



## Rousseau and the Dilemmas of Modernity

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This volume seeks to capture Jean-Jacques Rousseau's astonishing contribution to our understanding of the dilemmas of modernity. For the contributors to this book Rousseau is present as well as past, because he was so modern and yet so ambivalent about modernity, a position with which we are quite familiar. Highlighted in this volume is the contention that Rousseau set the stage for many discussions of the good and bad of modernity.

Previous efforts to deal with Rousseau and modernity have suffered from myopia. In the nineteenth century the Romantics claimed Rousseau as one of their own, pulling him out of his historical context, ignoring his full scale immersion in the debates of the French Enlightenment. In the twentieth century commentators have read into Rousseau the ahistorical and present-minded Cold War theme of "Rousseau the totalitarian."

In this volume Rousseau is treated as a person of his age but also as someone who speaks to us today. The topics covered range from feminism, music, science, and political theory, to updating the classics, and to the search for and limitations to the quest for self-knowledge. Few if any figures can compete with Rousseau when it comes to forcing us to face up to the price we pay for "progress."

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