

Abstract

This paper is focused on the problem of evil in the thought of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau deviates from traditional approach to evil by an assumption that human nature is good. In his conception, moral evil is neither the consequence of turning away from God, nor a deliberate action of a man. As Rousseau belongs to the authors who assume that understanding of evil enables us to overcome it, in my paper I inquire into two aspects of the problem – the origin of evil and its remedy. Firstly, the origin of evil is examined by Rousseau's investigation into alienated human nature in the society as the result of historical process. In this process a significant role is played by new passion born in society, self-love. Secondly, my goal is to explain his solution to the problem of evil as we can find it in his political and educational works. Rousseau neither condemn humanity, nor he seeks the redemption in grace. He allocates responsibility for evil's remedy to humans. I am therefore interested in the conditions which can facilitate this remedy. The development of Rousseau's responses to the problem of evil finally serves to show his solution to the problem of theodicy.

Keywords

Jean-Jacques Rousseau Evil Self-love General Will Theodicy