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Review of Rousseau Online: *Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Collection complète des oeuvres*
<http://www.rousseauonline.ch/>

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Rousseau Online (rousseauonline.ch) is a digitized collection of the works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the original editions published from 1780-1789 in Geneva (Du Peyrou and Moulto edition): *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Collection complète des oeuvres*. Professor Joseph Gallandar prepared and digitized the texts, while Enrico Natale, of Infoclio.ch, directed the project. Infoclio.ch is the “professional portal of the historical sciences in Switzerland,” and they collaborated with the Bibliothèque de Genève on this project. The Bibliothèque de Genève holds the original edition of the *Collection complète des oeuvres*.

Rousseau Online was released in a beta version on July 7, 2012, although improvements continue to be made to the site. The digitized texts are accompanied by a brief note from Professor Frédéric Eigeldinger detailing how the Du Peyrou and Moulto edition came about, and another equally brief note about the three formats originally used for the Du Peyrou and Moulto edition by Monsieur Thierry Dubois of the Bibliothèque de Genève. The edition presented here is in-4°. There are options for reading online or for downloading in pdf or epub formats (for tablets or e-readers, etc.). I found the site easy to navigate on the web as well as when tested with an iPad and a Kindle reader.

The interface is very simple: a menu bar appears across the top of the homepage. The *Table de matières* link opens the list of volumes with the titles of individual works in a sub-menu that is always open. When a text is selected, three icons appear providing the choice of format (php, pdf, epub). Clicking php opens the web text, and a light gray ribbon appears at the top as a location guide and to provide options to download the text or to return to the “Menu” (*Table de matières*). The pages are very clear and the quite large font makes for easy screen reading. The occasional author’s note within the text is typed in a smaller font and bracketed immediately after the point of the asterisk rather than appearing at the bottom of the page. This is a welcome change that prevents the need to scroll up and down a page to read a note. Those who worked on this project are to be congratulated for ensuring both maximum comfort for reading and ease of navigation throughout the site.

In addition to the complete Du Peyrou and Moulto edition, Rousseau Online includes a separate section of original images in the collection (reachable through the main menu bar). Organized by corresponding volume, the images consist in the frontispieces and the engravings included in the text. In *Julie ou la nouvelle Eloïse, Tome I* (volume 2), for example, we find the famous “inoculation d’amour” engraving, with artist and engraver’s information provided. The images are provided in thumbnail-like format and can be enlarged individually.

Researchers will be happy to know that the original page numbers appear within the text so that one can follow along and cite the original accurately. This leads to one of the most exciting elements of this edition (and one that readers could almost miss if they did not pay attention to the *Avant Propos* link on home page menu bar): each page number is a hyperlink leading to a high-definition image of the original page. These images are gorgeously rendered, and it is a wonderful opportunity to move back and forth

between images of original pages and web text. While this option is only available on the web, the epub and pdf documents have the original page numbers clearly marked as well. The high-definition images are housed in e-rara.ch, a service of the Bibliothèque de Genève, through which one can also peruse the seventeen volumes.

What distinguishes a digitized edition, of course, is the fact that it can be searched, enhancing a researcher's ability to locate sections of text quickly or see results of keyword searches across an extremely large number of pages. The search function on Rousseau Online retrieves results very quickly. One can choose to search in a single volume or in all seventeen volumes, but there is no option to search in any number of combined volumes. Currently the search function is limited to single words or exact phrases. Another limitation is that the displayed results are simply the fragments of the text with the word or phrase highlighted in blue. The blue highlighted text is not hyperlinked, and, thus, one cannot jump from the results list to a specific section of text (and so on, back and forth). While not a major nuisance, this limits the ease of using the web interface to move seamlessly between texts while tracking a keyword.

A sample search for "machine" in all seventeen volumes retrieved 116 results. Eleven hits were from volume one, *Ouvrages de politique*, with two hits being in the same retrieved fragment of text from *Discours sur l'origine et les fondemens de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*. The results list includes, in addition to volume number, the title of the text at the top of the fragment with solid line breaks distinguishing each fragment from the next. While I performed many different searches experimenting with the site, I chose "machine" as a search term example because of its use by Geoffrey Bennington in a brilliant little book entitled *Dudding: Des noms de Rousseau*.^[1] "Machine" is a term that links Rousseau's writing about his body, in *Confessions* for example, with his writing on the state in *Contrat social* and other texts. From the results presented in this search, I see that one may be interested in following this inquiry further by focusing on *Emile* or *Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques*, depending on the particular connection being followed.

While scholars have had access to online collections of some of Rousseau's works prior to Rousseau Online—at such sites as Athena (a selection of works maintained by Pierre Perroud)^[2] as well as a few translations available via Project Gutenberg^[3] and Liberty Fund's Online Library^[4]—the ability to search the complete collection in the original French is a new and exciting advance in Rousseau scholarship. Searches that turn up interesting results in lesser known works may be particularly useful for scholars and teachers by bringing our attention to some of the drafts, lesser known texts, and letters that may not be so quickly retrieved via the more typical routes (i.e., our memory of Rousseau's writings or thumbing through the paper version of the Pléiade *Oeuvre complètes*.) Volumes thirteen through seventeen are all *Suppléments de la collection* and include, for example, refutations of the discourses and replies to various of Rousseau's writings, and drafts of *Confessions*.

Recent communication with Enrico Natale, director of Rousseau Online, brings good news of a future collaboration with the ARTFL Project (American and French Research on the Treasury of the French Language)^[5] to use their PhiloLogic search software which would allow for more complex searches. Due out sometime in November 2012, he announces, is a map interface (coded with Google API) that will allow users to browse both geographically and chronologically the letters included in the *Collection complète des oeuvres* (approximately 200 letters). These updates show that Rousseau Online is still striving to make the site as dynamic, advanced, and appealing as possible.

In sum, Rousseau Online is clearly organized and the *Collection complète* presented with straightforward navigation. The large font is wonderfully crisp and easy to read, its current search function simple but quick, and a future collaboration with ARTFL should provide more complex search possibilities. The images are clean and can be enlarged, and the hyper-links to high-resolution images of original pages are an amazing addition. I found myself digging into the site for hours on end, searching within the

volumes, reading debates in the supplemental volumes, and going back and forth between the digitized text and the hyperlinked original pages. Rousseau Online is an important resource from which students, teachers and researchers of Rousseau will benefit greatly.

NOTES

[1] Geoffrey Bennington, *Dudding: des noms de Rousseau* (Paris: Galilée, 1991).

[2] <http://athena.unige.ch/athena/rousseau/rousseau.html>, 11/1/12

[3] <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/author/1286>, 11/1/12

[4] <http://oll.libertyfund.org/>, 11/1/12

[5] <http://artfl-project.uchicago.edu/>, 11/1/12

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