faculty of seeing the similar, and therefore of making the difference: *to gar eu metaphorein to to homoion theorein estin*) and sign of of the natural gift of genius, *euphuia*, (*ingenium*). *Techne*, in the sense of the art of tropes or polytropes, is the genius of the human, his naturally a-natural gift, since it "supplements" the lack of instinct. Man is an animal of tropes – yet another formulation of the founding oxymoron, which, what is more, will not be without consequence with regard to the figural origin of language and the inaugural "transport" of sociality.

But if the human is such – and this is, always following Aristotle's thread, the other analysis conducted by Rousseau – it is most of all by virtue of this that man is a mimetic animal. The second stage, which is to say an even more primitive stage, of *techne*. In the *agon* that opposes him, not to other humans, like in Hobbes, but to animals – this *agon* is the originary *agon*, which means that the origin is agonistic (neither Hegel nor Heidegger will forget this) -, man "supplements" his lack of instinct by his genius of imitation – which is, in fact, the first and foremost condition for his survival:

While the earth was left to its natural fertility, and covered with immense forests whose trees were never mutilated by the axe, it would present on every side both sustenance and shelter for every species of animal. Men, dispersed up and down among the rest, would observe and imitate their industry, and thus attain even to the instinct of the beasts, with the advantage that, whereas every species of brutes was confined to one particular instinct [*le sien propre – trans.*], man, who perhaps has not any one peculiar to himself, would appropriate them all, and live upon most of those different foods, which other animals shared among themselves, and thus would find his subsistence much more easily than any of the rest (p.53).

What is surprising here is not that Rousseau still follows very closely, whether he knows it or not, the *Poetics*, in particular the famous opening of chapter 4 (48b) where Aristotle defines man as *mimesis phusei* and from this definition deduces, for pleasure or joy – “enjoyment”, says Rousseau<sup>21</sup> – the faculty of *manthanein* and of *theorein*. The faculty of tropes then. What is surprising is that this definition is itself the definition of the actor that Rousseau (in order to respond to Diderot’s *Paradox*, which is based entirely on it) is the first to make his own, in the *Letter to d’Alembert*, in order to condemn, repeating Plato and the Fathers of the church, the theatre: the actor, having no proper character of his own, is made for [proper for - *propre à*] appropriating every character.<sup>22</sup> He is “the man without qualities” (or, more exactly, without properties), as Musil says.

Man is therefore originally a comedian. That is, ultimately, his advantageous organisation, and what makes of him less (which is to say more) than “an ingenious machine, to which nature hath given senses to wind itself up, and to guard itself, to a certain degree, against anything that might tend to disorder or destroy it”(p.59). We are still following Aristotle: it is because man is a naturally unfinished being, that the art in him – mimeticism, which is to say *techne mimetike* – finishes what nature wasn’t able to work through. Obviously, Rousseau translates this intuition in terms of freedom and perfectibility: “I perceive exactly the same things in the human machine, with this difference, that in the *operations* <emphasis mine> of the brute, nature is the sole agent, whereas man has some share in his own operations, in his character as a free agent”. But this freedom – or, in the next page, this “faculty of self-improvement (*la faculté de se perfectionner*)” – hinges entirely on this gift of being able to be everything by virtue of being nothing. That is to say, of knowing how to play or act.

From this point on, nothing prevents the thought that the state of nature is a theatre. Or, more precisely, that a primitive scene gives meaning or reason to the denaturation of man, that is to say to his required entry – or his birth - into history and culture: in the *play* of history and culture.

<sup>21</sup> “for we desire knowledge only because we wish to enjoy”(p.61) [in French, *joir*].

<sup>22</sup> Rousseau, *Lettre à d’Alembert* (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1967), p. 163, 164-165; Diderot, *Paradoxe sur le Comédien*, (Paris: Garnier Flammarion, 1967), p.127-128, 131, 156, 163.

This scene is perfectly noticeable – and we know that it will return regularly, in this or that form.<sup>23</sup> And it is indeed primitive. It clearly precedes the establishment of the reign of freedom and the exercise of self-improvement, which in fact presuppose it.

This takes place in the Preface: Rousseau has just challenged the idea of natural Law, which was exactly the subject that had been proposed to him. He then says this:

Throwing aside, therefore, all those scientific books, which teach us only to see men such as they have made themselves, and contemplating the first and most simple operations of the human Soul, I think I can perceive in it two principles prior to reason, one of them deeply interesting us in our welfare and preservation, and the other exciting a natural repugnance at seeing any other sensible being, and particularly any of our own species, suffer pain or death. It is from the agreement and combination which the understanding is in a position to establish between these two principles, without its being necessary to introduce that of sociability, that all the rules of natural right appear to me to be derived - rules which our reason is afterwards obliged to establish on other foundations, when by its successive developments it has been led to suppress nature itself (pp. 46-47).

Starobinski is not wrong in thinking that here, in a matrix-state, can be found all dialectical thought of history, which is to say the principle of historicity itself, as it will be developed from Kant onwards: from the angle of the problematic of natural right, it is clearly indicated that, once the state of nature is lost, it is up to reason or culture, which have negated it, to “establish [it] on other foundations” and to thus allow for what Kant would postulate as “a reconciliation of *nature* and *culture* through the intermediary of practical reason”.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, Starobinski adds that “for Rousseau, society has as its task to preserve what it has negated” offering, he says, “a gripping example of what Hegel will name *Aufhebung*”. This is undeniable. But what Starobinski does not note – nor anyone else, to my knowledge – is the strangely familiar character of the principal (pre-rational and pre-social) antinomy on which Rousseau rests: out of “the

<sup>23</sup> The scene of the fountains in the chapter on the birth of southern languages in the *Essay on the Origin of Languages*; the grape-picking scene in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*; the second Promenade of *The Reveries*.

<sup>24</sup> See Starobinski’s note, p.186-187.

first and most simple *operations* <my emphasis again> of the human Soul”, one, he makes clear “deeply interest[s] us in our welfare and preservation, and the other excit[es] a natural repugnance at seeing any other sensible being, and particularly any of our own species, suffer pain and death.”

The second of these “operations”, the analysis of which Rousseau develops extensively, is pity – which, contra Hobbes and thanks to Mandeville, who is however “the most violent detractor of human virtues”, Rousseau considers as “the only Natural virtue”, “compassion, [...] a disposition suitable to creatures so weak and suitable to so many evils as we certainly are: by so much the more universal and useful to mankind, as it comes before any kind of reflection; and at the same time so natural, that the very brutes themselves sometimes give evident proofs of it” (p.73). As for the first, which is not a virtue (and which it is precisely the function of pity to temper), it is love of self [*amour de soi*], which Rousseau carefully distinguishes from *amour-propre*, its social graft, and defines as “a natural feeling which leads every animal to look to its own preservation”.<sup>25</sup>

As much as pity does not present any problems – even if Rousseau, in a significant manner, will back away from his own discovery, which is no less than that of the originary character of transport and identification, which is to say of imagination (and this, as we can begin to perceive, is already roughly the transcendental itself)<sup>26</sup> – love of self – the instinct of preservation, just as one is precisely not supposed to say – remains enigmatic. This is because Rousseau, always between Hobbes and Montesquieu, does not want to refer it directly to fear, and thus to wickedness or hate, even though he cannot avoid connecting it to a primitive agon, and consequently to a perception of danger: “Self-preservation being his chief and almost sole concern, he must exercise most those faculties which are most concerned with attack or defence, either for overcoming his prey, or for preventing him from becoming the prey of other animals”(p.58). Love of self, Rousseau must recognise, presupposes the fear of perishing; and that is why it is indissociable from

<sup>25</sup> [See Rousseau, *op.cit.*, p.73, note. See also the translator’s note (p.393), where *amour-propre* (pride, self-esteem) is considered “best left untranslated”]

<sup>26</sup> Cf. the *Essay on the Origin of Languages*; and, on the subject of the second *Discourse*, Starobinski’s note, p.217-218. Pity is said to suppose reflection. The retreat is the same as the one regarding comparison, no doubt due to the difficult distinction between love of self and *amour-propre*, as Rousseau’s note, p.73. Cf. the *Essay on the Origin of Languages*.

compassionate projection or identification, which, in fact, presupposes the same fear.<sup>27</sup>

Fear and pity then. One will have recognised there the two *pathemata* that tragedy, according to Aristotle, has as a function to purify or purge, *katharein*. I have made elsewhere the hypothesis that the functional theory of tragedy is properly political, and that Aristotle puts at the principle of the tragic effect the two transcendental (and antinomial) affects of sociality: the affect of association (pity) and that of dissociation (fear). Politics, and the political art *par excellence* (which is also to say, and it is not at all another matter, politics as art) are in charge of regulating the possible excess of these affects: either the war of everyone against everyone, or communal fusion, which are equally disastrous. (But it is also Rousseau who permits the formulation of this hypothesis.)

I have talked of primitive scene or originary theatre. This is because it is striking to see to what extent the metaphors of theatre govern all the analyses undertaken by Rousseau.

In the case of pity, it is all too obvious. Everything rests on this principle, that “compassion must, in fact, be the stronger, the more the animal beholding any kind of distress identifies himself with the animal that suffers” (p.75); and we can easily see that Rousseau’s entire description calls, in fact, upon the enigma – or the paradox – of the tragic effect. It opens on this crucial argument: “Such is the pure emotion of nature, prior to all kinds of reflection! Such is the force of natural compassion, which the greatest depravity of morals has, as yet, hardly been able to destroy! For we daily find at our theatres men affected, nay shedding tears at the sufferings of a wretch who, were he in the tyrant’s place, would probably even add to the torments of his enemies.”(p.74) Rousseau is so much in favour of this argument that in a later addition he inserts a passage from the *Letter to d’Alembert*, inspired by Plutarch and Montaigne, word for word: “like the bloodthirsty Sulla, who was so sensitive to ills he had not caused, or that Alexander of Pheros who did not dare to go and see any tragedy acted, for fear of being seen weeping with Andromache and Priam, though he could listen without emotion to the cries of all the citizens who were daily strangled at his command”(p.74).

But in the case of love of self, things are just as clear: and we find the same metaphors here again. For example, from the beginning of the discussion of Hobbes and Montesquieu, on the subject of fear: “This may

<sup>27</sup> This is made particularly clear in Chapter 9 of the *Essay on the Origin of Languages*.

be true of things that he <savage man> does not know; and I do not doubt his being terrified by every novelty that presents itself, when he neither knows the physical good or evil he may expect from it, nor can make a comparison between his own strength and the dangers he is about to encounter" (p. 54). Or still, in his note concerning the distinction between love of self and self-esteem: "... I maintain that, in our primitive condition, in the true state of nature, *amour-propre* did not exist; for as each man regarded himself as the only observer of his actions, the only being in the universe who took any interest in him, and the sole judge of his deserts, no feeling arousing from comparisons he could not be led to make could take root in his soul" (p. 73).

Onto-technology, as Rousseau founds it, thus opening up the possibility for a thought of historicity, therefore presupposes a *theatre*. Existence is historical [*historiale*] inasmuch as man plays it, that is to say imagines it, if it is true – and it is incontestably true – that *imago* and *imitatio* (*mimesis*) belong to the same semantic field. The scene is primitive.

This is precisely what Hölderlin retained from Rousseau when he sought to support his interpretation of history – and this means: the history of art, of the relation between nature and culture, aorgic and organic (but all history is perhaps fundamentally, since Rousseau, history of art) – on a reading of the two Sophoclean tragedies, *Antigone* and *Oedipus*, one emblematic of the modern tragic, the other of the ancient.<sup>28</sup> And it is also exactly what Heidegger cannot bear to hear of: other than that he never concedes to the smallest commentary on the so-called "theoretical" texts of Hölderlin's on theatre and tragedy (*The Ground for Empedocles, Remarks on the Translations of Sophocles*), we may also remember his lapidary declaration, in the lectures of 1936 on *The Origin of the Work of Art*, in which, repeating Hegel, he renews an entire onto-theology of art and hence, an aesthetic-political theology: tragedy, he says in essence, is a matter neither of execution nor of staging, it is the place for the battle (or combat: *Kampf, polemos*) between ancient and modern gods.

No doubt the participation in this – immense – blindness, the metaphysical scorn placed upon Rousseau is not without its grounds. I have referred, inspired, moreover, by the Heideggerian reading of Kant and his interpretation, precisely, of the transcendental schematism (of the transcendental imagination) to the retreat of Rousseau. Nowhere is it more manifest than where – point of extreme condensation – Rousseau clashes head-on with two aporetic difficulties which, linked to each other

<sup>28</sup> See 'Hölderlin and the Greeks', in *Typography*, op.cit.

and treated on the basis of existential analytics and fundamental ontology, will make up all the resources for the step back into the metaphysics of the *rational animal* and of the *zoon logon echon*.

The first, unsurprisingly, is to do with fear. In the course of a genealogy of passions Rousseau notes that savage man, "being destitute of every species of enlightenment", can only feel passions deriving from "the simple impulse of Nature". He then adds, and here the prevaricating empiricism is obvious: "his desires never go beyond his physical wants. The only goods he recognises in the universe are food, a female, and sleep: the only evils he fears are pain and hunger. I say pain, and not death: for no animal can know what it is to die; the knowledge of death and its terrors being one of the first acquisitions made by man in departing from a natural state" (p.61).

The second is very famous; it overdetermines – and no doubt partly forbids – all of Rousseau's thought up to *The Social Contract*; it hinges upon the same formula of renunciation which will burden the vain attempt of the *Essay on the Origin of Languages*: "For myself, I am so aghast at the increasing difficulties which present themselves, and so well convinced of the almost demonstrable impossibility that languages should owe their original institution to merely human means, that I leave, to any who will undertake it, the discussion of the difficult problem: which was the most necessary, the existence of society to the invention of language, or the invention of language to the establishment of society" (p. 73).

Rousseau would then be missing the – assuredly tragic – determination of the essence of the human as "the mortal who has speech (or language: *die Sprache*)", this above all onto-logical formula that gives emphasis to Heidegger's last predication. That would be then the secret of his "liberalism", and the manifestation of his philosophical insufficiency. Unless, though this would necessitate another demonstration, the mortal who has language, indeed speech, were already discernible in Rousseau – in which case, the programmed politics, even up to Heidegger's time, would perhaps be the Terror ...

Translated by Hector Kollias