

desire for life, liberty, and property, Machiavelli starts from two contrasting ones: the desire to be free from princely rule so as to dominate and the desire to be free from any oppression so as to be secure. Whereas liberty is thus an ultimate end to liberalism, it is merely a proximate end to Machiavelli. Whereas liberalism constructs representative government on the moral basis of rights that are equal for all, Machiavelli constructs a mixed regime on the utilitarian basis of satisfying the desires of the great and the people. Nonetheless, Machiavelli provides liberalism with the crucial idea that common good can arise from institutionalized conflict between self-interested actors, as taken up by the invisible-hand argument of liberal economics and the checks-and-balances reasoning of liberal constitutionalism.

—Markus Fischer  
*California State University, Fullerton*



Jimmy Casas Klausen: *Fugitive Rousseau: Slavery, Primitivism, and Political Freedom*. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014. Pp. xvii, 333.)

doi:10.1017/S0034670515000145

Paul de Man identified what he took to be a recurring problem in Rousseau interpretation: commentators assume a moral and political stance owing to which they can pronounce his theoretical deficiencies and suggest remedies for them. This approach to Rousseau takes it for granted that his writings are deeply flawed, unsound even, and in dire need of revision and improvement. Jimmy Klausen has noticed a similar practice in two groups of recent Rousseau critics who also do a disservice to his work: theorists of colonial modernity who wrongly dismiss Rousseau for not (directly) addressing European slavery, and participants in the liberal-communitarian debate that disregard postcolonial themes in his work. Klausen's ambition is to place "Rousseau's political theory in the frame of a black Atlantic world that would have been broadly recognizable to him and refract his arguments through the long tradition of the concepts of slavery and freedom—particularly marronage—from Mediterranean antiquity through African American modernism in interwar Paris" (2). Complementing the theoretical efforts of Jane Anna Gordon and Neil Roberts, among others, Klausen seeks to extend and deepen what has become known as the "creolization" of Rousseau.

It is a distinctive project and Klausen puts his stamp on it by deploying Albert O. Hirschman's celebrated notion of exit, productively bringing it to

bear on Rousseau's second *Discourse*, which, in turn, contributes to a reconstruction of Rousseau's understanding of freedom developed in *On the Social Contract*. Rousseau's theorization of the state of nature continues to haunt the human imagination. As Klausen argues, however, there are multiple states of nature in the second *Discourse*. It is not the original state of nature (prepolitical, presocial, and prelinguistic) that tempts the human imagination with visions of recovery. Rather, it is the "golden age" between the original condition and *amour propre*-driven civil society which the human race had the misfortune to "leave" that proves tormenting. In this golden time, people nativized the world around them, enjoyed a "sort of property" or usufruct, and forged a primitive kind of stability (52). Still, if conflict and possible conquest threatened, it made good sense for people to take flight, to exit, as the costs of potential domination were too great for any would-be master to pursue it. The world did not amount to Hobbes's condition of war.

In the social contract tradition, Klausen notes, conceptions of nature and politics were closely linked. Nature had to be specified before social institutions could be properly designed. While Klausen does not retrace his predecessors' footsteps, he takes Rousseau's understanding of freedom and slavery, revitalized through Hirschman, to inform a contemporary reconstruction of one of several political possibilities in the *Social Contract*. Klausen recognizes that Rousseau's small-scale democratic vision grounded in a participatory ethos where people obey their own wills and remain as free as before attracts most theoretical rehabilitations. This is not the focus of *Fugitive Freedom*, though Klausen delineates the logic of Rousseau's nativist (or patriotic) enactment of freedom that defeats its best efforts at realization before pursuing his own intervention (163). Crucially, insofar as Rousseau theorizes the freedom of a people as legitimate social interdependence, it would need to find itself situated like Corsica, the one people still capable of legislation in the age of colossal states. Most peoples of the world, however, do not find themselves so well disposed. Yes, Klausen concedes, revolution and rebellion enjoy a minor place in Rousseau, but what happens if you place them front and center? What, in other words, are the rest of us, the impure, the subjected, and the poorly situated, supposed to do? What are the chances of a "slaves' rebellion" (212)? Klausen contends that "attending to Rousseau's representation of Jewish political subjectivity can tell us a lot about what it might mean to make fugitive freedom a practice and what its prospects might be if all the world is Pharaoh's Egypt" (206).

Admittedly, the prospects for freedom do not seem promising. A slave war is effectively unwinnable. And, contrary to the exit option available in the (more or less) infinite space of the state of nature, there is no apparent place left to go—not in our time, anyway. As a result, Klausen "articulates the production by fugitive wills of semi-autonomous political zones inside the existing contiguous state-space, rather than the exit of absconding bodies in natural-physical space" (240). Here he turns to the history of mar-ronnage, which consisted of more than intermittent individual or collective

uprisings. Rather, they were “relentless” (243). Maroon communities demonstrated that sovereignty was a precarious and perpetual practice of freedom that consisted of taking that which did not belong to them, freedom, however momentary it might (or might not) be. In doing so, they proved the limited, exhaustible powers of imperial mastery—not infrequently, local colonial officials found themselves forced to concede the sovereign identity of maroon bands following lengthy violent conflicts (246). This success, ironically, soon led maroons to surrender fugitive freedom for settled liberty and its predictable self-subversions, an outcome Klausen laments.

If the maroons (understandably) buckled to political modernity in seeking a stable territorial home, where in Rousseau might we find an example of people committed to fugitivity? “Des Juifs.” While Rousseau’s account of the Jews focuses on Moses as lawgiver, it also devotes attention to “Jewish mobility” (251). The absence of a territorial state requires the cultivation of diasporic tactics in the name of difference. What is more, spatial intimacy entails cultural distance (252). For Rousseau, then, it is not exodus that matters most, it is wandering, to the effects of which Jews “owe their strength as a people” (250). Permanent, perpetual nomadism amid the nations of other peoples “continuously reconstituted and reconsecrated their common political life” (251). It required seizing zones of autonomy, referred to above, in both states and in the state system. It also required what Klausen calls “closeness in association” or “situated intensity” insofar as “proximate contiguity” could not be assumed (261).

Klausen makes a strong case for his idolatrous reading of Rousseau and the radical alternative it offers, contrasting it with, among others, the projects of Alain Badiou and Jacques Rancière, both of which suffer from universal and universalizing tendencies in their melodramatic opposition to late modern neoliberal capitalism. These tendencies lead them to conceive of politics on a mass scale and thus at the level of the state (or beyond), ultimately implicating them in the very forms of subjugation they oppose and resist. Klausen presumes that his political vision, rooted in a fugitive Rousseau, might strike some as “quaint” or “parochial” (275), but he deems it preferable to the Maoist or Leninist inclinations lodged in the conceptions of his adversaries. At the same time, Klausen might be said to share with Rousseau a certain resignation, a sense that the late modern age has rendered freedom largely, but not exclusively, a thing of the past. It is not that Klausen’s project does not entail possibility, opportunity, and resilience, but to engage with it is to feel always already over-matched, somehow reconciled to the myriad forms of domination that characterize our reality.

—Steven Johnston  
*University of Utah*

