



Basic Political Writings

Jean Jacques Rousseau

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While some modern lovers of philosophy, literature, and politics might not agree with his views, Jean-Jacques Rousseau was undoubtedly one of the most influential thinkers in Western civilization. Rousseau was certainly controversial during his time, as his writings were revolutionary for contemporary audiences. "Basic Political Writings" contains four essential political works written by Rousseau: "Discourse on the Science and the Arts," "Discourse on the Origin of Inequality," "Discourse on Political Economy," and "On the Social Contract." In these works, he lays out the basic foundation of society and how it has evolved since the origins of man. Then, he describes how society is pulling mankind away from the laws of nature. Foundational to his point of view is Rousseau's argument that there are no true personal possessions in nature, only the community. He writes that it was the rise of personal possessions that allowed certain people to make powerful gains, and they were the ones who controlled the political spectrum. However, Rousseau offers hope by explaining that men can change their government; they do not have to be chained by their possessions or other symbolic constraints. The author's concept of the general will is astounding, and he has since been both praised and criticized for his beliefs. Regardless of whether the reader agrees with Rousseau's political theories, the works in "Basic Political Writings" are essential reading for anyone looking to better understand the forces at work behind the rise of civilizations, power, and politics.

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