

**Rousseau's "Very-Monarchic" Republic: Sovereignty and Representation in
the *Considerations on the Government of Poland***

Graham Clure

The Author:

Graham Clure is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Government at Harvard University, where he is completing a dissertation titled "European Illusions: Political Economy and War from Rousseau to the French Revolution." The dissertation is about the impact on Enlightenment political thought of the elimination of Poland from the map of Europe. An article drawn from this project will appear shortly in the *History of European Ideas* under the title "Rousseau, Diderot and the Spirit of Catherine the Great's Reforms" and a second paper will be part of the forthcoming collection, *The Economic Turn: Recasting Political Economy in Enlightenment Europe*, edited by Steven Kaplan and Sophus Reinert.

The Paper:

Rousseau's *Considerations on the Government of Poland* is usually regarded today as a local application of the *Social Contract*. Moreover, it is assumed, in order to devise constitutional reforms for a large monarchic republic like Poland, Rousseau was forced to retreat from the *Social Contract's* theory of the ideal republican state. The present paper offers a different reading, which takes as its starting point the fact that the *Social Contract* was itself a fragment drawn from a larger, unfinished project, the *Political Institutions*. Instead of looking for confirmation of existing interpretations of Rousseau's thought - that he was a theorist of "ancient" liberty, an enemy of commerce, or a nationalist - this paper places the *Considerations on Poland* in its historical context, which suggests that book was concerned with the kind of scaling-up of the *Social Contract* that might have formed a central component of the *Political Institutions*.