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Philip Stewart, *Éditer Rousseau: Enjeu d'un corpus (1750-2012)*. Lyon: ENS Éditions. Institut d'histoire du livre, 2012. 327 pp. Illustrations, tableaux, bibliographie, notes, and index. 28€ (pb). ISBN 978-2-84788-343-5.

Review by Christopher Kelly, Boston College.

In the midst of his survey of revealed religions, Rousseau's Savoyard Vicar observes that claims of divine revelation are virtually always based on human testimony. Miracles are described in books written by men who received testimony from other men who claim to have seen the miracles. He cannot keep himself from lamenting, "So many men between God and me!" Philip Stewart's bracing survey of the role of editors in preserving and disfiguring the works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau over more than two centuries makes the reader want to declare, "So many editors between Rousseau and me!" Rousseau was a writer who gave his readers a sense of an intimate and direct personal tie with him. He was always wary of his own publishers' efforts to "correct" his manuscripts and intensely anxious about the possibility of future disfiguration of his works. Stewart demonstrates that even the best intentioned editors have sometimes unwittingly justified Rousseau's fears. The seriousness with which he takes the editor's task is indicated by his assertion that "éditer et bien éditer est un grand mérite et a été pour certains un glorieux destin" (p. 300). Few live up to his high standards.

Stewart provides an account of the most important examples of attempts to produce the complete or collected works of Rousseau, building on the work of scholars such as Jo-Ann McEachern, Raymond Birn, and others.[1] He restricts himself to the significant examples because it would be virtually impossible to take notice of every edition, many of which are merely copies of earlier ones. As Stewart points out, according to an official report, 22 editions of Rousseau's works appeared between 1817 and 1824 alone, totaling 480,500 volumes (p. 153). This was only one of the periods during which Rousseau's reputation flourished, although it was a high point (p.184). Stewart's focus is particularly on the decades after Rousseau's death and on the last fifty-five years, with the appearance of the Pléiade and the editions recently undertaken by Slatkine-Champion and Classiques Garnier, but he provides the highlights of the intervening period. He also discusses the Dufour-Plan and Leigh editions of the correspondence and provides very useful charts and a fine assortment of illustrations. Along the way, he makes many intelligent reflections on the editor's task.

How can an editor achieve the glorious destiny Stewart promises? Stewart argues that the organization of the works, if done well, represents an interpretation of how the works should be read. The editor may explicitly or implicitly indicate that the best way to read Rousseau is to read his works in the order they are presented or, more modestly, that at least the organization of the edition should present each work in the proper context for understanding it (pp. 12-13; see also p. 166). Even a chronological ordering is a choice that implies some interpretation.

Moreover, in the case of Rousseau, chronology is itself a complex matter. Should the works be presented in the order in which they were written or in the order they were published? The significance of this can be seen by considering the case of the *Essai sur l'origine des langues*, which Rousseau maintained began as a portion of the *Discours sur l'inégalité*, was ready for publication six years later, but was not ultimately

published for another two decades. Even if an editor could settle all of these questions in a satisfactory way, material conditions of publishing could make it difficult to execute even the best of plans. Commercial concerns and scholarly ones exist in an uneasy tension. Stewart's discussion of the task of the editor in his sixth chapter is one of the highlights of the book.

Rousseau himself gave some guidance about how he should be edited, although he too saw the necessity of yielding to material considerations on occasion. Consider for example the division of *Emile* into five books of very unequal lengths and the consequent difficulties of placing the illustrations. When he made plans for a six-volume collection of his works, Rousseau put himself into the camp of those who would organize editions by themes rather than chronology (pp. 61-62; see also pp. 46-47). In this edition, which was to establish the writings (previously published and new) claimed by Rousseau and to give his definitive version of these writings, pride of place went to his overtly political writings, especially the *Second Discourse*. This opening volume was to be followed by volumes centering on *Julie*, *Emile* (two volumes), theatrical and fictional works, and music. This proposed but unrealized organization is helpful in that it shows something about how Rousseau himself viewed his works.

In my opinion this would, in fact, be an excellent order for readers who want to understand Rousseau's thought. It nevertheless caused problems for future editors who sometimes felt themselves torn between Rousseau's intentions and the interests of readers. First, where should the *Confessions*, *Rousseau Juge de Jean Jacques*, and *Rêveries* be placed—works written after this plan was constructed? The most common solution was to make these works the first volume of the collection in that they showed us the man who wrote the works before we then turned to the works themselves. But, should we regard all of these works as simply autobiographies? The latter two do not belong to any clear genre, although they are universally referred to as autobiographical works. Then, what about works that Rousseau or others preserved that he did not choose to publish, to say nothing of different manuscript versions of works he did choose to publish? Stewart has a keen eye for these and other issues, and he is very good at drawing out the implications of editorial options. He is especially severe with the numerous editors who have claimed to be following the text or manuscript precisely while covertly substituting their own judgment for that of Rousseau. Stewart is not opposed to some intervention on points of punctuation and capitalization, but he reasonably insists that the intervention should be made clear and given a justification rather than covered over by specious claims of fidelity.

One point upon which Stewart dwells is the way in which errors made in one edition have been perpetuated in others. Not surprisingly, given his work as an editor and translator of Rousseau's novel, Stewart pays particular attention to *Julie* in collected editions of Rousseau's works, in editions of the novel alone, and in scholarship (pp 203-214). After reading his account of the "beheading" of the title of this work, readers will resolve never again to refer to Rousseau's novel as *La Nouvelle Héloïse* without preceding this with *Julie*. They will strive to remember that the pseudonym of the hero is St Preux and not Saint-Preux. Resolve and strive as they might, however, Stewart will be dismayed but not surprised when they slip into well-established habits in spite of the better knowledge he provides. This is not the only example Stewart gives of this persistent failing of editors. He also shows that the now standard presentation of *Rousseau Juge de Jean Jacques* with the addition *Dialogues* and the same epigraph as the *First Discourse* gives authority to the earliest manuscript of the work and that these extra elements are not found in the later manuscripts written by Rousseau (pp. 201-202). Stewart himself has corrected this in his own editing of the work in the new Slatkine-Champion edition.

It is worth noting that some errors can be resurrected even after they appeared to be put to rest. This can be illustrated with an example not used by Stewart. In the third volume of the Pléiade edition, a couple of lines were omitted from one of Rousseau's notes to his "Observations de J.-J. Rousseau sur la Réponse à son Discours." This omission was remedied in the Intégrale edition that came several years later, but it was then repeated in the Slatkine-Champion edition which claimed to edit the works anew. To its credit, the Slatkine-Champion did restore an omission made by the Pléiade in one of Rousseau's

notes to Book V of *Emile*. Whether future editions restore the omission remains to be seen. As Stewart points out, such slips—as well as unannounced editorial interventions—will cease to pose the same sort of problem for scholars once these editions and manuscripts are easily available in digital versions. This does not mean, however, that the editor's function will disappear, because explanatory notes and attempts to read handwriting will gain a new importance. A particular problem will be how to handle questions such as Rousseau's revisions of the first edition of the *Second Discourse*, revisions that were published only posthumously. Readers who take the first edition as Rousseau's definitive expression will be missing something important. For this work we now have Rousseau's handwritten corrections, but this is not always the case for other works.

Finally, as if to demonstrate the near impossibility of producing a work without editorial errors, even as scrupulous an editor as Stewart (or his publisher) makes an occasional slip. At one point (p. 201) Robert Osmont is turned into "Oswald." At another, Théophile Dufour is said to have died in 1822 instead of 1922 (p. 227). Stewart says that the first edition of *Emile* consisted of five volumes when, in fact, the five books were put into four volumes (p. 47). At one point two sentences are immediately repeated in the text (p. 54). In spite of these small errors, Stewart has produced a work that is of great use for Rousseau scholars and for anyone who aspires to edit any author.

#### NOTE

[1] Raymond Birn, *Forging Rousseau: Print, Commerce and Cultural Manipulation in the Late Enlightenment* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation (SVEC 2001:08), 2001) and Jo-Ann McEachern, *Bibliography of the Writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau to 1800* (Oxford, Voltaire Foundation, t.I, 1989).

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