



# **Rousseau's Counter-Enlightenment: A Republican Critique of the Philosophes (SUNY Series in Social and Political Thought)**

*Graeme Garrard*

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Arguing that the question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's relationship to the Enlightenment has been eclipsed and seriously distorted by his association with the French Revolution, Graeme Garrard presents the first book-length case that shows Rousseau as the pivotal figure in the emergence of Counter-Enlightenment thought. Viewed in the context in which he actually lived and wrote from the middle of the eighteenth century to his death in 1778 it is apparent that Rousseau categorically rejected the Enlightenment republic of letters in favor of his own republic of virtue. The philosophes, placing faith in reason and natural human sociability and subjecting religion to systematic criticism and doubt, naively minimized the deep tensions and complexities of collective life and the power disintegrative forces posed to social order. Rousseau believed that the ever precarious social order could only be achieved artificially, by manufacturing sentiments of sociability, reshaping individuals to identify with common interests instead of their own selfish interests."

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