ROUSSEAU, DEMOCRACY, AND HIS IDEOLOGICAL INTENTIONS: CONCEPTUAL ARRANGEMENTS AS POLITICAL DEVICES

Rousseau, democracia y sus intenciones ideológicas: arreglos conceptuales como instrumentos políticos

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Abstract

This article brings to the fore and examines Jean-Jacques Rousseau's inconsistencies when using the word 'democracy' in relation to 'monarchy' and 'republic'. It argues that these are not the result of a mere lack of ability, or a change of beliefs in the fundamental, but of his political intentions and of his creation of a conceptual arrangement that best promotes those. A systematic approach to his main writings will show evidence indicating that Rousseau instrumentally modified his taxonomy of regimes in order to develop a republican language or ideology. This conceptual arrangement was meant to play a key role in the institution of popular sovereignty as the only legitimate form of state, and included Rousseau's prudential intuitions about political freedom and its preservation. The article also differentiates the contradictory intentions at work behind Rousseau's words, and outlines the main contextual factors that may have influenced his resorting to this rhetorical strategy.

Keywords

Jean-Jacques Rousseau; democracy; ideology; rhetoric; republic.

Resumen

Este artículo se propone analizar las inconsistencias de Jean-Jacques Rousseau en su uso de la palabra «democracia» en relación con las palabras «monarquía» y «república». Se argumentará que dichas inconsistencias no son el resultado de una mera falta de capacidad intelectual y tampoco de un cambio de creencias en lo fundamental, sino efecto de las intenciones políticas de Rousseau y de la creación de un arreglo conceptual para promoverlas. Una aproximación sistemática a sus principales textos permitirá mostrar cómo modificó Rousseau su taxonomía de los regímenes de gobierno instrumentalmente para desarrollar una ideología o lenguaje republicanos. Se trata de un arreglo conceptual pensado para jugar un papel clave en la institución de la soberanía popular como única forma legítima del Estado, y que incluye las intuiciones prudenciales de Rousseau acerca de la libertad política y su preservación. En el artículo se diferencian las diversas y contradictorias intenciones de Rousseau y se señalan los principales factores contextuales que pudieron haberle influido en la adopción de dicha estrategia retórica.

Palabras clave

Jean-Jacques Rousseau; democracia; ideología; retórica; república.

CONTENTS

I.   INTRODUCTION

Besides Rousseau's insistence on the unity of his thought, there is a long-standing debate regarding the multiple contradictions, variations, and tensions all over his works. Indeed, "scholars can be divided between those who accept Rousseau's frequent claims of consistency and a larger group who stress the many apparent tensions in his thought and life" (Kelly, 1991: 725)[1]. This article continues this line of research focusing on Rousseau's contradictory use of the word 'democracy' in connection with 'monarchy' and 'republic'[2].

The conceptual structure concerning the various forms of government as presented in *The Social Contract* may be briefly sketched. In a republic, which is the only legitimate regime, the people are the sovereign and they exert the legislative power as such. However, a government is needed to execute the laws they pass. This government may be established as a monarchy ("a single magistrate"), as an aristocracy ("a small number, so that there are more private

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[1]   Fralin (1978) remembers that Rousseau was charged of "radical inconsistency […] by his contemporaries", but also by key commentators like Vaughan (1962: 5). Sabine (1937: chapter XXIX) shared this view too. Some researchers have tried to explain Rousseau's paradoxes as a consequence of addressing different audiences and of a duality of intentions, as I myself will. As exemplary works unravelling Rousseau's contradictions, see L. Strauss (1947) and Salkever (1977-1978). In the Spanish context, Rubio Carracedo (1990) has analysed several of Rousseau's paradoxes (thought not the one here addressed).

[2]   This paper analytically distinguishes words (in single inverted commas) from concepts, following R. Koselleck (2011).

citizens than magistrates"), or as a democracy ("whole people or to the majority of the people, so that more citizens are magistrates than are mere private individuals")[3]. Each of them is legitimate, and their convenience depends on contextual factors (*The Social Contract*: Book III, chap. 3; henceforth *SC* III:3; Rousseau, 1913: 53).

Nonetheless, several inconsistencies spring up all over Rousseau's work regarding the words 'democracy', 'republic' and 'monarchy'. From this random usage, one might simply conclude that he was just quite unsystematic. Although I agree with Fralin (1978) and O'Hagan (2004) that some of Rousseau's contradictions can be understood as the reflection of "truth-giving tensions"[4], the following pages will show that, in this matter, his beliefs remained fundamentally unitary and stable over time.

Rousseau understood that no people could be free without a widespread belief in popular sovereignty as the only legitimate way of organising the state, but neither if popular sovereignty was confused with popular government; that is, with the people directly taking and performing executive decisions. This article claims that Rousseau intended to play an active part in spreading these ideas resorting to a rhetoric change in his taxonomy of government, in a movement that can be referred to as ideological. To this end I will present an analysis of his main writings, of his historical context, and of the several and contradictory intentions he may have had while writing.

These intentions become particularly manifest when comparing the differences between the taxonomies of political regimes presented in *The Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* and in *The Social Contract*, as section VI will show: while the former taxonomy seems to have felt more natural or spontaneous to Rousseau, the latter is more coherent with his political aims. However, 'democracy' and 'monarchy' reappear once and again along his work conveying the different meanings they were given in each taxonomy, producing the conundrum this article intends to unravel.

I will argue that such an account provides a more comprehensive explanation for Rousseau's failure to remain faithful to his own definitions than previous ones. In particular, the article will discuss the account provided by James Miller (1984), who had already described some of these inconsistences in a markedly erudite style and concluded that Rousseau was an advocate of "democracy" in the terms of *The Social Contract*. A more analytic approach to Rousseau's use of the word 'democracy' will show that Miller's conclusions need reconsideration in order to avoid misunderstanding Jean Jacques' beliefs and intentions.

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[3]   My emphasis.
[4]   The expression is quoted by Fralin (1978: 518) from Einaudi (1967: 9-16).

II. THREE CONTRADICTIONS: DEMOCRACY, REPUBLIC, AND MONARCHY

Rousseau's basic conceptual structure is indeed stated in very clear terms in *The Social Contract*: "I therefore give the name 'Republic' to every State that is governed by laws, no matter what the form of its administration may be: for only in such a case does the public interest govern [...]. Every legitimate government is republican" (*SC* II:6; Rousseau, 1913: 31). He resorts to a footnote in that same page to insist on this idea: "I understand by this word ['Republic'], not merely an aristocracy or a democracy, but generally any government directed by the general will, which is the law. To be legitimate, the government must be, not one with the Sovereign, but its minister. In such a case even a monarchy is a Republic". These same principles are upheld in *Emile*, where *The Social Contract* is summarised (*Emile, or on Education*: Book V Chap. "On Travel"; henceforth *Emile* V; Rousseau, 1979: 640-663).

There are three incongruences in the use of these words that motivate this piece of work. First, Rousseau sometimes gives the name 'democracy' to what he defines as a 'republic' in *The Social Contract*. There, it is affirmed that: "[The] <u>*Republic*</u> or *body politic* [...] is called by its members *State* when passive, *Sovereign* when active [...]. Those who are associated in it take collectively the name of <u>*people*</u>, and severally are called *citizens*, as <u>sharing in the sovereign power</u> [...]" (*SC* I:6; Rousseau, 1913: 13)[5]. A very different conceptual arrangement appears, for example, in his *Letters written from the Mountain*: "In every State the Law speaks where the Sovereign speaks. Now in a Democracy where the People is Sovereign [...]" (*Letters written from the Mountain* Seventh Letter; henceforth *LM* 7; Rousseau, 2001: 240). Suddenly, the word "democracy" seems to occupy the place where "Republic" should be. Moreover, both words are made the same after some lines: "it is in a Republic, it is in a Democracy [...]" (*LM* 8; Rousseau, 2001: 263). This is not just a one-time mistake: in his *Letter to D'Alembert*, Rousseau wrote: "In a monarchy [...]. But in a <u>Democracy</u>, in which the <u>subjects and sovereign</u> are only <u>the same men</u> considered in different relations [...]" (*Letter to D'Alembert;* Rousseau, 2004: 336)[6].

Secondly, democracy is sometimes held in very high regard, as the system in which he would rather be born. This is the case of the dedicatory in *A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, also known as *Second Discourse* (henceforth *SD*; Rousseau, 1913: 145). However, in other passages it is depicted as disastrous and

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5   My underlining; original cursive writing.
6   My emphasis.

Fig. 1. *Basic conceptual structure and three incoherent uses*
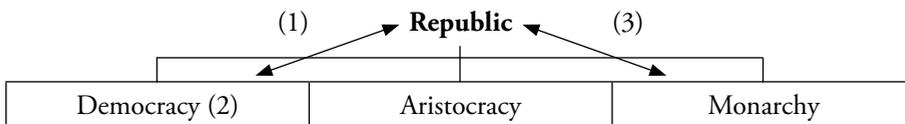
(1) Used interchangeably; (2) Positive and negative; (3) Used as opposites.

Source: own elaboration.

impossible: since "[i]t is not good for him who makes the laws to execute them", he concludes in *The Social Contract* that "[w]ere there a people of gods, their government would be democratic. So perfect a government is not for men". In fact, it is more "subject to civil wars and intestine agitations" than the others and, in any case, "[i]f we take the term in the strict sense, there never has been a real democracy, and there never will be" (*SC* III:4; Rousseau, 1913: 54-55).

As a third contradiction, Rousseau tends to present 'monarchy' and 'republic' as opposites (although the former was supposed to be a subtype of the latter). This could be noticed at the conceptual level in the previous quotation of the *Letter to D'Alembert*: "In a monarchy […]. But in a Democracy [...]" (where "Democracy" would mean republic). Surprisingly, this use is present in *The Social Contract* itself: "An essential and inevitable defect, which will always rank <u>monarchical</u> below <u>republican</u> government, is that in a republic the public voice [rarely fails to raise enlightened men to the higher positions]" (*SC* III:6; Rousseau, 1913: 60)[7].

The confusion between 'republic' and 'monarchy' is related to 'democracy' through contradiction one. Hence, it could be argued that this third contradiction is merely a consequence of that first one: once the words 'republic' and 'democracy' are used interchangeably, it would seem normal finding 'monarchy' in contrast to the word 'republic' (as a synonym of democracy; that is, as a different type of government from both monarchy and aristocracy). However, this cannot be the case: otherwise, Rousseau could not have presented the word 'monarchy' and the concept of republic as opposites (instead of treating one as a class of the other) as he frequently did; for example, in the following quotation: "In fact, the more we reflect, the more we find the difference between <u>free</u> and <u>monarchical</u> States to be this: in the former, everything is used <u>for the public advantage</u>" (*SC* III:8; Rousseau, 1913: 65)[8].

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[7]   My emphasis. "The people is far less often mistaken in its choice than the prince", says Rousseau to defend the value of republican government against "monarchy".

[8]   My emphasis. Even though the word 'republic' does not appear in this quotation, the concept ("free state […] for the public advantage") is there.

Moreover, at the end of that same paragraph, monarchy is made the same as "despotism".

Indeed, his attacks against monarchy for being the entire antithesis to a republic are many—and quite colourful. Therefore, it is not the word 'republic' which is referring to two different concepts (as Aristotle's '*politeia*' was in *Politics*)[9], but the words 'democracy' and 'monarchy' which change their meanings. 'Monarchy' stands for two different concepts: first, it means what Rousseau explicitly states in *The Social Contract:* when the government of a republic is held by a single citizen. Secondly, it is applied to the despotic regime *par excellence*: absolute monarchy. 'Democracy' appears sometimes to denote the government by the larger part of society and, sometimes, as a synonym of republic.

Before assuming that Rousseau was simply not careful enough in his wording, or that he lied about the stability of his beliefs, it would be interesting (and fair) to consider if he may have had a political or ideological agenda that could explain his rhetorical choices. Since the common meaning of 'philosophical', 'ideological', 'rhetorical', 'truthful' or 'sincere' may lead to confusion, I will dedicate the next section to defining and drawing out the differences between these intentions that may motivate a political thinker[10].

III. PHILOSOPHERS AND IDEOLOGISTS. RHETORICAL AND POLITICAL INTENTIONS

There is a name clearly associated to the search for intentions behind political thought: Quentin Skinner (1969)[11]. Skinner put this concept in the centre of historical research in order to avoid anachronisms and misinterpretations, promoting a contextual approach. However, this work will not

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[9]   Indeed, Rousseau was not the first western thinker to present confusing arguments around these words and concepts. Aristotle (1988: 77 [1279a]) supplied a similar conundrum in his Politics, where 'politeia' was defined both as a generic name for any political regime and for Democracy (in the terms of The Social Contract: as rule of the people under the law). "But when the multitude governs for the common benefit, it is called by the name common to all CONSTITUTIONS, namely, *politeia.* Moreover, this happens reasonably", wrote Aristotle. Rousseau, who repeatedly quotes the Roman and Greek classics, was surely aware of this.

[10]   I depart from an implicit Derridian perspective. On deconstruction, see Derrida (1988). On deconstruction as a tool for Political Theory, see Lasse Thomassen (2010).

[11]   Surely, he was not the first author to direct research towards intentionality (recall from Dilthey's and Weber's *Verstehen* to the already mentioned article by Strauss (1947).

provide a first-hand contextual research of the way Rousseau conceived his work. The definitions provided should therefore be considered more as a map than as a meticulous description of the way Rousseau thought of his own work. In any case, I will show the validity of this definitions resorting to the work of other researchers who have paid a closer attention to the way Rousseau could have conceived his own intentions.

For example, Starobinski (1983: 23) argues that we can see in Rousseau's works, as a result of his "unitary intention" of preserving transparency, both a moral advice for private life and an invitation to social reform through effective political action. Nowadays, a word springs to mind talking about the diffusion of ideas for political reasons: 'ideology'. Following Freeden (1996, 6: 54), by 'ideologies' I refer to "particular patterned clusters and configurations of political concepts" meant to "guide practical political conduct"; "the macroscopic structural arrangement that attributes meaning to a range of mutually defining political concepts". When the intention is to persuade a group of people for political reasons, content and form will depend heavily on those group's structures of ideas, affecting how "essentially contested concepts" are decontested[12]. Additionally, the actual limitations of actual people (in the plural) as well as matters of probability are consubstantial to politics, which leads to the introduction of prudential considerations. In this respect, political horizons differ from the paradises of perfection philosophy can offer. Besides, ideologists may have to segment their discourse if their audience is heterogeneous, probably falling as a result into self-contradictions. This was Rousseau's case according to Strauss (1947) or Miller (1984: 66).

Michael Freeden tried to distinguish between ideologies and political philosophies: the division is "far from clear"—he admitted—and "on the sole basis of the morphology of political argument […] it is difficult to separate ideologies from political philosophies" (Freeden 1996, 28, 41)[13]. His close analysis of this complex relationship is so insightful that it ironically led to deconstructing the opposition without intending to. However, the fragility of these deconstructed boundaries does not imply that authors, as Rousseau himself, could not use these categories as guides for their actions; that is, it does not prevent the existence of "philosophical" and "ideological" intentions.

Focusing on intentions allows to think of the difference between philosophy or ideology regardless of the readings and uses the texts under analysis

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[12]   On essentially contested concepts, the already classical quote is W.B. Gallie (1955).
[13]   Freeden made this effort in pages 28, 41, 45, 52, 54, 75-80, 95, 100-111. 131-136. In a later piece of work, Freeden (2004: 3-17) presented a more systematic (but least reavealing for this matter) account on their relationship.

may have suggested. E.g., Rousseau's work may be very funny, and some people may laugh at it, but this does not make him a humourist[14]. However, when there are sound reasons to be suspicious of an author's words on his own intentions, we step into quicksand. This should not prevent political theory from elaborating tentative interpretations, especially if the author provides permission as it is implicitly the case here: after all, Rousseau himself talked about Machiavelli's hidden intentions in *The Social Contract*, arguing that his love for liberty had been encrypted (*SC* III:6: Rousseau, 1913: 59-60).

The difference between philosophies and ideologies runs parallel to that between information (aimed at communicating facts) and persuasion (at changing beliefs). This pair should not be understood merely as the ideal extremes of a continuum on which the different types of communication can be situated (from a political pamphlet to the weather forecast), but as radically impossible opposites. In fact, the difference between persuasion and information can also be deconstructed resorting to very intuitive arguments. On the one hand, there is no information without the previous persuasion to start reading or listening, or even to recognise me as myself[15]. On the other, information will always try to persuade of being just information, of being true and transparent. In fact, its being thought of as 'information' (that is, not persuasion) is dependent on its success in persuading others of being so (its condition of possibility is, at the same time, its condition of impossibility). Persuasion, on its behalf, must "inform" about something in order to affect decision-making processes. Nonetheless, persuasion and information are not one and the same. There is definitively a difference between having the intention to provoke changes in the attitudes of a reader, and not having it at all.

Besides, the idea of information seems to conflate two different intentions. On the one hand, the will to convey truth; on the other, the intention to be sincere or transparent. These should not be confused, since a lie or a fiction may help to teach a truth, as literature frequently does[16]. In the real world, saying things in the way one thinks them, or saying all the things one believes in, may lead others to embrace all the contrary; that is, what one considers to

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[14] By contrast, Freeden affirms that "Rawls is both a philosopher and an ideologist because his texts can be subjected to totally diverse analyses and can carry various meanings for different types of reading" (Freeden, 1996: 45). In any case, the bases for my conclusion are helpfully established in Freeden's work.

[15] Every utterance makes "universal validity claims", as Habermas (1979: 2) says in *Communication and the Evolution of Society*.

[16] Consider, e.g., *La vida es Sueño* [*Life is a Dream*], by Pedro Calderón de la Barca.

be falsehood. However, sincerity does not warrant in any way the truthfulness of those beliefs conveyed.

Messages may transpire either more spontaneously or after a hard work of preparation. As a first impossible extreme, communication may happen for the *mere* act of expression, regardless of the effects it may have on others (sometimes, even without the physical presence of another). At the other extreme, some sources may be very careful to deliver their message in the most effective way. Accepting that content and form are deeply intermingled, the changes introduced in the *natural* way of speech production will affect not only the structure of the message, but also the content it conveys. The language chosen can hide or bring to the fore certain ideas or make some more attractive than others. "Rhetorical intentions" is probably the best phrase to name this preoccupation for the way a message is delivered.

The different intentions I have outlined may overlap, particularly in the means they require to succeed: ideological formulations are stronger when they are carefully prepared for their receivers and represent truths in a sincere way. However, they may sometimes collide. Not every ideological statement is carefully prepared, or sincere, or tries to represent any truth at all; and this may be to its advantage, since partiality, spontaneity, lies, and falsehood also play their part in the real world.

Now I can translate the main argument of this paper into these terms. My claim is that behind the already highlighted contradictions we can find Rousseau's rhetorical work at the service of his political intention: to convince his multiple audiences of his "great truths which would make for the happiness of the human race, but above all for that of my native land" (*The Confessions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*: Book IX; henceforth *Confessions* IX; Rousseau, 1953; 377). Those truths, revealed to him in an epiphany on the road to Vincennes, concerned the "government best fitted to create […] the best people", which "by its nature always adheres closest to the law" (*Confessions* IX; Rousseau, 1953: 376). Such a transcendent truth would deserve his sacrificing both intra and intertextual coherence, as well as wholesale transparency.

As Starobinski (1983: 174-184) argued, Rousseau was as eager to reach transparency as aware of its impossibility: once the state of nature is left behind, human beings require the distorting mean of "conventional language" to convey their thoughts and feelings. Nonetheless, I agree with Derathé (1988: 60-61) that *The Social Contract* is not a political manifesto, but an abstract work following the style of previous treaties on natural right. However, Rousseau understood that the definitions we give to our words and their connotation in common language inevitably have political consequences, so bad choices could hinder the principles he intended to communicate. This

helps to explain why he "conceived his theoretical work as a conceptual elaboration" (Bernardi, 2014: 23, 545).

My argument, therefore, is that Rousseau did not succumb to falsehood: on the contrary, he thought himself to be defending a (unitary) truth leading to justice. In this sense, he could have considered himself as a "true philosopher" in his own terms (Bernardi, 2014: 14). However, his conceptual elaboration was deeply influenced by his political aims, which matches the definitions provided for "ideological" intentions. The textual analysis will show that, even if Rousseau was not exhaustively transparent or informative about the ideological nature of his famous taxonomy, it cannot be claimed that he resorted to lies. Neither is it fair to claim that Rousseau was unclear in his mind, although he certainly fell back onto his more spontaneous "language" once and again. Unfortunately, a more straight-forward style could have undermined his political goal. After all, "[t]he democratic Constitution is certainly the Masterpiece of the political art: but the more admirable its contrivance is, the less it belongs to all eyes to penetrate it" (*LM* 8; Rousseau, 2001: 257).

IV. SOME CONTEXT AROUND ROUSSEAU'S INTENTIONS: DO NOT SAY DEMOCRACY

There are several facts, both textual and contextual, that support this interpretation of Rousseau's intentions. On the one hand, blood was spilled in Geneva due to the clash between "a widespread ideology of popular sovereignty and an actuality of oligarchy" in 1707, 1734-38, and 1768 (Bertram, 2012: 413). Rousseau's strong feelings for his birthplace are well known and therefore, the political tensions between the popular party and the ruling aristocrats of the Small Council of Geneva become relevant. On the other, he felt that a revolution was upcoming in his unwillingly beloved France[17]. The influence of these circumstances has already been presented in depth by authors like Miller (1984: Chap. II and IV), and so I will mainly focus now on a rhetorical factor: the negative connotations of the word "democracy" in his time.

Democracy has become a major source of legitimacy in our days, but this was not always the case. In fact, 'democracy' carried dense negative connotations for centuries and until recently. As Palmer (1953: 204-205) states: "It is

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[17]   "I thought that the weakening of the constitution threatened France with impending collapse" (*Confessions* XI; Rousseau, 1953: 522). "I love the French in spite of myself" (*Confessions* V; Rousseau, 1953: 177).

rare, even among the philosophers of France before the Revolution, to find anyone using the word 'democracy' in a favourable sense in any practical connection". Pure democracy was considered a utopia, only possible in small states with simple cultures. "At the most, democracy was a principle, or element, which might profitably enter into a mixed constitution" (Palmer, 1953: 204-205).

As James Miller (1984: 41) recalls, "for most political theorists before him [Rousseau], [democracy] had spelled only disorder and decay, licence and tyranny". It was connoted as "urban chaos" in contrast with the "rural simplicity" Rousseau pictured. Later, in the 1790s, conservatives used the word 'democracy' in much the same way as 'communism' was used negatively during the cold war (Palmer, 1953: 208). In fact, important theorists argue that today's acceptance of the word has only happened at the price of changing its meaning (Lively, 1975; Manin, 1997).

Rousseau was already considered quite extravagant, and declaring his love for democracy—no matter what his understanding of the word was— could not help to spread his ideas. Moreover, defending democracy may have appeared to be a way of taking part in the internal dispute of Geneva in favour of the popular party before the eyes of the Small Council (Miller, 1984: 15). The effect that the dedicatory of the *Second Discourse* had in Geneva, as Rousseau tells in his *Confessions*, "was unfavourable to" him (*Confessions* VIII; Rousseau, 1953: 368)[18]. Such a disappointment may have inspired a change of strategy.

Although Rousseau's intention for *The Social Contract* was "to employ solely the power of reason, without any vestige of venom or prejudice" (*Confessions* IX; Rousseau, 1953: 378 [footnote]), he understood that language is not innocent. For example, he knew that "[t]he word Government does not have the same meaning in every country, because the constitution of States is not the same everywhere" (*LM* V; Rousseau, 2001; 201). If words do not stand for essential contents, then their meaning can be related to both their context and the interests they further. In this sense, Rousseau mentions in the *Letters written from the Mountain* the existence of "the language of Monarchies". "In general, the Leaders of Republics are extremely fond of employing" it, wrote Rousseau in a clear reference to Geneva. "Under cover of terms that seem consecrated, they know how to introduce little by little the things that these words signify" (*LM* 5; Rousseau, 2001: 201-202).

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18 Miller (1984: 52-54) argues against the accuracy of Rousseau's impression, but it is difficult to assess with exactitude if Rousseau exaggerated Geneva's official response or if he tried to disguise his reasons to "cho[o]se the role of exile for himself".

According to Rousseau, this language of monarchies mainly involved the confusion between sovereigns and governments (*LM* V; Rousseau, 2001: 201). When introducing this difference, however, Rousseau also transformed the meaning of the term 'democracy'. While aware of the negative connotations of the shunned word, Rousseau may have intended for a quick sleight of hand that allowed him to criticise 'democracy' without ceasing in his defence of popular self-rule and the rule of law themselves. As Bernardi (2014: 194) puts it, "the principle of popular sovereignty seems to be a determinant factor in the whole conceptual system that organizes the political philosophy of Rousseau". Confirming my point will require tracing the use of the word systematically and chronologically along his main writings. This will show the vestiges of such a displacement of meaning.

V.   DISASTROUS AND IMPOSSIBLE WHILE DESIRABLE AND NECESSARY

The occasion did not arise in his *First Discourse* [1750], but in the *Discourse on Inequality* or *Second Discourse* [1754], as mentioned, there is an example of the contradictions here analysed already in the dedicatory: "I should have wished to be born in a country in which the interest of the Sovereign and that of the people must be single and identical […]. And as this could not be the case, unless the <u>Sovereign and the people were one and the same person</u>, <u>it follows</u> that I should have wished to be born under a <u>democratic government</u>, wisely tempered" (*SD* Dedicatory; Rousseau, 1913; 145)[19]. There, "democracy" comes across in a positive way (contradiction 2), apparently as a synonym of republic or rule of law (contradiction 1).

Later, in his *Discourse on Political Economy* [1755], Rousseau repeats twice "legitimate or popular government", assuming them as synonymous. Here 'government' seems to mean sovereignty (Rousseau, 1913: 255, 269), so Rousseau would still be employing the language of monarchies. In any case, the possibility of confusing "democracy" and "republic" does not emerge there.

Then we get to Rousseau's masterpieces: *Emile* and in *The Social* Contract [1762][20]. The conceptual rift between democracy and republic persists

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[19]   My emphasis.

[20]   I refer to *The Social Contract* and The *Emile* as his *magnum opera* following Rousseau's own opinion. He tells us in his *Confessions* that the *Emile* is "my best and more important" work (*Confessions* XI; Rousseau, 1953). On its behalf, *The Social Contract*

across these books, but now 'democracy' is rejected in the renowned terms. In contrast, two years after that, the *Letters written from the Mountain* [1764] are published and, in the same lines where Rousseau defends himself from his critics, contradiction one (republic = democracy) appears: democracy is presented as an actual possibility. This happens again in his *Plan for a constitution for Corsica* [1764-1768], where Rousseau speaks of "democracy" as a possible type of republic. He recommends it, but hopes that his advice helps to change living conditions so that Corsica can soon enjoy "a more brilliant administration". However, the plan for Corsica is eventually described as "a mixed Government", half aristocratic and half democratic, "in which the people is assembled only in parts and in which the depositaries of its power are often changed" (Rousseau, 2005: 128)[21]. Finally, 'democracy' appears only once in his *Considerations on the government of Poland* [1771-1772], next to the word "tumultuousness" (Rousseau, 2005: 194).

How could he "wish" to live in a democratic state, only to state next that such a thing, besides being inconvenient, is an impossible utopia? This is especially surprising after Rousseau affirmed that "[a]ll that is challenging in *The Social Contract* had previously appeared in the *Essay on Inequality*" (*Confessions* IX; Rousseau, 1953: 379). Did his opinion evolve contrary to this claim? In fact, we know for certain that his initial beliefs somehow may have persisted, since the first meaning of 'democracy' (positive) was revisited not only in the *Letter to D'Alembert* [1758], but also in his *Letters written from the Mountain* [1764], two years after the publication of *The Social Contract* [1762], or in the *Letter to Mirabeau* [1767], where Rousseau tragically regrets:

> If unfortunately this form [in which <u>law is put above men</u>] cannot be found, and I frankly admit that I believe that it cannot be, then I am of the opinion that one has to go to the other extreme and all at once place man as much above the law as he can be… In a word I see no tolerable mean between the

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was initially conceived as a huge enterprise [his *Political Institutions*] "which, in my opinion, ought to put the seal on my reputation", although eventually he did not feel "brave enough" to finish it and decided to publish it partially (*Confessions* IX; Rousseau, 1953: 377; *Confessions* XX; Rousseau, 1953: 478).

[21]   As Fralin (1978) showed, there is a clear contrast between Rousseau's refusal of representation in *The Social Contract* and its acceptance in the *Considerations*. However, my impression is not that Rousseau's opinion evolved, but that he reluctantly gave in to representation due to the particular circumstances and characteristics of Poland. The fact that *The Social Contract* contains important doses of prudential knowledge also helps to understand the nature of this change.

most austere <u>Democracy</u> and the most perfect Hobbesianism (Rousseau, 1997: 270)[22].

At this point, it should be clear that Rousseau's words need a careful reading if we are to understand him. When Rousseau claims in *The Social Contract* that there has never been a real democracy "in the strict sense" (*SC* III:4; Rousseau, 1913: 54-55), it implies that *other* sense can be thought of; a sense in which democracy is possible, maybe even desirable[23].

This is what is found in the *Second Discourse*. There the Genevan thinker tells us how "the differing degrees of inequality" resulted in the different types of governments: monarchy, republic, and democracy. All of them had the obligation to respect the fundamental laws that the people agreed upon in the contract "between the people and the chiefs chosen by them". However, in this same piece of writing he insinuates that only a democratic government (the one he says there to prefer) can keep the rule of law alive: "It was discovered in process of time which of these forms suited men the best. Some peoples remained altogether subject to the laws; others soon came to obey their magistrates" (*SD*; Rousseau, 1913: 214). Thence, "rule of law" (a characteristic of any republic according to *The Social Contract*) and "democracy" appear defined as different things, and under different words, although interconnected: the rule of law would not survive long without democracy.

This relation by necessity between democracy and republic helps to unravel contradiction one (republic = democracy). If we now come back to the crucial quotation of the dedicatory in the *Second Discourse* ("I should have wished to be born under a democratic government, wisely tempered"), we now have to stop thinking that 'democracy' simply substituted "republic" there. It is more precise to say that, if I want to live in a republic (sovereign = subjects; rule of law) <u>that endures as such</u>, "it follows" that I will need to live in a "democracy". Rousseau's prudential considerations can therefore explain the apparent contradiction in that quote.

Moreover, the meaning of 'democracy' in this *Second Discourse* was compatible with some very counter-intuitive affirmations: e.g. Rousseau stands that in his ideal system the right to propose laws "should belong exclusively to the magistrates". He also wishes not to live in a place where people imagined "themselves in a position to do without magistrates", "imprudently [keeping]

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22 My emphasis. Here, "[p]ut law above men" equals "democracy", while "put men as above the law as it may be possible" equals "perfect Hobbesianism".

23 If my claim is right, this illustrates again Rousseau's awareness of the multiple "senses" of terms, opening up the possibility of an instrumental use of this plurality.

for themselves the administration of civil affairs and the execution of their own laws" (*SD*; Rousseau, 1913: 147). Consequently, Rousseau was already criticising in the *Second Discourse* (under the idea of a "wisely tempered democracy") what in *The Social Contract* would be despised (and called "democracy"): the people directly exerting the executive power. This means his political preference in the *Second Discourse* is consistent to this extent with *The Social Contract*. Regarding this fundamental aspect, the change occurs in the words, not in his opinions.

VI.   FROM THE *SECOND DISCOURSE* TO THE *SOCIAL CONTRACT*: DISPLACEMENT OF MEANING AND MILLER'S ACCOUNT

In this section I will continue defining this displacement of meaning that happened between the *Second Discourse* and *The Social Contract* together with the suggestive and detailed work by James Miller, who identified some of the contradictions here analysed, but arrived at some different conclusions. Besides Miller's wonderful work on contextualisation, I find that a more analytic reading of the passages he himself quotes leads to important clarifications.

On the one hand, Miller (1984: 72), as I do, accepts that the system Rousseau defended over his life was fundamentally the same, but he also claims Rousseau did not truly believe his critiques against "democracy": "Democracy, *even as a form of government*, would seem to possess many estimable merits [for Rousseau]". Miller thinks that Rousseau's defence of a direct election of magistrates would show such a thing, and considers that Rousseau would "cast doubt" upon the idea in *The Social Contract* that "a true democracy has never existed", for he would think humans lived originally in democracies: "For Rousseau, the saga of decay is the story of a disappearing democracy" (Miller, 1984: 68, 118) Coherently, Miller's book is called *Rousseau: Dreamer of Democracy*.

This account, which implies Rousseau was hiding his real opinions, can be highly misguiding. Mainly, it forgets Rousseau's explicit intention in *The Social Contract* to take men "as they are"—not as the "gods" they are not. It is irrelevant for this matter what men were in an irrecoverable state of nature, since *The Social Contract* is a treatise on the "Principles of Political Rights": that is, for political times. In this sense, Miller confuses Rousseau's philosophical absolute ideal with his analysis of political right, which takes into account real people as they appear in real political history and, therefore, has to include prudential considerations. Rousseau sees "unimaginable that the people should remain continually assembled"; moreover, as soon as commissions

were appointed, they would rapidly gather power, modifying the form of government (*SC* III:4; Rousseau, 1913).

As mentioned, Miller's interpretation relies on the fact that some "democracy" (as a form of government) enters into play each time a government is appointed in *The Social Contract*'s account, since this act is of executive nature (Miller, 1984: 117; *SC* III:17 and IV:3; Rousseau, 1913). However, the executive nature of appointments only comes to confirm Rousseau's insight that every government is mixed; that "[s]trictly speaking, there is no such thing as a simple government" (*SC* III:7; Rousseau, 1913; Bernardi, 2014: 143). Ultimately, if Rousseau had intended to advocate for a full democracy according to the way the word was understood in his time, he would have defended sortation as the best system for the selection of magistrates, which he only advises for the impossible democracies of *The Social Contract* and for the appointment of life-rulers (*SC* IV:3; Rousseau, 1913)[24].

Rousseau did surely not refer to a metaphysical impossibility when he claimed that a real democracy has never existed, since the possibility of a democratic sovereignty is mentioned here and there: "At first the Legislative power and executive power that constitute sovereignty are not distinct. The Sovereign People wills by itself, and by itself it does what it wills" (*LM* 7; Rousseau, 2001: 238). Moreover, in a Lockean fashion, Rousseau claimed there that "in every country in the last resort [the fundamental law] arms the Sovereign with the public force for the execution of what it wills" (*LM* 8; Rousseau, 2001: 268)[25]. However, this could barely be called a regime; it would just constitute a mere fleeting revolutionary moment. Full democracy as a form of government (the people are the only executors of their own will) is impossible if "possible" means viable in the long run. Spreading the belief of its impossibility can subsequently be considered as a prudential move seeking the preservation of liberty. Therefore, a democratic government cannot be considered Rousseau's political ideal, as Miller argued.

Finally, Miller (1984: Chap.V) is right to claim that Rousseau used the word "democracy" both as 1. a type of government (mainly, in *The Social Contract)* and 2. a type of sovereignty (mainly, in the *Second Discourse*). Indeed, Rousseau insists on how important it is for "democracy" to distinguish "the Sovereign from the Government, the legislative Power from the executive.

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[24]   On this matter, see Manin (1997: 97, 103). Eventually, Rousseau's words may have had an impact in the evolution of the meaning of democracy, moving it away from lottery.

[25]   Rousseau claims to be defending the same principles Locke did. See *LM* 7; Rousseau (2001: 236).

There is no State in which these two powers are so separate, and in which people have so affected to mix them up" (*LM* 8; Rousseau, 2001: 257).

> In Monarchies, where the executive power is joined to the exercise of sovereignty, the Government is nothing but the Sovereign itself […]. In Republics, above all in Democracies, where the Sovereign never acts immediately by itself, it is something different. Then the Government is only the executive power, and it is absolutely distinct from sovereignty (*LM* V; Rousseau, 2001: 201)[26].

Yet closer attention to the meaning of 'sovereignty' and 'government' in the *Second Discourse* and in *The Social Contract* is needed to clarify such a claim, since each text provides slightly different sets of definitions. Moreover, an analysis of the differences between the model he promoted at each moment (the wisely tempered democracy and the aristocratic republic) will reveal how Rousseau's fundamental truth moulded them. I count at least four of these differences:

1) First and most importantly, Rousseau surrenders to the negative connotation of the word 'democracy' (disastrous and impossible) in *The Social Contract*. However, he only does so after reducing the content of 'democracy' to the major threat for popular sovereignty: popular government. While 'democracy' in the *Second discourse* included the popular right to appoint and revoke magistrates as well as imperative mandate, in *The Social Contract* these are part of any "republic". Therefore, the language Rousseau creates for republics not only differentiates governments and sovereigns, but also warns against the temptation of the people to directly execute the law, and incorporates crucial democratic institutions as general conditions of legitimacy.
In the *Second Discourse*, once the fundamental laws are established by the free people, it seems they may legitimately vanish (unless they had established a democracy). *The Social Contract*, on the contrary, claims as a condition of legitimacy that the people must retain the right to pass, reject, and change laws, and to change both the magistrates and the type of government at any point. As G.D.H Cole (1913: xvi)

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[26] In this quote, 'Republic' and 'Democracy' convey the meanings given in the *Second Discourse*, as have already been defined. Besides, it shows again that the political ideal Rousseau endorsed was never a "full" democracy in the terms of the Discourse on Inequality, which had to be wisely tempered to avoid a "government" or executive of the people. The "sovereign never acts immediately by itself"; at least, not for long.

noted, "Rousseau saw clearly the necessity, if popular consent to government were to be more than nominal, of giving it some effective/ constitutional[27] means of continuous expression. For Locke's theory of tacit consent, he substituted that of an active agreement, periodically renewed".

Fig. 2. *Second Discourse v. The Social Contract*[28]

"Republic" in the *Second Discourse*	"Republic" in *the Social Contract*
The contract is between people and chiefs. Institution of a limited sovereign organised either as a democracy, an aristocracy, or a monarchy.	The contract is agreed among the citizens. Institution of an unlimited sovereign (the people).
One of its articles or fundamental laws regulates the selection and power of magistrates. Chiefs were (initially) elected in every type of government.	The people must be able to approve/ reject/change every law (fundamental or not), including the "commission" given to their magistrates and the form of government.
"Democracy" in the *Second Discourse*	"Democracy" in *the Social Contract*
A way of organising sovereignty in which the people control the executive (appoint/revoke magistrates, imperative mandate).	A form of government (that is, a type of republic) in which the majority of citizens execute the law (including the appointment of magistrates)
In its pure form (unless it is "wisely tempered"), the majority of the citizens would also elaborate non-fundamental laws and execute them.	

Source: own elaboration.

2) In the *Second Discourse*, Rousseau commended the edict published in 1667 in the name and by order of Louis XIV, where it can be read: "Let it not, therefore, be said that the Sovereign is not subject to the laws of his State since the contrary is a true proposition of the right of nations"

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[27] Depending on the edition (1913 or 1923, respectively) Cole uses one word or the other.

[28] Although the word 'republic' is not explicitly defined in the *Second Discourse*, it is taken here as synonymous of 'legitimate state' in order to compare both models.

(*SD*; Rousseau, 1913: 210). Later, he affirms that the power of this (initially elected) limited sovereign extended to "everything which may maintain the constitution, without going so far as to alter it" (*SD*; Rousseau, 1913: 212). This law-abiding "sovereign" of the *Second Discourse*—may it be the people or not—is surely not the almost[29] omnipotent sovereign people of *The Social Contract*, which led some to consider Rousseau as a precursor of a "totalitarian democracy" (Talmon, 1952). In *The Social Contract*, the sovereign should not demand anything unnecessary from the citizenry; however, he only was to decide what is necessary and what is not (*SC* II:4; Rousseau, 1913). In his own Hobbesian words: "These clauses [of *The Social Contract*], properly understood, may be reduced to one—the total alienation of each associate, together with all his rights, to the whole community" (*SC* I:6; Rousseau, 1913: 12)[30]. It is due to the taxonomic change that liberty can now be presented as compatible with an absolute conception of sovereignty. Here lies the key novelty of *The Social Contract.*

3) The sovereign of the *Second Discourse* would not be appointed to pass any laws, but "to watch over the execution" of the fundamental laws: the articles of the contract to which the people agreed. As seen, this so-called sovereign would also have the exclusive right to propose laws if they were needed, but its "power extends to everything which may maintain the constitution, without going so far as to alter it". Therefore, it seems more accurate to describe it as a constitutional executive that, in exceptional cases, can pass legislation "in conformity with the intention of his constituents" (*SD*; Rousseau, 1913: 147, 212) than as a sovereign legislative. Again, this is relatively close to the system of the more radical position of *The Social Contract,* where Rousseau claims that "there can be no assurance that a particular will is in conformity with the general will, until it has been put to the free vote of the people" (*SC* II:7; Rousseau, 1913)[31].

4) Finally, in the *Second Discourse*, "[w]ithout entering at present upon the investigations which still remain to be made into the nature of the

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[29] Only "limited" by the duty of generality.

[30] Steinberger (2008) has convincingly presented the similarities between Rousseau's and Hobbes's conceptions of the state.

[31] It must be kept in mind that, as Rubio Carracedo (1990: 135) noted, the legislative task as conceived by Rousseau is mainly of constitutional nature and is developed by the legislator in the origins of the political community. Therefore, it is mainly constitutional control what Rousseau had in mind when he made such a participatory claim.

fundamental compact underlying all government" and, therefore, following the "common opinion", the contract was presented as a pact "between the people and the chiefs chosen by them" (*SD*; Rousseau, 1913: 147, 212). By contrast, the model of *The Social Contract* was based first on a pact amongst the people, and then on a law or commission binding the magistrates (*SC* III:1; Rousseau, 1913: 47)[32]. Therefore, the citizenry of *The Social Contract* could get rid of their government as soon as they are legally gathered and want to. However, in the system of the *Second Discourse* there would be no other way to change the type of government (of limited sovereign) but resorting to a revolution and signing a new social contract. Citizens would always retain the right to breach the contract but, had they decided to organise their government as a monarchy or an aristocracy, they would lose any political control from the moment they elected their limited sovereign.

According to the *Second Discourse*, "in these different governments, all the offices were at first elective" (*SD*; Rousseau, 1913: 214). Therefore, in that model freedom (as self-rule) is presented as possible even in a "monarchy" (under a sovereign king). However, Rousseau informs us with subtlety that freedom in monarchies and aristocracies would barely last in real life. The Genevan thinker already realised that the notion of a limited sovereign meant trusting in self-limitation, which is not quite a secure basis for liberty. Even though philosophically or theoretically conceivable, the political risk it implied recommended the changes he introduced in his taxonomy of governments. Otherwise, cases of limited slavery (such as the "aristocratic" England he so bitterly criticised in *The Social Contract*[33]) could have been easily legitimised. This would have undermined his political quest for popular sovereignty and against absolute monarchy.

VII. CONSISTENCY AND ABSOLUTE MONARCHY

This article does not claim Rousseau remained coherently faithful to his new definitions; rather that his misuse of those can be better explained by

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[32] It should be noticed that Ch. 16 in book III is titled "That the institution of government is not a contract" (Rousseau 1913, 80).

[33] *SC* III:15; Rousseau, 1913: 85. According to the language of republics developed in *The Social Contract*, it was no "aristocracy": such a name implied popular sovereignty there.

reconstructing his intentions. When Rousseau boasted about being consistent after such a large disparity between different texts, I understand the Genevan thinker meant he was consistent in his main ideas, his final aims and truths, not in the exact terms of his contractualism. The textual analysis has shown this consistency, even though it must be admitted that the change in the way his truths were expressed had an impact on some non-essential parts of the content conveyed. Accepting that Rousseau's opinions evolved in the fundamental would not allow us to explain the persistent reappearance of both meanings of 'democracy' and 'monarchy' but as a mere lack of mental clearness.

However, it remains a conundrum why Rousseau resorted to both meanings of "democracy" after defining his republican vocabulary, even in *The Social Contract* itself. Once the "strict sense" of this word was defined and the requirements of freedom were saved into the word 'republic', there may seem to be no point in his using their previous meanings. Aside from pure and simple mistakes, Rousseau may have felt the necessity to use the common meaning of these words in order to be properly understood; a common meaning that surely felt more natural and spontaneous to him and that could reach a broader audience.

The convenience of alternatively resorting to both systems is especially clear regarding his use of the word 'monarchy'. Once 'democracy' was limited to those elements that Rousseau disapproved of, then the meaning of 'monarchy' was necessarily affected, for both are defined at the same logical level (as types of republic). When examined the other way around, "monarchy" had to change its referent if so-called republics (wisely tempered democracies according to his previous vocabulary) were to become the only legitimate regimes. In Rousseau's opinion, "legitimate monarchy" (meaning a sovereign monarch who provided liberty, rule of law, etc.) should be understood as an oxymoron; an impossibility.

A footnote to *The Social Contract* states: "It is true that Aristotle […] distinguishes the tyrant from the king by the fact that the former governs in his own interest, and the latter only for the good of his subjects […] but also it would follow from Aristotle's distinction that, from the very beginning of the world, there has not yet been a single king" (*SC* III:10; Rousseau, 1913: 72 [footnote 1]). A king that governs following the general interest may be philosophically or theoretically possible, but politically it appears to Rousseau as a chimera, if not a sheer lie meant for political domination. Therefore, an absolute monarchy would not even deserve a particular name in his republican language but those of tyranny and despotism. Rousseau had to admit that, once "the government" is regarded as nothing but the "minister" of the sovereign, "even a monarchy is a Republic" (*SC* II:6; Rousseau, 1913: 31). However, he would not have been ready to stop criticising present absolute monarchies by their popular name, since this was the most effective way to

convey his political stance to his well-appreciated "common readers". Again, his political rejection of monarchies had to take into account the rhetorical context; the success of his work as an ideological dispositive depended on it.

VIII. TO END WITH: A SINGLE CRITERION OF LEGITIMACY

This article examined Rousseau's republican alternative to the language of Monarchies in *The Social Contract*: a republican ideology. Surely, the main feature of this new language is its bringing to the fore the difference between sovereignty and government. "This distinction is very important in these matters. In order to have it thoroughly present in one's mind one ought to read with some care the first two Chapters of the third Book in *The Social Contract*, in which I attempted to fix by means of a precise meaning expressions that they artfully leave uncertain" for their own political interest (*LM* 5; Rousseau, 2001: 201-202). However, this conceptual device also includes an important amount of Rousseau's prudential wisdom about the conditions of freedom, and about what democracy can and cannot be. Such an account provided a more compelling way to understand Rousseau's multiple contradictions around the words 'monarchy', 'republic', and, above all, 'democracy'.

Aristocracy—and not democracy—was considered "the best and most natural" of all governments in *The Social Contract* (*SC* III:5: Rousseau. 1913: 57). For his words, Rousseau seemed now even more elitist than the Genevese Small Council itself, which regarded Geneva as an "aristo-democracy" (Miller, 1984: 17, 73). In *The Social Contract*, Rousseau unexpectedly yielded to the negative connotation of the word which was general at his time and condemned democracy as an impossible and undesirable option. However, the "democracy" he repudiated now did not include, by definition, the fundamental elements he found necessary to preserve freedom: popular legitimacy and popular participation[34] were safe in the word 'Republic'—a word that effectively became victorious during the revolutions that were to come (Manin, 1997; Palmer, 1953). Moreover, Rousseau used this negative connotation to protect his "reasonable populism" (Cohen, 1986) (the people's sovereignty through legislation) from the danger of a self-defeating popular executive, a tumultuous and instable form of government, now the only meaning placed into the word 'democracy'.

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[34] Including the participation in the election of magistrates, which is the only legitimate way of instituting a government according to *The Social Contract* (*SC* III:17; Rousseau, 1913). This was also the case (at the beginning) according to the *Second Discourse*.

Rousseau's ideal political constitution undoubtedly includes moments when the people would hold both the legislative and the executive power: this would happen in revolutions, and also each time a government is elected in a republican aristocracy. Nevertheless, these exceptions should not lead us into thinking (along the lines of James Miller) that Rousseau considered "ideal" a government which no man could desire without considering himself an omnipotent god; a government that could not last long. Such a wish implied too much of an idealisation for Rousseau's political judgement, even if he may have found a democratic government appealing in philosophical terms.

Rousseau's ideological move is of extreme relevance for the History of Western Political Ideas. As Kingsley Martin wrote, Rousseau's "real influence cannot be traced with precision because it pervaded all the thought that followed him" (quoted in N. Dent, 2005: 210). Quoting G.D.H Cole (1913: xx): "Rousseau unites the absolute Sovereignty of Hobbes and the 'popular consent' of Locke into the philosophic doctrine of popular Sovereignty, which has since been the established form of the theory". As Bernardi (2014: 203) explains, through developing of the concept of popular sovereignty Rousseau "forms the modern concept of democracy"[35]. Against Bernardi, however, I do not think Rousseau's choosing of the word 'republic' to convey this content was a mere question of "terminology", but a very clever ideological and rhetorical move.

Strongly democratic ideas came to be regarded as the principles that any state should embody in order to be legitimate. Popular sovereignty and the need for some constitutional guarantees that make popular sovereignty effective have become common sense, no matter how much real conditions dramatically limit our capacity to make our institutions embody these principles. Moreover, the praised idea of a mixed government changed meaning too, referring now to mixed governments and never again to a mixed source of legitimacy (Bernardi, 2014: 127-128; Derathé, 1988: 49; Villaverde, 1987: 239). Since sovereignty cannot be divided, the democratic principle could no longer be combined with the monarchic or aristocratic principles. No compromise is possible at the sovereignty level under the Hobbesian conceptual arrangement presented in *The Social Contract*.

Rousseau revisited the common meanings of the words 'republic', 'democracy', and 'monarchy' repeatedly after publishing *The Social Contract*, either out of political interest, spontaneity, or sheer mistake. Fortunately for democrats, his far-reaching ideological aim was achieved besides all of Rousseau's contradictions; contradictions that, in some cases, may have furthered instead of hindered his aims.

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[35]   See also Rubio Carracedo (1990: 115-116).

However, the success of the Rousseaunian ideological device should be neither over-emphasised nor taken for granted. Principles opposed to those here analysed have also had a strong appeal in history. As a clear example, remember the following quotation from *The Federalist Papers*: "The true distinction between these [the purest democracies of Greece] and the American government lies *in the total exclusion of the people, in their collective capacity*, from any share in the latter, and not in the *total exclusion of the representatives of the people* from the administration of the *former*" (Madison, 1961b: 387 [No. 63])[36].

The Genevan ideologist would have surely condemned Madison's words for the sake of participation; that is, of freedom[37]. In his opinion, the people had to ratify periodically the form of government, their rulers and any new law if they were to remain free. There fore, he would have also strongly rejected the prohibition of *referenda* in the constitutional amendment process, which was ratified by the United States Supreme Court in 1920[38]. Yet the fact that Madison had to defend his positions in the name of "popular government" (Madison, 1961a: 80 [No.10]) makes clear Rousseau's success in determining the frame with which even adversaries had to handle, as well as its limits and fragility. May a better understanding of the origins of our beliefs help us to foster political freedom in the present times of uneasiness.

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36   For a reflection on this quote, see Manin (1997).
37   About the dependence of freedom on participation in Rousseau's thought, see Carole Pateman (1970, 25-27).
38   Hawke v. Smith, 253 U.S. 221 (1920).

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