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PROJECT

Rousseau révolutionne l'histoire. Recherche sur la contribution rousseauiste à la philosophie de l'histoire

Si Rousseau révolutionne la pensée politique, sa principale innovation consiste dans l'articulation d'une généalogie historique de l'individu et de l'espèce humaine avec un renversement épistémologique des catégories analytiques propres aux théories politiques de son temps, une méthode indissociable de sa pensée sur l'historicité et sur la contingence de la société et la possibilité hypothétique d'une intervention politique correctrice.

Mieux encore, c'est la double articulation de l'axe de la société avec l'axe de l'histoire qui permet à sa pensée d'agir comme une critique interne des Lumières mêmes, en dressant une déconstruction de deux formes opposées, mais solidaires et complémentaires, de ce qu'on pourrait appeler pensée abstraite : une forme d'essentialisme - qu'on retrouve dans diverses références théoriques à l'état de nature, à la raison originaire, aux droits qui en dérivent etc. - et une forme de constructivisme social et politique, voire même de volontarisme.

Cette grande découverte rousseauiste de l'histoire en tant qu'explication fondamentale de la structure dynamique de la société (et non pas comme illustration d'un principe transcendant, ni comme généalogie légitimatrice d'un droit, car telles étaient les fonctions de l'écriture historique traditionnelle) est la base d'un nouveau matérialisme, cette-fois-ci un matérialisme social et historique distinct du matérialisme naturaliste de son époque, et qui anticipera les sciences sociales modernes.

Lecture recommandée :

Lazar, Veronica. « Origine et histoire dans le Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité. » *Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai* 3, 2012 (Seria philosophia).

Towards a Historical Consciousness of Modernity: Rousseau and the Critique of Abstract Thinking

If Rousseau's criticism of modernity has been considered - only too often - to betray a hostility towards history itself (both as a real process and as a scientific discourse), I intend to show that, on the contrary, Rousseau's work is essentially an attempt to situate the modern subject in his own historical circumstances, in order to allow a true understanding of his potential for emancipation. The situation - or historical self-consciousness - rests both on a historical explanation of the political, cognitive and emotional modern landscape in its specificity, and on a deciphering of what keeps society together, despite everything that works towards its disintegration. And, once accepted, the reintegration of the modern subject into a history does not lead to his dissolution, but functions, against all the traditional attempts of philosophy to rise above its own temporality, as a liberation of philosophy from its unreflected remnants and for practical political thinking.

On the one hand, history in this sense can only function as an explanation as long as it does not assume what has to be explained, but examines its object in all its contingency and strangeness. On the other hand, to gain concreteness, history has to be a history of the formation of society - the formation of an entity which is essentially distinct from a simple gathering of people under the command of a chief. And, among other things, what I want to explore in this research is whether we can actually speak about a sort of 'economism' in Rousseau's theory, about a way of equating what is socially determinant with the existence and dynamics of property, money and market.

Thus, my project is also an exploration of the possibilities of using some anachronistic analytical operators in order to understand a philosophical work. In this case, I tend to believe that some anachronisms might prove to be improper - like the notion of 'capitalism' for designating the object of Rousseau's economic critique -, while others might be useful and even legitimate, like the concept of 'abstract thinking'. This is because I take Rousseau's paradoxical attitude towards his fellow philosophes to be an attack on their abstract thinking, which is a flaw that can manifest itself either in the reduction of social behaviors to some naturalist principles, or in the voluntaristic-constructivist tendencies of the contractualist theories.