mechanism of LTP is useful and helps the reader to avoid getting lost in the details of contemporary neuroscientific research. Indeed, most arguments can be understood without any significant background in neuroscience. At the same time, it would have been interesting to see Craver’s impressive conceptual apparatus at work on other (less mature) research programs, especially in cognitive neuroscience, in which attempts to bridge the gap from ‘how-possibly’ to ‘how-actually’ mechanisms are often tentative.

That being said, Explaining the Brain still does a great job in reconstructing the features of good explanations in neuroscience. Craver is especially innovative and convincing on matters of causal relevance and interlevel integrations, which are central to neuroscience, but also to biological and social sciences. The book is thus not only relevant and challenging for those interested in explaining the brain, but more generally for those trying to explain complex phenomena in terms of constitutive mechanisms.

Benoît Dubreuil
Department of Philosophy
Université du Québec à Montréal
Canada
Dubreuil.benoit@uqam.ca

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While Jean-Jacques Rousseau has received consistent attention in departments of literature and political science, contributions by Dieter Henrich (1992), Richard Velkley (1989, 2002), Susan Neiman (1997), Joshua Cohen (1997), Terence Irwin (2008), and Frederick Neuhouser (2000) suggest that interest in Rousseau’s influence on the history of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German philosophy, and interest in Rousseau more generally, may be gaining ground in departments of philosophy. Indeed, Neuhouser’s latest book, Rousseau’s Theodicy of Self-Love: Evil, Rationality, and the Drive for Recognition, will be of interest to those working across the disciplines of philosophy, political science, and literature; but it will be of particular value to scholars and advanced students concerned with the social, psychological, moral, and political implications of Rousseau’s account of amour-propre, that specific form of self-love that Rousseau’s readers have all too often identified as ‘a wholly negative phenomenon’ (p. 15), and hence ‘the principle source of an array of evils so widespread that they can easily appear to be necessary features of the human condition: enslavement (or domination), conflict, vice, misery, and self-estrangement’ (pp. 2, 70–89). To his credit, Neuhouser does not assume such a narrow view. Instead, by taking up and refining arguments made by commentators such as Nicholas Dent, Joshua Cohen, and

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Andrew Chitty, namely, that ‘amour-propre’ is a “neutral” feature of human beings’ (p. 15), and one capable of great plasticity in its aims (pp. 39–42), Neuhouser offers a highly nuanced assessment of Rousseau’s conception of amour-propre, not only as a force of destruction and alienation within society, but also as a potential remedy for the very problems it tends to instigate. Such, Neuhouser argues, is the aim of Rousseau’s ‘theodicy’.

That Rousseau has a theodicy at all may come as a surprise to even his most attentive readers, given that Rousseau is not an explicit theologian (the closest approximation coming in the voice of the Savoyard Vicar in *Emile*). But where a theodicy implies the justification of divine goodness despite the persistence of this-worldly evil, Neuhouser—operating within a tradition of Rousseau scholarship that can be traced as far back as Immanuel Kant (pp. 2 n. 1, 4 n. 8)—finds in Rousseau a ‘secular theodicy’, that is, ‘a familiar theodicean strategy: seeking in evil itself a promise of redemption’ (p. 3). The aim of Rousseau’s theodicy, then, is to give an ‘essentially secular and naturalistic’ account of the human ‘fall from grace’ (p. 2), where, by finding in amour-propre the source of human strife, it becomes possible to realize ‘the possibility of a this-worldly remedy’ (p. 5). Accordingly, it is in amour-propre, understood fundamentally by Neuhouser as a drive for recognition, that Rousseau finds the cause of our human ills, as well as the secular source of our salvation.

Neuhouser’s central concern is to oppose the argument, such as the one ostensibly advanced by Allan Bloom, that Rousseau’s solution to the dangers posed by the inflammation of amour-propre requires its absolute eradication from the human constitution (pp. 155–61, esp. 156 n. 1). To the contrary, Neuhouser argues, ‘even if the extirpation of amour-propre were possible, it would be undesirable, since success in this undertaking would destroy the very condition of nearly everything that makes human existence valuable’ (p. 155). Crucial for Neuhouser’s interpretation, then, is how amour-propre gives meaning to human life despite its inflammatory tendencies. For it is precisely this emphasis on a certain salutary kind of meaning making—one rooted in the drive for recognition—that Neuhouser finds at the heart of Rousseau’s solution to amour-propre’s destructive inclinations.

Neuhouser divides Rousseau’s theodicy of amour-propre into three basic parts. The first argues that ‘amour-propre’ is directly the source of a number of human goods that are valuable in themselves’ (p. 187). Thus, Neuhouser notes, ‘[e]ven if stamping out amour-propre succeeded in eliminating human misery, conflict, and degradation, it would also abolish, along with them, the basis for countless irreplaceable goods such as love, friendship, and the affirmation of others’ (p. 188). From this, it follows that amour-propre must be ‘cultivated so as to motivate individuals to pursue their quest for recognition through socially constructive avenues’ (p. 188). The second component of Rousseau’s theodicy consequently ‘depends on finding instrumental value in the desire for the good opinion of others’ (p. 188). Texts such as *Emile* and the *Social Contract* are then, on Neuhouser’s reading, intended to demonstrate how education and social reform can direct the desire for recognition towards ‘collectively beneficial ends’ (p. 188). Finally, the third component of Rousseau’s theodicy concerns ‘how amour-propre makes it possible for humans to be motivated by the demands of duty and reason’ (p. 189). This latter point represents the key to amour-propre’s redemptive value, and its articulation takes up the better part of Neuhouser’s final two chapters.

By way of preface, I note that Neuhouser’s defense of amour-propre’s utility is founded on a careful analysis of the dangers and varieties of inflamed amour-propre in Chapters 2 and 3, including an especially helpful distinction between the two basic forms of recognition that amour-propre seeks, namely, respect and esteem. Neuhouser invokes this
distinction between respect and esteem, which does not appear explicitly in Rousseau’s texts, in order to (1) reconsider the prevailing view that ‘inegalitarian’ *amour-propre* is necessarily an expression of an inflamed or pernicious ‘desire to be recognized as superior to one’s fellow beings’, and (2) to challenge the otherwise common view that the solution to *amour-propre*’s destructive effects necessitates making it ‘egalitarian’ in order to render it harmless (p. 59). Important, here, is Neuhouser’s argument that ‘simply getting persons to think of themselves as equal to their fellow beings’ (p. 61), and to thus satisfy *amour-propre*’s demand for recognition by according each individual equal moral respect, is not sufficient to satisfy *amour-propre*’s desire for esteem, that is, ‘the desire to be worthy of praise, admiration, or emulation’ (p. 62). This argument becomes especially relevant within the context of Kantian moral philosophy (from which Neuhouser derives the distinction between respect and esteem, but with examples from Rousseau’s own texts: pp. 61–6), for it addresses a common criticism, namely, that mere recognition of the moral law is not sufficient to ensure obedience to it. What is required is a more general account of how individuals can be motivated by what Neuhouser identifies in Rousseau’s theory as the ‘standpoint of reason’ (pp. 187–217).

Neuhouser’s discussion of what Rousseau has to say about the standpoint of reason rests largely on his analysis of the general will as it appears in the *Social Contract*. This means, consequently, that the standpoint of reason indicates an essentially practical faculty, which Neuhouser describes as having three fundamental features: (1) a capacity ‘to step back from one’s own particular desires and interests and to take as authoritative an appropriately universal perspective (one that considers only the fundamental interests of each individual)’; (2) the capacity of ‘individuals to conceive of themselves as the moral equal of each of their associates’; and (3) the capacity of an individual to ‘relinquish his claim to have ultimate authority over his own will and locate that authority instead in the opinions of others (in the prevailing consensus of his community, subject to the appropriate constraints)’ (p. 218). Taken together, these three criteria explicate the legitimate authority of the general will, properly conceived as a form of ‘reciprocal recognition among subjects’ (p. 216).

What emerges from Neuhouser’s analysis (here reproduced in highly condensed form), is the insight that ‘rational authority, for Rousseau, is possible only intersubjectively’ (p. 216); and further, that the reciprocal form of recognition that gives reason its authority must have its source in *amour-propre*, which alone (provided the conditions for its optimal cultivation) has the capacity to motivate individuals to act from the standpoint of reason. To that end, Neuhouser identifies two primary sources of such motivation: (1) the kind of honor exemplified by Rousseau’s account of the Roman citizen who wins esteem (from both himself and his fellow citizens) by giving expression to a ‘practical identity’ as a sovereign member of the Roman republic, ‘where having such an identity implies a normative commitment, an allegiance to some standard of what is good, or worthy of honor’, generated specifically by what it means to be a citizen of ancient Rome (pp. 260–1, 236–9); and (2) the kind of self-approbation exemplified by Emile who, by ‘sublimating’ (in the Freudian sense) the demands of his *amour-propre*, internalizes the viewpoint of a loved external authority, thereby developing the prototypical conscience necessary to make him a self-sufficient, self-regulating moral agent who enjoys the esteem of his qualified semblables (pp. 229, 245–50). Neuhouser’s argument, here, is helpfully supplemented by comparisons between Rousseau’s position and those belonging to Aristotle, Smith, Kant, and Hegel—all of which will surely be of value to scholars interested in the thematic discussion of the role that a doctrine of recognition must play in a theory of moral sentiments and, likewise, a theory of rational agency. In the case of Rousseau, however,
Neuhouser finds a tension between the internal and external sources of rational motivation illustrated by Emile on the one hand and the Roman citizen on the other. This tension, in fact, reproduces Rousseau’s well-known statement in Book I of *Emile* that ‘one must choose between making a man or a citizen, for one cannot make both at the same time’ (1953–95: 4/248; emphasis added). Neuhouser, I think, is right to pay special attention to this crucial qualification, which has not been stressed enough in the existing literature. The point, here, is that one need not choose between making a man or a citizen, but rather that making a good citizen may presuppose making a good human being—that is, one who is ‘subjected to an educational regime that shields him for as long as possible from the dangers of *amour-propre* in order to instill in him the capacities for self-sufficiency he will eventually need if his later attachments to others are to be compatible with his freedom and integrity’ (p. 260).

Taking seriously the developmental perspective offered in *Emile*, however, does not allay what Neuhouser identifies as a ‘fundamental antinomy of rational agency’, which is exposed by a question ‘concerning where the ultimate source of rational authority is to be located: in the individual’s judgement, in which case self-sufficiency is essential to rational agency, or in the collective judgement of one’s community, in which case obeying reason involves recognizing the judgements of others as having authority over one’s own’ (p. 258). Neuhouser suggests that this antinomy ‘can be resolved only by abandoning the assumption that rational obligation must have a single, supreme source and by regarding it instead as flowing from two independent sources, neither of which can be granted a priori the authority to trump the other in cases of conflict’ (p. 258). In other words, resolving the antinomy means recognizing the fundamentally intersubjective character of the standpoint of reason. Rational authority is not produced either from within or from without, but by a kind of ‘dialectical’ mediation between the two (p. 257). Clearly, on the basis of Neuhouser’s reading, Rousseau appears to anticipate Hegel’s doctrine of recognition, as well as subsequent doctrines such as Gadamer’s ‘fusion of horizons’ and Habermas’s ‘ideal speech state’. Yet the account of rational motivation that Neuhouser finds in Rousseau’s thought may also serve as a critical supplement to these later theories.

In this regard, Neuhouser submits that, for Rousseau, ‘conflicts that emerge in the real world between the two sources of reason’s authority may be undecidable by reason alone’—that ‘philosophy provides no algorithm, nor any other sure procedure, for settling the kind of dispute over what reason requires’ (p. 258). Instead, Rousseau ends up ‘conceiving of rational agency as an ideal that is fully realized only when individual and community stand in a specific and delicate relation’—a relation of reciprocal recognition moderated by a well-adjusted *amour-propre* (p. 259). All considered, it seems the best philosophy can do against a disposition of ‘metaphysical pessimism or despair’ is to offer a doctrine of practical hope by showing that ‘human nature and the basic features of the world are compatible with’ the conditions required to fully realize the possibility of rational agency (pp. 259, 2). On the basis of Neuhouser’s study, therefore, it seems possible to argue that whereas for Hegel philosophy is the ‘true theodicy’ (1999, 2002: 20/455), for Rousseau the theodicy of *amour-propre* indicates a more modest, and perhaps a more realistic, response to the ‘crisis’ of modern reason—the argument originating in Rousseau’s first *Discourse* that advancements in the arts and sciences are incompatible with moral or political progress. This point, however, does not emerge explicitly from Neuhouser’s commentary.

In all, Neuhouser has written a uniquely comprehensive study of Rousseau’s concept of *amour-propre*. It is thoroughly engaged with the contemporary literature, and deserves to be included in the canon of recommended Rousseau scholarship. It will likewise be
relevant to scholars interested in Rousseau’s influence on Smith, Kant, Hegel, and the legacy of German Idealism extending through the Frankfurt School critical theorists. To this point, however, I have not said anything about Neuhouser’s interpretive strategy. I will therefore offer some remarks to that end, and then pose a few questions.

Neuhouser’s treatment of Rousseau focuses almost exclusively on the second Discourse, Emile, and the Social Contract. This in itself is not problematic. Rousseau himself said that all of his writings conform to the same principles (1953–95: 4/928), and Neuhouser appears to endorse the implications of this statement when he commits to ‘treat these texts as constituting a single, coherent system of thought’ (p. 18). Yet a few lines later Neuhouser also remarks that ‘Rousseau’s works are too rich, too diverse and, if all are taken together at once, too full of contradictions to be comprehended both in their full depth and as parts of a single body of thought’ (p. 19). I note that Neuhouser is forthright about the limits of his book, which ‘does not pretend to deliver the final word on Rousseau’s intellectual achievement as a whole’ (p. 19). Nevertheless, it is not entirely clear from the above statements whether he thinks it is possible to take Rousseau at his word about having a coherent system, whether he thinks that only the three primary texts on which his study concentrates can be treated coherently, or whether he thinks the task of trying to make sense of Rousseau’s work as a whole is simply too great for a single book. Neuhouser’s response to this question would clarify how, exactly, his account of Rousseau’s theodicy should be received. For example, if Neuhouser’s interpretation of Emile as the consummate ‘man-citizen’ is to be understood as the ideal end of Rousseau’s practical philosophy, how ought we then to understand the constitutional difference between Emile and his tutor Jean-Jacques?

And last, Neuhouser concludes his study by considering the ‘respects in which Rousseau’s theory does not fully succeed’ (p. 265). Central to Neuhouser’s concern is whether Rousseau has adequately defended the thesis that amour-propre is in fact the ‘single source’ of human evil (pp. 266–7), and he suggests that Rousseau’s account of the drive to dominate others directly contradicts the singularity thesis by appealing to what Rousseau identifies in Emile as the ‘active principle’ (1953–95: 4/289). First, in Neuhouser’s view ‘it is not plausible that domination is attractive to humans only because it is a particularly dramatic way of winning recognition’ (p. 268). But more importantly, he argues: ‘That Rousseau does not fully succeed in explaining the drive to dominate as a perverted form of the drive for recognition can be seen in his account in Emile of the infant’s “spirit of domination” or “desire to command”’ (p. 269; Rousseau 1953–95: 4/289–90). The problem, for Neuhouser, is that he sees Rousseau as introducing a third principle—namely, the ‘active principle’, which is distinct from amour de soi’s merely self-preservation aim—in order to explain the infantile ‘spirit of domination’ as something independent of, rather than born with, the pernicious effects of amour-propre. The ‘active principle’, according to Neuhouser, expresses a ‘fundamental longing to “animate” the surrounding world, by causing it to bear the imprint of, and so to reflect, one’s own subjectivity’ (p. 269); and it is this ‘desire to command’ which, on Neuhouser’s reading, seems to readily express itself as a source of human evil that is more primitive than amour-propre.

While it is true that Rousseau attributes to the active principle a certain desire to see one’s subjectivity (or at least the effects of one’s will) expressed in the external world, it is not clear that Rousseau means anything different by the active principle than what is implied by Aristotle’s notion of energeia, understood as the specific form of being-at-work that makes something what it is. Thus, in the relevant passages from Emile, the active principle of a child is distinguished from that of an old man: ‘The active principle common to both is developing in the one and being extinguished in the other . . . the one is tending
towards life and the other towards death’ (1953–95: 4/289). When Rousseau says that a ‘child wants to upset everything he sees; he breaks, he breaks everything he can reach; he grabs a bird as he would grab a stone, and he strangles it without knowing what he does’ (1953–95: 4/288), this show of power belongs in principle to the purely physical domain of nature (evinced by the lack of distinction between bird and stone); and it is only with the genesis of amour-propre that this ‘desire for domination’ could take on a moral or political end. It is worth asking, therefore, whether closer attention to the role amour-propre plays in the genesis of moral or political life (out of the purely physical domain of nature) might instead bolster the singularity thesis animating Rousseau’s theodicy.

Lucas Fain
Committee on Degrees in Social Studies
Harvard University
USA
fain@fas.harvard.edu

NOTES

1 Contributions by Dieter Henrich are many. Henrich 1992 represents a summary of his research in English. Neuhouser 2000 was originally published in 1993.

2 In fairness to Bloom, I note that his critics often ignore a relevant passage (from his Introduction to Emile): ‘Sexual desire, mixed with imagination and amour-propre, if it remains unsatisfied produces a tremendous psychic energy that can be used for the greatest deeds and thoughts. Imaginary objects can set new goals, and the desire to be well thought of can turn into a love of virtue’ (Rousseau 1979: 16).

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