
Cristaudo's knowledge of the primary and secondary sources is staggering. This is the best book on philosophy that I have read in a long time.

—Nicholas Capaldi
Loyola University New Orleans



John T. Scott: *Rousseau's Reader: Strategies of Persuasion and Education*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020. Pp. ix, 328.)

doi:10.1017/S0034670520000947

There are many philosophical exegeses of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. John T. Scott's *Rousseau's Reader* is something different. It is closer to literary analysis than philosophical exegesis, not because Scott is primarily interested in literary analysis, but rather because he believes that attending to Rousseau's literary and rhetorical strategy can deepen our substantive understanding of Rousseau's philosophical system. In chapters on the *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*, *Discourse on Inequality*, the *Social Contract*, and *Emile*, Scott takes for his subject not Rousseau's philosophical arguments themselves but the literary and rhetorical architecture within which Rousseau situated those arguments. Mining in areas less careful readers may regard as peripheral, Scott demonstrates that the periphery is in fact not at all peripheral to Rousseau's project. On the contrary, by adopting this approach, Scott uncovers insights that he is, in turn, able to illustrate for his reader. And this points to a second contribution of the book. In addition to deepening his readers' understanding of Rousseau, Scott's book operates as a study in *how* to read—an example of what might be discovered through a certain kind of careful reading.

While all writers pay some attention to presentation and form, Rousseau's concern for these questions was exceptional; he devoted as much energy and attention to the presentation of his philosophical arguments as he did to those arguments themselves. His writing is replete with prefatory material, notes, literary conceits (apostrophe, metaphor, paradox), epigraphs, genre shifting, illustrations, and variations in authorial and narrative voices. Why was Rousseau so preoccupied with literary and rhetorical style? The answer to this question, Scott argues, lies in the radically transformed worldview Rousseau was asking his readers to contemplate: "Everything is good as it leaves the hands of the author of things; everything degenerates in the hands of man." This claim, which formed the foundation of what Rousseau

called his “system,” was directly at odds with the prevailing wisdom of the time. (Voltaire famously said that reading Rousseau’s attack on the arts and sciences filled him with the desire to “walk on all fours.”) Rousseau believed most of his readers had most everything wrong, but he also believed that convincing them they had it all wrong would require some subtlety. To invoke a Rousseauian distinction, in order to be convinced, Rousseau’s readers would first have to be persuaded. So, instead of simply telling his readers that almost all of them had almost everything wrong, Rousseau opted for the more artful approach of directing his readers’ attention in various directions at various times, the cumulative effect of which would be to prime their consciousness to see differently.

Scott’s book should be read as a companion to Denise Schaeffer’s *Rousseau on Education, Freedom, and Judgment*, which examines techniques used by the tutor in the education of Emile. Like Schaeffer, Scott is interested in education, but where Schaeffer focused on the education of Emile, Scott focuses on a very different kind of pupil. This pupil—Rousseau’s reader—has been fully formed antecedently by the very influences from which Emile’s education was designed to shield him. And so, this tutor—Rousseau the author—cannot educate his reader in the same way the tutor educates his pupil in Rousseau’s masterpiece. He cannot begin from where one ought to begin: with an infant who has not yet been exposed to any of society’s corrupting influences, a pupil who is not yet “blinded by reigning opinions,” as Scott puts it (43). Instead, in addressing his pupils, Rousseau must begin by acknowledging the pervasiveness of moral corruption, so as to prepare them for the magnitude of the challenge they will need to confront. In order to understand his system, Rousseau’s readers will need to see anew; they will need to see through almost everything society has trained them to accept.

Readers of this review should know that Scott’s interpretive approach is premised on the idea that Rousseau presented a “complete system unified by the ‘system’ of the natural goodness of man and his corruption in society” (2). Scott makes a convincing case for reading Rousseau as the author of a system, and, unsurprisingly, in building his model of literary analysis, he is inclined toward authors who emphasize authorial intent and against those who foreground textuality. His approach is, he concedes, “arguably old-fashioned” (10), but Scott is not interested in making an original contribution to literary theory. His intention is rather to make an original contribution to Rousseau studies.

The approaches to literary criticism Scott deploys were designed, in his words, “to apply to literary or fictional works and not to philosophical writings” (13). But, if Rousseau’s works are “protreptic in intention and form” (7), then a full understanding of his philosophical teaching will require both a philosophical and a literary analysis. For the most part, the book wears its interpretive apparatus lightly, drawing on the literary criticism of (especially) Wayne C. Booth and E. D. Hirsch but never straying far from immersive

readings of Rousseau's writings. One of the few occasions Scott directly engages with literary theory is in discussing Wolfgang Iser's description of the novel form: "What is presented in the novel led to a specific effect: namely to involve the reader in the world of the novel and so help him to understand it—and ultimately his own world—more clearly" (12). Scott argues that this way of thinking about the relationship between medium and message helps us take the full measure of Rousseau's philosophical project. It can be seen throughout Rousseau's output but is perhaps most evident in *Julie* and *Emile*. Both works present idealized versions of our world: the impossibly pastoral estate at Clarens and the meticulously managed environment of Emile. Both evoke versions of our world in which layers of corruption have been stripped away so that the reader might be open to the idea that a different world is possible and might "picture a different world that is somehow truer" (12). This process of training the reader to see differently, to see things not previously seen, was, Scott shows, central to Rousseau's philosophical project.

As I noted, Rousseau's rhetorical strategy is a kind of architecture for his philosophical system. It is also like stagecraft. Before a play can go on, elaborate stage crafting is undertaken, some of which the audience may never become aware of but which affects their experience and the lessons they take away from the play. *Rousseau's Reader* is a study of Rousseau's stagecraft, in particular of how he uses stagecraft to reinforce his substantive teaching. "I examine," Scott writes, "how form and content . . . work together to educate the reader" (126). Rousseau's literary and rhetorical techniques serve a purpose: they point the reader toward particular, substantive conclusions. And being attuned to these techniques, in turn, points us toward a deeper understanding of Rousseau.

—Jason Neidleman
University of La Verne



Paul A. Rahe: *Sparta's Second Attic War: The Grand Strategy of Classical Sparta, 446–418 B.C.* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2020. Pp. xviii, 384.)

doi:10.1017/S0034670520000959

In the third volume of his ongoing history of classical Sparta's grand strategy, Paul A. Rahe gives us a thought-provoking counterpoint to many of the trends in classical scholarship of the last several decades.