



Men and Citizens: A Study of Rousseau's Social Theory (Cambridge Studies in the History and Theory of Politics)

By Judith N. Shklar

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This book, first published in 1969, is widely regarded as one of the best studies of Rousseau's thought in any language. In it, Professor Shklar examines Rousseau's central concern: given that modern civilisation is intolerable and a return to the state of nature impossible, how is man to arrange his existence in society? Shklar organises the study around Rousseau's two conceptions of Utopia: the Spartan city and the autonomous family group. She emphasises the importance for Rousseau of psychological factors and shows how, when mediated through his images of authority and use of metaphor, they bring him to his notorious view that man is 'everywhere in chains'. In Shklar's view, Rousseau's conclusion is almost equally pessimistic: the chances are very remote that we can overcome the psychological obstacles to become both men and citizens.

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