Erasmus Journal for Philosophy and Economics,
Volume 19, Issue 1,
Summer 2026, pp. aa–aa.
https://doi.org/10.23941/ejpe.v19i1.936

From the 'Sense of Justice' to 'Public Reason': A reading of Rawls through Smith, Rousseau, and Kant

RAGIP EGE
University of Strasbourg, CNRS, University of Lorraine

HERRADE IGERSHEIM
University of Strasbourg, CNRS, University of Lorraine

BENOÎT WALRAEVENS
Paris 8 University, LED

Abstract: This paper investigates two closely connected Rawlsian concepts: 'the sense of justice' and 'public reason'. Rawls assumes that all members of a society are endowed with a sense of justice, which allows, but does not guarantee, the emergence of public reason in a well-ordered democratic society. But he does not really specify how the passage from a sense of justice at the individual level to public reason at the collective level becomes real and effective. To clarify this issue, we use a particular research method specific to the analytical history of economic thought: text analysis. Via this method, we make an instrumental use of some of the main concepts of three great figures of the Enlightenment, Smith, Rousseau, and Kant, in order to shed light on the possible steps from the sense of justice to public reason, and on the three ways by which public reason is *public* for Rawls: as the reason of the citizens; by having the public good and matters of fundamental justice as its subjects; and because its nature and content is public.

Keywords: Public reason, Social Justice, Rawls, Rousseau, Smith, Kant

JEL Codes: B10, B12, B4

I. INTRODUCTION: RAWLS FROM *A THEORY OF JUSTICE* TO *POLITICAL LIBERALISM*

In this paper we attempt to trace the origin and emergence of the concept of public reason as he developed it throughout his career, from *A Theory*

AUTHOR'S NOTE: We would like to thank the two referees of this journal for their comments and suggestions which helped to significantly improve our paper.

of Justice to *Political Liberalism* and beyond. The concept of public reason—its nature, scope, constituency, structure and so on—has been and still is the subject of debate and even controversy among moral and political philosophers (see among others Gauss 2011; Vallier 2011; Enoch 2013, 2015; Kogelman and Stich 2016; Quong 2022; Hédoin 2023, 2024). Rawls, for his part, relies on a specific conception according to which:

> public reason is characteristic of a democratic people: it is the reason of its citizens, of those sharing the status of equal citizenship. The subject of their reason is the good of the public: what the political conception of justice requires of society's basic structure of institutions, and of the purposes and ends they are to serve. Public reason, then, is public in three ways: as the reason of citizens as such, it is the reason of the public; its subject is the good of the public and matters of fundamental justice; and its nature and content is public. (Rawls 1993, 213)

This definition of public reason, developed in his later years, was absent from his early work. Indeed, a study of Rawls's intellectual journey reveals a shift in focus. Initially, in *A Theory of Justice*, he embarked on an ambitious endeavor to construct a comprehensive and general theory of justice. However, his later writings, notably *Political Liberalism*, reflect a more restrained approach—a precise and concrete exploration of the fundamental political structure necessary for the peaceful coexistence of diverse yet reasonable worldviews in well-ordered democratic societies.[1]

In *A Theory of Justice*, the guiding principle for deliberations among free and equal individuals in the original position is rooted in the priority of the right over the good. This means that a reasonable person is someone who prioritizes the rights of others above any other value. This concept aligns closely with Kantian ethical theory, where a moral subject recognizes the primacy of others' rights. Human beings' desire for community and cooperation stems from their inherent sense of justice, defined in *A Theory of Justice* as "an effective desire to apply and to act from the principles of justice and so from the point of view of justice" (Rawls [1971] 1999, 497). Rawls argues that the conceptual framework employed in the idea of the original position and the veil of ignorance in

[1] This transformation in Rawls's perspective has been analyzed by a number of scholars (Ladrière and Van Parijs 1984; Audard 1988, 1993; Höffe 1988; Guillarme 1999; Freeman 2002, 2007; Munoz-Dardé 2003; Ege and Igersheim 2008, 2010, and many others).

A Theory of Justice possesses a 'metaphysical' nature; but he later distances himself from the abstract and metaphysical aspects of his work and aims for a more realistic approach.

Rawls changes his view due to a combination of internal theoretical tensions, external criticisms—especially from economists and philosophers—and a growing awareness of pluralism in modern societies. Indeed, *A Theory of Justice* faces a conceptual difficulty: Rawls attempts to ground the principles of justice both in rational choice theory and in a Kantian conception of autonomy. However, this dual ambition proves unstable. If the principles of justice are derived from rational decision-making under uncertainty, they risk being interpreted as prudential (and thus hypothetical) rather than genuinely moral or categorical imperatives. This tension is also reinforced by criticisms from economists such as Kenneth Arrow (1973) or John Harsanyi (1975),[2] who interpret Rawls's difference principle through the lens of decision theory—especially by comparing it to the maximin rule. These critiques challenge the normative status of Rawls's theory, suggesting that it reduces to a particular decision criterion under uncertainty rather than a moral principle. Such readings contribute to the ambiguity Rawls himself later acknowledges regarding the role of rational choice in his framework (Rawls [1985] 1999, n20).

Moreover, Rawls increasingly recognizes the fact of reasonable pluralism: in a democratic society, individuals inevitably hold diverse and incompatible comprehensive doctrines. This diversity is not accidental but the normal result of the free exercise of reason under conditions of liberty. As a consequence, grounding justice in any single comprehensive moral doctrine—such as a Kantian one—would be both unrealistic and potentially coercive.

In response, Rawls redefines the scope and ambition of his theory. He abandons the project of a comprehensive moral doctrine of justice and develops instead a strictly political conception of justice. This shift also allows Rawls to clarify the distinction between the reasonable and the rational, and to subordinate the latter to the former within a political framework. In *Political Liberalism*, Rawls focuses on constructing a political theory, specifically exploring the conditions that would allow a political society to accommodate individuals' reasonable yet incompatible conceptions of the good: principles of justice are now justified by their capacity to be accepted by citizens holding different reasonable

[2] On this issue, see especially Igersheim (2022).

doctrines. In order to better understand this subtle issue, one needs to focus on the difference between reasonable and unreasonable (or irrational) comprehensive doctrines: an irrational comprehensive doctrine is not simply a doctrine one disagrees with, but one that falls outside the bounds of what Rawls calls reasonable. It fails to meet the minimal conditions required for fair social cooperation in a democratic society. In particular, such a doctrine refuses the principle of reciprocity, that is, it does not accept that social and political rules should be justifiable to others as free and equal citizens.

By contrast, reasonable doctrines accept that, even though they are incompatible, others may also hold justified views. The diversity of such reasonable doctrines is a normal outcome of free institutions, whereas irrational doctrines are those that cannot be integrated into this framework of mutual recognition and toleration. This distinction is crucial for Rawls: political liberalism is designed to accommodate reasonable pluralism, not all possible views. Irrational doctrines are not excluded because they are false, but because they are incompatible with the very conditions of a fair and stable democratic order.

The central concern in *Political Liberalism* thus becomes the possibility of ethical pluralism in society. This shift in focus affects the theory's universality. Rawls's *Political Liberalism* cannot claim universality; instead, its applicability is expressly limited to modern Western societies. The theory presupposes a cultural democratic accumulation, where individuals, over generations, integrate an ethics of deliberation. Historical events, such as the Reformation in Europe, played a significant role in shaping the problem of how to ensure toleration and fair cooperation between citizens. Through these experiences, individuals learn to become citizens of a well-ordered democratic society defined as follows: (a) everyone accepts, and knows that others accept, the same conception of justice (or at least everyone accepts some member from the family of liberal conceptions); (b) the basic structure of society is publicly known to satisfy this conception, and; (c) citizens have a normally effective sense of justice (Rawls 1993, 35).

In *Political Liberalism*, the sense of justice retains the same definition as in *A Theory of Justice*—"an effective desire to apply and to act from the principles of justice, and thus from the point of view of justice"—but its actual emergence and development among members of society are described in more concrete terms, whereas previously they remained at a more abstract level (Rawls 1963; [1971] 1999, §70–72; Walraevens 2023):

the sense of justice is not an item of external knowledge but a virtual faculty or 'capacity' of the moral subject, gradually revealed and reinforced through historical processes. As individuals assimilate how to become members of a well-ordered society, their sense of justice becomes actualized and progressively manifests in their identity as citizens, representing the moral reality underpinning public reason.[3] But while Rawls tries to define the nature, content, scope and values of public reason (Rawls 1993, 1997), he does not specify the conditions of emergence of public reason from the sense of justice. Nor is there, to our knowledge, any attempt at doing so in Rawls scholarship. Thus, in Rawlsian thought it still remains unclear (1) how and why the sense of justice can be concretely activated at the individual level, (2) how it can then be shared more or less equally among all members of society, and (3) how finally it can bring about public reason at the collective level. The individual sense of justice is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the emergence of public reason, which still needs to be explained.

In this paper we try to provide a more precise explanation of these three steps, which allow the progressive and concrete passage from the individual 'sense of justice' to the collective 'public reason' in order to enrich and display the coherence of Rawls's later theory of justice. To this end we will consider the works of three main Enlightenment philosophers: Smith, Rousseau, and Kant, with whose works Rawls was familiar. All three must be combined to get a full grasp of this question of transition. Importantly, these three steps of our investigation, each of them associated with a main concept developed by these eminent philosophers, exactly follow the Rawlsian definition of public reason, recalled in our introduction: "Public reason, then, is public in three ways: as the reason of citizens as such, it is the reason of the public; its subject is the good of the public and matters of fundamental justice; and its nature and content is public" (Rawls 1993, 213). The first step corresponds to the awakening of a sense of justice—understood as the exercise of reason—at the individual level; it closely parallels the emergence of the impartial spectator in Smithian thought. The second

[3] It is important to underline that Rawls does not claim that all people will always have a fully developed and effective sense of justice: he argues that in a well-ordered society, citizens generally develop and act from a sense of justice, but this is conditional on the society's institutions fostering such moral development. He further acknowledges that some people may not have it or may act against it, which is why institutions must help sustain a just order. We are grateful to an anonymous referee for having pointed this out.

step concerns the extension and sharing of individual reason among members of society. This process can be interpreted, in the vein of Rousseau, as the extension of the self into the general will, thereby orienting individual judgments toward the common good. Finally, the third step marks the diffusion of reason at the collective level and the emergence of public reason, in line with the Kantian conception of the public use of reason.[4]

Before going any further, it is important to specify the particular methodology that we will use in this paper. What we are mainly interested in here are conceptual proximities and complementarities between different texts of these three authors, and how these can inform and strengthen Rawls's conception of public reason. We will not discuss the tensions or contradictions between specific parts of the works of these philosophers, or within their own works, nor will we try to assess any mutual influences between these philosophers. Our approach sees the texts as pools of concepts and ideas which can help us to pursue and deepen our research question and to build an original answer to it. We might describe this approach as an 'instrumental use of the concepts'. Our priority is not to reveal what reading Rawls made of Smith, Kant, and Rousseau,[5] but rather what reading he could have made of them in order to support and enrich his analysis of the conditions of the effective advent and concrete development of public reason in a democratic society, and of the three aspects of public reason as the reason of the public, aimed at the public good, and whose nature and content is public. Moreover, it should also be noted that we are not concerned here with the empirical question of how people actually experience the sense of justice and how they are moved to reason publicly, a question which would deserve separate treatment. Our interest in and perspective on the

[4] It should be noted that Kant's public reason is much broader in scope and different in its content compared to Rawls's. As we will show in Section 4, it is addressed to the entire reading world and is opposed to 'private' reason. It refers to individuals freely using their reason to question authority and contribute to enlightenment. By contrast, Rawls's public reason is a more constrained form of political reasoning in which citizens justify political principles to each other by using a shared framework that is acceptable within a liberal democratic society, and it is opposed to "non-public" or "social reasons" (Rawls 1993, 1997). But both philosophers rely on the idea that public reason must be public in its nature and content: for both, public reason is based on the public sharing of reason. We thank an anonymous referee for suggesting that we clarify that point. For more details on the differences between Kant's and Rawls's conceptions of public reason, see Koukouzelis (2009).

[5] This point will be developed in the conclusion of our paper.

connection between the sense of justice and public reason is meant to be philosophical.

The paper is built as follows. In the second section, we refer to the twofold aspect of the Smithian impartial spectator and show that the interactions put forth by Smith between the 'man within the breast' and the 'real spectator' are indeed able to explain how and why the sense of justice can be effective at the individual level. In the third and fourth sections, we focus on the collective aspect of public reason. To do so, first in section 3 we analyze the concept of the general will developed by Rousseau and his specific notion of the 'extension of the self'. Then in the fourth section we describe how reason becomes public following Kant. A fifth section briefly concludes.

II. SMITH, THE SENSE OF JUSTICE, AND THE IMPARTIAL SPECTATOR

Smith's thought is clearly not fundamental for Rawls. Indeed, not only does Rawls in no way claim to be a follower of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, but, worse still, he simply labels Smith a utilitarian author, reading the figure of the impartial spectator from this perspective (Rawls [1971] 1999, §30). A number of authors have rightly criticized Rawls for counting Smith among the representatives of the utilitarian tradition (Hurtado 2006; Sen 2009; Raphael 2009; Ege et al. 2013; Ege and Igersheim 2023; Walraevens 2023). That said, we claim that the idea of the sense of justice—which corresponds to the interior and individual aspect of public reason as the reason of citizens—finds its origin in the seminal work of Adam Smith, especially in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Here Smith writes:

> The man within the breast, the abstract and ideal spectator of our sentiments and conduct, requires often to be awakened and put in mind of his duty, by the presence of the real spectator: and it is always that spectator, from whom we can expect the least sympathy and indulgence, that we are likely to learn the most complete lesson of self-command. (TMS, III.3.38, 153–54)[6]

[6] This and all subsequent references to *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, abbreviated as 'TMS', will be to the Oxford edition (Smith [1759] 1976). References include, in this order, part, section (if applicable, in lower case roman numerals), chapter, and paragraph (both in Arabic numerals).

This passage expresses the two aspects of Smith's concept of the "impartial spectator". First, there is "the inhabitant of the breast, the man within, the great judge and arbiter of our conduct" (TMS, III.3.4, 137). With respect to our investigation, this "man within the breast" or the "man within", characterized by Smith as "reason, principle, conscience", corresponds to the capacity for reason that any moral subject possesses:

> The wise and virtuous man directs his principal attention to the first standard; the idea of exact propriety and perfection. There exists in the mind of every man, an idea of this kind, gradually formed from his observations upon the character and conduct both of himself and of other people. It is the slow, gradual, and progressive work of the great demigod within the breast, the great judge and arbiter of conduct. (TMS, VI.iii.25, 247)

But Smith also shows how and why the sense of justice can be concretely activated. For this capacity needs to be "awakened" and stimulated by a "real spectator", who is also supposed to be impartial in so far as he stands at a "great distance" from us. Consequently, he is not involved in our current desires or interests, nor concerned by the specific comprehensive doctrines which we may have adopted. As a consequence, the real spectator will lead us to examine our parochial habits and choices, that is, our "natural station", in the light of the rest of the world: "we can never survey our own sentiments and motives, we can never form any judgment concerning them, unless we remove ourselves, as it were, from our natural station, and endeavor to view them at a certain distance from us" *(*TMS, III.1.2, 110). It is worth recalling here that the Smithian notion of 'distance' is neither spatial nor geographical. The real but impartial spectator denotes any citizen who has different points of view, different desires, etc., as compared to the ones of the subject. One can only remove oneself from one's 'natural station' by taking into account other points of view, which are distant from one's specific and local comprehension of the good.

In order to better understand the interaction between these three Smithian notions (impartial spectator, real spectator, and natural station), a detour through Sen's *Idea of Justice* (2009) is instructive. As he evokes in the introduction, in this book Sen describes two mutually exclusive traditions in the theory of social justice, traditions he refers to as "transcendental institutionalism" and "realization-focused comparison",

notably in order to distinguish his own philosophical stance from Rawls's. The former tradition seeks to define an ideal of justice and the nature of just institutions, following the approaches of thinkers like Hobbes, Kant, Rousseau, and Rawls. In contrast, the latter tradition aims to provide practical tools to evaluate specific situations, focusing on the results of real social institutions without defining what a just institution should be. This latter approach includes figures such as Smith, Condorcet, Bentham, and Sen himself. Sen argues that having an overarching concept of justice is neither necessary nor sufficient for making comparative judgments about social justice. Therefore, Sen favors the comparative tradition, which has significant implications for social scientists, particularly economists and philosophers who seek to address issues of social justice. Accordingly, Sen relies heavily on the Smithian concepts to build his 'idea' of justice. Indeed, there is a close similarity between the concept of the 'real spectator' and Sen's comparative approach. The mere fact that the existence of a condition renders something possible does not mean that the condition is thereby effective in itself; and in the present context we note that subjects will tend to run away from the impartial spectator's stance and take refuge in the security and moral comfort of their 'natural station'. In other words, the 'impartial spectator' remains so to speak asleep inside the individual. This is why a 'real spectator' must irrupt in our world in order to stimulate, awaken, and reactivate our 'reason within'. Sen's comparative approach focuses precisely on how Smith's real spectator intervenes in the world of moral subjects and reveals certain unknown human realities to them. Sen says:

> Smith invoked the reflective device of the impartial spectator to go beyond reasoning that may—perhaps imperceptibly—be constrained by local conventions of thought, and to examine deliberately, as a procedure, what the accepted conventions would look like from the perspective of a 'spectator' at a distance. (Sen 2009, 125)

According to Sen, the interventions of the Smithian real spectator allow individuals to make progress in the comparison of social states when questions of social justice are at stake.

On the other hand, we believe that Sen is not sufficiently attentive to the transcendental dimension of the Smithian approach. This leads him to neglect the Kantian moral dimension of the Smithian approach and to reduce the problem of impartiality to a question of experience or

knowledge (Ege et al. 2013; Bréban and Gilardone 2020).[7] Indeed, this "reason, principle, conscience, the inhabitant of the breast, the man within, the great judge and arbiter of our conduct" (TMS, III.3.4, 137) is not a faculty the moral subject acquires from outside, through comparison, imitation, or various experimentations. Rather, it is immediately present, in the heart of each moral subject:

> it is he who, whenever we are about to act so as to affect the happiness of others, calls to us, with a voice capable of astonishing the most presumptuous of our passions, that we are but one of the multitude, in no respect better than any other in it […] It is from him only that we learn the real littleness of ourselves, and of whatever relates to ourselves, and the natural misrepresentations of self-love can be corrected only by the eye of this impartial spectator. (TMS, III.3.4, 137)

But the moral subject generally is not aware of this presence. More specifically, in his 'natural station', that is, when he is pleased with himself, the moral subject feels no need to make use of his internal spectator. The intervention of an external element, a real spectator, an interaction with other moral subjects, or more precisely an interaction with 'otherness' as such, is necessary to make him aware of this dimension, which he contains in the depths of his self. One must pay great attention to this phenomenon, which at least at first sight appears paradoxical. We should not understand it as a simple acquisition of external knowledge or experience, as a simple fact of mimetism, or as an adoption of a behavioral model observed in another moral subject. We are not dealing here with a pedagogical or didactic process. We should represent it as a phenomenon of the awakening of a potential spiritual power that is currently in a state of sleep. What is awakened is not a source of knowledge, nor an innate wisdom liable to show us the right path towards truth or justice. Rather, what is awakened is the ability or the propensity to *criticize*, and especially the propensity for *self-scrutiny* and *self-criticism* thanks to our capacity to put ourselves in the other person's place.

In his comment on Smith's remark on 'the man within the breast', Sen writes: "Even though Smith often refers to the impartial spectator as 'the

[7] Note that, contrary to Ege et al. (2013), Bréban and Gilardone (2020), while acknowledging that Sen does not take into account the 'man within' part of Smith's impartial spectator, do not assimilate it to a transcendental aspect.

man within the breast,' one of the main motivations of Smith's intellectual strategy was to broaden our understanding and to widen the reach of our ethical inquiry" (Sen 2009, 125). It is difficult to understand the signification of this reservation expressed by the adverbs "even though" and "often". What authorizes Sen to thus play down the fundamental ontological status of the impartial spectator as 'the man within the breast', and to emphasize the role of the real spectator? Smith is perfectly clear on the fact that the impartial spectator is man's 'conscience'. And in the passage we are dealing with, Smith mentions the word 'duty'. Moreover, the title of the part dedicated to the question of the impartial spectator includes the term "sense of duty" (TMS, III, 109). Significantly, Sen also neglects the concept of 'duty' in his comment on Smith (as in the one on 'conscience'). Man as a moral subject is called to appear before the impartial spectator's 'tribunal'. This appearing does not stem from a subjective choice, the adoption of which would depend on the arbitrary good will of the individual; it is rather a *duty* he has to assume. The individual has to submit himself to the judgment of the impartial spectator. And it is precisely this motive of 'duty'that brings the Smithian figure of the impartial spectator closer to the Kantian conception of the 'categorical imperative'. This duty, as a 'categorical imperative', is not the result of an experience, and is not acquired through experimentation.

We can illustrate our argument through Sen's comment on Smith's reflections about the attitude of the Greek philosophers of antiquity, such as Plato or Aristotle, towards the practice of infanticide. Smith regrets that these philosophers did not condemn this appalling custom. He says that such a monstrous practice is "more pardonable" in the "rudest and lowest state of society": "The extreme indigence of a savage is often such that he himself is frequently exposed to the greatest extremity of hunger; he often dies of pure want; and it is frequently impossible for him to support both himself and his child" (TMS, V.2.15, 210). Smith is deeply shocked that a society which did not face such poverty or harsh conditions of life should abide by such a ruthless and appalling custom, and considers it to be morally wrong that such great thinkers as the Greek philosophers did not condemn such infamy. But Sen claims that their sticking by such a custom may be explained by the fact that these thinkers were "unfamiliar […] with societies that functioned well without that alleged necessity" (Sen 2009, 130); and such ignorance could be explained by the fact that they neglected the "voices from elsewhere". In other words, in Sen's eyes, this issue of moral nature may be reduced to

knowledge, experience, worldly awareness, knowledge of other cultures, etc. According to Smith, however, if these great thinkers failed to condemn such barbarity, the reason resides not in their ignorance of the functioning of other societies but in the fact that they were infringing a moral principle, which should have imposed itself on them as would any 'categorical imperative'; in other words, they failed to observe their own moral duty. What these philosophers were lacking in was morality, not any given item of factual knowledge. In other words, conformism, opportunism, cowardice are the causes of their failure to apply the basic principles of justice and morality, which are called to govern any society. A practice such as infanticide is necessarily an infamy with regard to this internal tribunal, to this moral conscience incarnated by the impartial spectator. The condemnation of infanticide is a requirement of the impartial spectator rather than the result of an external obligation or experience. By objecting that Sen reduces an issue which is fundamentally concerned with our moral nature to a question of knowledge or experience, our criticism is clearly addressed at the theoretical position which refuses the logical necessity of a transcendental dimension in any theory of justice. Indeed, we believe that if in the following quotation we replace the phrase "pure sincerity in friendship" with the phrase "condemning infanticide", and the phrase "sincere friend" by the term "infanticide", this famous observation of Kant would have expressed exactly Smith's idea concerning the question of infanticide:

> Pure sincerity in friendship can be no less required of everyone even if up to now there may never have been a sincere friend, because this duty—as duty in general—(*Pflicht als Pflicht überhaupt*) lies, prior to all experience, in the idea of reason (*Vernunft*) determining the will by means of *a priori* grounds (*Gründe*). (Kant 1785, 20)

We thus believe that the sense of justice harbors a transcendental feature; this is what Kant—most likely after reading Smith's work—calls the "impartial reasonable spectator" (*vernünftiger unparteiischer Zuschauer*) (Kant 1785, 7). One can characterize this as the condition which enables the moral subject to become open to the rest of the world and thus to the points of view of other moral subjects. All the theories that in Sen's eyes belong to the transcendental tradition are based on the hypothesis of such a 'sense of justice', from which 'public reason' can emerge. This, for instance, lies at the heart of the well-known hypothetical

scenario introduced by Rousseau. Indeed, for Rousseau, individuals are able to work in favor of the general interest or the 'general will' since they are all themselves the seats of the 'sense of justice': this is precisely what allows the sense of justice to be generalized to all members of society. To sum up, in order to fill the gap in Rawls's explanation of the transition from the sense of justice to public reason, Smith's concept of the impartial spectator is helpful for understanding the individual aspect of public reason as the reason of its citizens, of the public, and how and why the sense of justice can be concretely activated at the individual level. But Smith does not really explain how this individual moral guide could translate into public reasoning. In Smith, the impartial spectator is first and foremost a capacity for self-scrutiny rather than a capacity for identifying the public good. We have to turn to Rousseau to conceptualize this second aspect of public reason and to understand how it is related to the individual, inner sense of justice.

III. ROUSSEAU, THE EXTENSION OF THE SELF, AND GENERAL WILL

To accomplish this task, we must draw on two of Rousseau's concepts. The first one is developed in his political writings: it is his famous and controversial concept of 'general will', by which society should be governed.[8] The general will aims at the *common* good and tends to equality by identifying our *common* interests (Rousseau 1762a, 2.1, 57). As Rawls nicely sums it up:

> Accepted facts, or reasonable beliefs, about what best advances the common good provide the basis for the reasons that properly have weight in our deliberations from the point of view of the general will. The general will results from our capacity to take up this appropriate point of view. It calls upon our shared capacity for deliberative reason in the case of political society. (Rawls 2008, 234)

Rousseau explicitly presents the general will as a sense of a collective or "common self" (Rousseau 1755b, 6; 1762a, 1.6, 50). For him, each of us has both a private or *particular* will, and a *general* will, as Rawls also noted:

[8] On recent analysis of the different interpretations of Rousseau's general will, see Bertram (2012), Canon (2022).

> It is individual citizens who have a general will: that is, each has a capacity for deliberative reason which, on appropriate occasions, leads them to decide what to do—how to vote, say—on the basis of what they each think will best advance their common interest in what is necessary for their common preservation and general welfare, i.e. the common good [Rousseau 1762a, I.vii, 52]. In other words, the general will is a form of deliberative reason that each citizen shares with all other citizens in virtue of their sharing a conception of their common good. (Rawls 2008, 224)

Of course, for Rousseau the particular will and the general will do not always coincide: "His [the citizen's] particular interest may speak to him quite differently from the common interest" (Rousseau 1762a, 1.7, 52; see also Tarrant and Perraton 2019). To illustrate his point, Rousseau then underlines the temptation that citizens in big states may have to engage in injustice or free-riding, as Rawls later would also do:[9] "His absolute and naturally independent existence may lead him to look upon what he owes to the common cause as a gratuitous contribution, the loss of which will harm others less than its payment burdens him" (Rousseau 1762a, 1.7, 52).

But the particular interest and the common interest are not necessarily at odds with one another either; and this is due to the fact that for Rousseau we are all endowed, deep inside ourselves, "deep into our heart", with "an innate principle of justice and virtue", that is, with a principle of "conscience", which is a sense of justice (Rousseau 1755a, 29; 1762b, IV, 267). The parallel here with Smith is noteworthy, since the latter presents the impartial spectator as 'conscience' and as the 'man within the breast'.

Rousseau's general will is not the 'will of all' or the mere aggregation of private wills. Neither is it the negation of the private will or self-interest, nor a move towards disinterestedness or true beneficence. It is an overcoming or transcendence of our private will, and the identification of *what we have in common* with the other members of our political community, our common interests, a reconciliation of the particular and the universal. Rousseau's general will is one and the same for all, it is unique, as is Rawls's public reason (Rawls 1993, 220). The public good it seeks is good for each and for all. For Rousseau, when our particular and

[9] See notably Rawls ([1971] 1999, §42 and §76).

general wills coincide, we can be said to be virtuous citizens, obeying "the voice of duty" (Rousseau 1755b, 13, 54).

But this process of identification of our particular will with the general will is far from certain or natural for most citizens. Though we all have in us a "voice of duty", an "inner sentiment of justice", "deep in our souls" (Rousseau 1762a, 1.8, 53; see also Rousseau 1762b, book IV), this can soon be turned off (Rousseau 1755b, 14) and long remain "mute", remaining only a latent potentiality which needs to be reawakened or cultivated (Rousseau 1762a, 4.1, 122). Remember that Rousseau, in his *Dedication* to the *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men* to the Republic of Geneva, exhorted its citizens to "go deep into [their] hearts and to consult the secret voice of conscience" (Rousseau 1755a, 29).

Consequently, Rousseau takes great pains to discuss what he sees as the moral and political conditions of the convergence of the particular will towards the general will, and their reconciliation; which entails, in concrete terms, defining the education of a man and of a citizen. We will not here go into the details of his specific political propositions in this regard concerning the constitution, civil religion, or the promotion of civic virtue. Generally speaking, however, in a famous passage of *Emile* Rousseau defends the idea that

> Good social institutions are those that know best how to denature man [*dénaturer l'homme*], to take his absolute existence from him in order to give him a relative one, and to transport the *self* into the common unity, with the result that each individual believes himself no longer one but a part of the unity and no longer feels except within the whole. (Rousseau 1762b, I.7, Rousseau's italics, translation slightly modified)

For Rousseau, in order to identify our particular will with the general will, we need to "transport ourselves", to go out of ourselves, "*nous tirer hors de nous-mêmes*" by using our capacity for "identification" (Rousseau 1762b, book IV, 223). In other words, we need to engage in a process by which we "extend our self" towards the "common self" of the body politic (Rousseau 1762b, book IV, 219–220). To do so, we need to go beyond our

own partial and limited view of the world, to transcend our *amour-propre*.[10]

Rousseau's second concept related to public reason, the 'extension of the self', is thus taken from his moral writings on education. It is a condition of possibility of the emergence of the general will and of its coincidence with the particular will:

> Let us extend *amour-propre* to other beings. We shall transform it into a virtue, and there is no man's heart in which this virtue does not have its root. The less the object of our care is immediately involved with us, the less the illusion of particular interest is to be feared. The more one generalizes this interest, the more it becomes equitable, and the love of mankind is nothing other than the love of justice […] To prevent pity from degenerating into weakness, it must, therefore, be generalized and extended to the whole of mankind. Then one yields to it only insofar as it accords with justice, because of all the virtues, justice is the one that contributes most to the common good of men. (Rousseau 1762b, book IV, 252–253)

By going first deep *inside* ourselves (*rentrer en soi*) to listen to our inner sense of justice, by consulting the 'voice' of conscience and (then) through an *outward* process of extension of our self, we can identify our particular will with the general will and our private interest with the common good, transforming our love of ourselves (*amour-propre*) into the (virtuous) love of our country (Rousseau 1755b, 20). Rousseau's concepts of the general will and the extension of the self provide us with further philosophical foundations for the second aspect of public reason, as aiming to the good of the public and fundamental justice, and on the process by which the individual sense of justice can lead to the identification of public reason by citizens. And yet, even after engaging with Rousseau, something remains unresolved: Rawls's third and final aspect of public reason—namely, how and why reason can be diffused throughout society, or, put differently, what makes its nature and content genuinely public. To address this question, we turn to Kant.

[10] It is important to note that Rawls himself defends the idea that for Rousseau there is the possibility that a natural, uncorrupted, or positive form of *amour-propre* can be developed and cultivated, and that he relies on Kant's interpretation of the latter on this point (Rawls 2008, 198–200, 206).

IV. KANT ON THE SHARING OF REASON AND THE FORMATION OF PUBLIC REASON

From the beginning of his *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant declares that the human being harbors, in the depths of his self, 'an impartial rational spectator', which makes him a moral being, and is the seat of the 'good will'. As we can see, the Kantian conception of this moral consciousness seems close to the Smithian one. In his *Doctrine of Virtue*, he says: "Consciousness of an internal court in man ('before which his thoughts accuse or excuse one another') is *conscience* (*Gewissen*; moral consciousness)" (Kant 1797, 189). On this issue his statements have a remarkably Smithian tone:

> Every human being has a conscience and finds himself observed, threatened, and, in general, kept in awe (respect coupled with fear) by an internal judge; and this authority watching over the law in him is not something that he himself (voluntarily; *willkürlich*; *arbitrairement*) *makes*, but something incorporated in his being. It follows him like his shadow when he plans to escape. He can indeed stun himself or put himself to sleep by pleasures and distractions, but he cannot help coming to himself or waking up from time to time; and when he does, he hears at once its fearful voice. He can at most, in extreme depravity, bring himself to *heed* it no longer, but he still cannot help *hearing* it. (Kant 1797, 189)

The 'good will' corresponds to the 'sense of justice' that Rousseau, Smith, and obviously Rawls consider to be the fundamental characteristic or essence of the moral being. Also, for Kant, justice is inherent to the moral being in the form of 'consciousness' or 'reason', in the widest sense. The question that we now address is how this virtuality or potentiality, that is, the reason, becomes 'public'. This question is examined by Kant in two different texts: *What is Enlightenment?* (1784) and *The Doctrine of Virtue* (1797).

That the reason should become public, that is, the emergence of public reason, requires that two fundamental conditions be met: one concerns the individual level, the other the sociopolitical level. In *What is Enlightenment?* (1784), Kant develops arguments regarding the first level. Public reason could only be set up by free human beings. Freedom or liberty means "man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity" (Kant 1784, 54). *Enlightenment* is the name for this process of overcoming of

the state of immaturity. Kant immediately underlines the organic relationship between the question of freedom or liberty and the question of will. The accession of the individual to liberty or independence is an act of courage: the individual has to have the will to overcome the state of dependency that characterizes all those subjects who prefer the comfort of having a tutor who dictates their behavior, their choices, and the ideas they must adopt. For the individual, the state of immaturity (*Unmündigkeit*) can be seen as the refusal of the use of his own reason. Instead, he prefers that others think, choose, and decide for him; he prefers to be submitted to other's authority. Immaturity or the non-educated state is a state where the individual is satisfied with himself. Kant says:

> Thus it is difficult for each separate individual to work his way out of the immaturity which has become almost second nature to him. He has even grown fond of it and is really incapable for the time being of using his own understanding, because he was never allowed to make the attempt […] Thus only a few, by cultivating their own minds (*Bearbeitung ihres Geistes*), have succeeded in freeing themselves from immaturity and continuing boldly on their way. (Kant 1784, 54–55)

And the condition of the possibility to work himself out of immaturity is not a simple use of reason but the *public* use of his reason: "by the public use of one's own reason (*öffentliche Gebrauch seiner eigenen Vernunft*) I mean that use which anyone may make of it as *a man of learning* (*Gelehrter*) addressing the entire *reading public* (*Leserwelt*)" (Kant 1784, 55). In this passage, we must pay attention to the term "man of learning". Kant's strange word *Gelehrter* is often translated wrongly by the terms 'scholar', 'wise man', or 'scientist'. But in Kantian terminology this word does not designate a state of knowledge; it does not refer to a human figure that is supposed to know. *Gelehrter* is an individual who learns, who accepts the need to learn. It refers to an individual who refuses the state of self-sufficiency. The condition of the overcoming of immaturity is not the acquisition of diplomas or certificates. The condition is the opening to the world. Here we have the real signification of the concept of 'public use of reason'. The individual opens himself to the world when he takes up the pen and addresses the "entire reading people", *Leserwelt*. In other words, according to Kant, real liberty is not a solipsistic phenomenon, a solitary exercise. The emergence from the state

of immaturity requires a process of mediation by others. Mediation signifies distance from oneself. And it is in this gesture of distance that individuals are actually equal. Equal, free individuals are those subjects who dare to go outside of themselves towards other subjects and allow the latter to judge them. But, as we several times had opportunity to notice in studying the Smithian reflections on the concept of the impartial spectator, the moral being is able to receive and integrate the judgement of another because he is himself bearer of a judge or a court in his breast. In a surprisingly Smithian style, Kant says:

> Now, this original intellectual and (since it is the thought of duty) moral predisposition called *conscience* is peculiar in that, although its business is a business of a human being with himself, one constrained by his reason sees himself constrained to carry it on as at the bidding *of another person*. For the affair here is that of trying *a case* (*causa*) before a court. But to think of a human being who is *accused* by his conscience as *one and the same person* as the judge is an absurd way of representing a court, since then the prosecutor would always lose. —For all duties a human being's conscience will, accordingly, have to think of *someone other* than himself as the human being as such; as the judge of his actions, if conscience is not to be in contradiction with itself. This other may be an actual person or a merely ideal person that reason creates itself. (Kant 1797, 189)[11]

As we see it, the necessary condition of freedom is the individual's courage to go outside of himself and allow others to judge him. But that is not sufficient. If the sociopolitical organization of the society where the individual lives does not allow him to take up his pen and freely address his fellows, there is no possibility for the reason to become public. Here we find the second condition of the realization of public reason: the effective possibility of *public criticism* in society. Let us return to the arguments of *What is Enlightenment?* Here Kant wonders about the extent of the freedom of expression, writing: "which restriction hinders

[11] And even more eloquently, he writes in a footnote: "I, the prosecutor, and yet the accused as well, am the same *human being* (*numero idem*). But the human being as the subject of the moral lawgiving which proceeds from the concept of freedom and in which he is subject to a law that he gives himself (*homo noumenon*) is to be regarded as another (*specie diversus*) from the human being as a sensible being endowed with reason […] When the proceedings are concluded the internal judge, as a person *having power*, pronounces the sentence of happiness or misery, as the moral result of the deed" (Kant 1797, 189).

enlightenment? […] The public use of one's reason must always be free, and it alone can bring about enlightenment among mankind" (Kant 1784, 55). The public use of reason, that is, the public expression of individual ideas, opinions, appreciations, judgements, and, obviously, criticisms, must be *absolutely* free, without any restriction or limitation. No authority, whether political, moral, or religious, has the right to interfere and legislate with regard to the public use of reason. No authority, whatever it may be, has the power to inhibit my freedom of expression. But Kant goes further. He says:

> We do admittedly say that, whereas a higher authority may deprive us of freedom of *speech* or of *writing*, it cannot deprive us of freedom of *thought*. But how much and how accurately would we *think* if we did not think, so to speak, in community with others to whom we *communicate* our thoughts and who communicate their thoughts to us! We may therefore conclude that the same external constraint which deprives people of the freedom to *communicate* their thoughts in public also removes their freedom of *thought*, the one treasure which remains to us amidst of the burdens of civil life, and which alone offers us a means of overcoming all the evils of this condition. (Kant 1786, 247)

According to Kant there is no freedom of thinking if we are forbidden to share our thoughts with others. In other words, the free public exchange of ideas constitutes the condition of possibility of the freedom of thinking. Reason becomes public reason in the climate of the free exchange of individual cognitive experiences. And here we find the deep significance of the following observation of Kant concerning the historical phase we are passing through:

> Our age is the age of criticism, to which everything must be subjected. The sacredness of religion, and the authority of legislation, are by many regarded as grounds of exemption from the examination of this tribunal. But, if they are exempted, they become the subjects of just suspicion, and cannot lay claim to sincere respect, which reason accords only to that which has stood the test of a free and public examination. (Kant 1781, 9)

Public reason for Kant involves a process of learning: the learning of the practice of criticism, i.e., learning to engage in the public examination of all the cognitive experiences individuals can generate. But such an examination can take place only in a political regime of individual freedom. In terms of the second Rawls, the Rawls of *Political Liberalism*, a society organized according to the requirements of constitutional democracy, which ensures the protection of the individual when he publicly expresses his thoughts, constitutes the condition of the possibility of public reason.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper investigates two closely connected Rawlsian concepts: 'the sense of justice' and 'public reason'. While Rawls assumes that all members of a society are endowed with a sense of justice, which theoretically allows the emergence of public reason in a well-ordered democratic society, he does not really specify how the passage from a sense of justice at the individual level to public reason at the collective level becomes real and effective. To clarify this issue and to give more substance to the three aspects of public reason defined by Rawls, we have used a particular research method specific to the analytical history of economic thought: text analysis. Via this method, we have made an instrumental use of some of the main concepts of three great authors of the Enlightenment, Smith, Rousseau, and Kant, in order to shed light on the three steps from the sense of justice to public reason and on the three meanings of public reason.

Our philosophical reconstruction led us to show that this question of the emergence of public reason involves the (re)conciliation of two dimensions: the interiority of the moral subject, with her inner sense of justice, and the exteriority of the moral subject in her relationship to others, or respectively the 'transcendental' and the 'comparative' aspects of a theory of justice. Smith's impartial spectator, Rousseau's general will and extension of the self, and Kant's idea of public expression, all help us to understand the different though necessary and complementary aspects of the dialectical process of permanent exchange between an interiority and an exteriority which leads to the emergence and evolution of public reason.

Our method, of course, may in many respects be considered open to dispute. In particular, the choice of these three authors might be questioned. Why them? Why them only? But as we indicated in the

introduction, our reasoning operates not through authors, but through their concepts. In our opinion, these particular concepts (Smith's impartial spectator, Rousseau's extension of the self and general will, and Kant's idea of public expression) are the three which can help explain the passage from the sense of justice to public reason. All three are complementary and join together to emphasize the dialectics of interiority and exteriority which leads to the advent of public reason. So they must be combined to get a better grasp of the transition from the sense of justice to public reason and of the different meanings or facets of public reason in Rawls. But our philosophical reconstruction is meant to be neither a fully comprehensive account of this passage from the sense of justice to public reason in Rawls, nor the only possible explanation or reconstruction of it.

To end our paper, we might briefly recall the connections between Rawls's theory of justice and these three authors, for these connections vary widely from one to the other. As said before, regarding Smith, not only does Rawls in no way claim to be aligned with the author of the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, but in fact he simply assimilates him to the utilitarians, notably because of the figure of the impartial spectator (Rawls [1971] 1999, §30). A number of authors have rightly passed severe judgement on the fact that Rawls counts Smith among the representatives of the utilitarian tradition, but interestingly, as we have attempted to do in this paper, some of them have also shown that Smith and Rawls have more in common than the latter might have thought, and that fruitful Smithian concepts could indeed improve and/or corroborate Rawlsian ones (see, in addition to previous references, Von Villiez 2006 and Ben Moshe 2021).

Much less controversially, Rawls is generally seen (and saw himself) as a Kantian philosopher. But there are good reasons to think that his political philosophy is deeply influenced by Rousseau too (see Brooke 2015, Spector 2016). Joshua Cohen, who as a PhD student followed Rawls's course on social and political philosophy, reported that Rawls "once said in passing that his two principles of justice could be understood as an effort to spell out the content of the general will" (Cohen 2010, 2). It just so happens that Rawls's posthumously published *Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy* contain three long lectures on Rousseau's political thought,[12] and especially *On the Social Contract*,

[12] Rawls presents *On the Social Contract* as "the greatest work [of political philosophy] in French" (Rawls 2008, 191).

in which Rawls offers a deep analysis of Rousseau's concept of the general will. There, in his third lecture, entitled "The General Will and the Question of Stability", Rawls writes that "Rousseau's view contains an idea of what I have called public reason", and then adds that "so far as [he] know[s] the idea originates with him, though versions of it are certainly found later in Kant, who is also important in this connection" (Rawls 2008, 231). Then, a few pages later, he underlines that Rousseau's remark according to which "the private will tends by its nature towards preferences, and the general will toward equality", taken from *On the Social Contract*, "is an ancestor of the first reason why, in justice as fairness, the basic structure is taken as the primary subject of justice" (Rawls 2008, 234). Moreover, in *Political Liberalism* Rawls claims that "public reason with its duty of civility gives a view about voting on fundamental questions in some ways reminiscent of Rousseau's *Social Contract*" (Rawls 1993, 219). Finally, in a 1963 article and in *A Theory of Justice* he explicitly relied on Rousseau's *Emile* to think about the different stages of development of moral sentiments—guilt in particular—and of the sense of justice in well-ordered societies (Rawls 1963; [1971] 1999, § 69–72, 397–419).

We thus believe that in this paper we have substantiated Rawls's claim about Rousseau—who first used the expression 'public reason' in his *Discourse on Political Economy*, where it is equated to 'law', which he defines in this work as the expression of the general will[13] (Rousseau 1755b, 44, 50)—but also about Kant, both being the originators of the idea of 'public reason'; though, as stressed in our introduction, there are also important differences between Rawls's and Kant's conception of public reason.

In the end, we have tried to show that Rawls could have used Rousseau and Kant, along with Smith, to support and enhance his analysis of the conditions of the emergence and development of public reason in liberal, democratic, well-ordered societies. By engaging these three major thinkers, Rawls, in his later work, might have more effectively convinced his readers of the profound theoretical connection between the 'sense of justice' and 'public reason', thereby rendering his political liberalism even more compelling. It is precisely this task that we have attempted to carry out in this paper.

[13] Note too that the *Discourse on Political Economy* is the first text in which Rousseau introduces the 'general will'.

REFERENCES

Arrow, Kenneth. 1973. "Some Ordinalist-Utilitarian Notes on Rawls' Theory of Justice." The Journal of Philosophy 70: 245–263.

Audard, Catherine. 1988. "Principes de justice et principes du libéralisme : la 'neutralité' de la théorie de Rawls." In *Individu et justice sociale: autour de John Rawls*, edited by Catherine Audard, Jean-Pierre Dupuy, and René Sève, 158–189. Editions du Seuil.

Audard, Catherine 1993. "La stratégie kantienne de Rawls." *Magazine littéraire*, 309.

Ben-Moshe, Nir. 2021. "Comprehensive or Political Liberalism? The Impartial Spectator and the Justification of Political Principles," *Utilitas* 33 (3): 253–269.

Bertram, Christopher. 2012. "Rousseau's Legacy in Two Conceptions of the General Will: Democratic and Transcendent" *Review of Politics* 74 (3): 403–419.

Bréban, Laurie and Gilardone, Muriel. 2020. "A Missing Touch of Adam Smith in Amartya Sen's Account of Public Reasoning: The Man Within for the Man Without." *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 44 (2): 257–283.

Brooke, Christopher. 2015. "Rawls on Rousseau and the General Will." In *The General Will. The Evolution of a concept*, edited by James Farr and David Lay Williams, 429–446. Cambridge University Press.

Canon, Jason. 2022. "Three General Wills in Rousseau." *Review of Politics* 84 (3): 350–371.

Cohen, Joshua. 2010. *Rousseau: A Free Community of Equals*. Oxford University Press.

Ege, Ragip, and Igersheim, Herrade. 2008. "Rawls with Hegel: The Concept of Liberalism of Freedom." *The European Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 15 (1): 23–44.

Ege, Ragip, and Igersheim, Herrade. 2010. "Rawls's Theory of Justice and its Relations to the Concept of 'Merit Goods'." *The European Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 17 (4): 1001–1030.

Ege, Ragip, and Igersheim, Herrade. 2023. "From a Hegelian to a Smithian Reading of Rawls." In *Economic Reason and Political Reason*, edited by Jean Mercier Ythier, 109–130. ISTE.

Ege, Ragip, Herrade Igersheim, and Charlotte Le Chapelain. 2013. "Par-delà le transcendantal et le comparatif. Deux arguments." *Revue Française d'Economie* 27 (4): 185–212.

Enoch, David. 2013. "The Disorder of Public Reason." *Ethics* 123 (1): 141–176.

Enoch, David. 2015. "Against Public Reason." In *Oxford Studies in Political Philosophy* (Volume 1), edited by David Sobel, Peter Vallentyne, and Steven Wall, 112–142. Oxford University Press.

Freeman Samuel. (ed.) 2002. *The Cambridge Companion to Rawls*. Cambridge University Press.

Freeman, Samuel. 2007. Rawls. Routledge.

Gauss, Gerald. 2011. *The Order of Public Reason: A Theory of Freedom and Morality in a Diverse and Bounded World*. Cambridge University Press.

Guillarme, Bertrand. 1999. *Rawls et l'égalité démocratique*. Presses Universitaires de France.

Harsanyi, John. 1975. "Can the Maximin Principle Serve as a Basis for Morality? A critique of John Rawls's Theory." American Political Science Review 69 (2): 594-606.

Hédoin, Cyril. 2023. "In Search of a Stable Consensus: Rawls's Model of Public Reason and Its Critics" *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* 24(2): 236–57.

Hédoin, Cyril. 2024. "Public Reason, Democracy, and the Two-Tier Social Choice Model of Politics," *Constitutional Political Economy* 35 (4): 388–410.

Höffe, O. 1988. "Dans quelle mesure la théorie de John Rawls est-elle kantienne?" In *Individu et justice sociale: autour de John Rawls*, edited by Catherine Audard, Jean-Pierre Dupuy and René Sève, 54–72. Editions du Seuil.

Hurtado, Jimena. 2006. "El Sistema de la simpatia de Adam Smith : una alternativa liberal olvidada por John Rawls." Documentos CEDE 2553, Universidad de los Andes, Facultad de Economia, CEDE.

Igersheim, Herrade. 2022. "Rawls and the Economists: The (Im)possible Dialogue." *Revue Economique*, 73: 1013–1038.

Kant, Immanuel. 1781. *The Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by N. K. Smith. Palgrave MacMillan, 2007.

Kant, Immanuel. 1784. "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment." In Kant, *Political Writings*, edited by Hans Reiss, 54–60. Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Kant, Immanuel. 1785. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, edited by Mary Gregor. Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Kant, Immanuel. 1786. "What is Orientation in Thinking?" ("*Was heißt: Sich im Denken orientieren?*"), In Kant, *Political Writings*, edited by Hans Reis, 237–249. Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Kant, Immanuel. 1797. *The Doctrine of Virtue*, In Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals,* edited by Mary Gregor. Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Kogelman, Bryan, and Stich, Stephen. 2016. "When Public Reason Fails Us: Convergence Discourse as Blood Oath." *American Political Science Review* 110 (3): 717–730.

Koukouzelis, Kostas. 2009. "Rawls and Kant on the Public Use of Reason." *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 35 (7): 841–868.

Ladrière, Jean. and Van Parijs, Philippe. (eds.) 1984. *Fondements d'une théorie de la justice: essais critiques sur la philosophie politique de John Rawls*. Diffusion, Libr. Peeters.

Munoz-Dardé, Véronique. 2003. "Le partage des raisons." *Revue de Philosophie Economique* 7 : 81–110.

Quong, Jonathan. 2022. "Public Reason," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2022/entries/public-reason

Raphael, David. 2009. *The Impartial Spectator. Adam Smith's Moral Philosophy*. Oxford University Press.

Rawls, John. 1963. "The Sense of Justice." *The Philosophical Review* 72 (3): 281–305.

Rawls, John. (1971) 1999. *A Theory of Justice*. Oxford University Press.

Rawls, John. 1985. "Justice as Fairness: Political, not Metaphysical." In *John Rawls, Collected Papers*, edited by Samuel Freeman. Harvard University Press. 1999.

Rawls, John. 1993. *Political Liberalism*. Columbia University Press.

Rawls, John. 1997. "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited." *University of Chicago Law Review* 64 (3): 765–807.

Rawls, John. 2008. *Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy*. Harvard University Press.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. 1755a. *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality Among Men*, in *Basic Political Writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, trans. Donald A. Cress. Hackett Publishing, 1987.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. 1755b. *Discourse on Political Economy*, in *Rousseau.* The Social Contract *and other later political writings*, edited and translated by Victor Gourevitch. Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. 1762a. *On the Social Contract*, in *Rousseau.* The Social Contract *and other later political writings*, edited and translated by Victor Gourevitch. Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. 1762b. *Emile or on Education*, translated by Allan Bloom, Basic Books, 1979.

Sen, Amartya. 2009. *The Idea of Justice*. Harvard University Press.

Smith, Adam. 1759–1790. *The Theory of Moral Sentiments (TMS)*, edited by David Raphael and Alec Macfie. Oxford University Press, 1976.

Spector, Céline. 2016. "Rousseau at Harvard: John Rawls after Judith Shklar on Realistic Utopia." In *Engaging with Rousseau. Reaction and Interpretation from the Eighteenth Century to the Present,* directed by Avi Lifschitz, 152-167. Cambridge University Press.

Tarrant, I. and Perraton, J. 2019. "Conflicts between Liberty and Social Welfare in Historical Perspective." In *The Individual and the Other in Economic Thought*, edited by Ragip Ege and Herrade Igersheim, 336–50. Routledge.

Vallier, Kevin. 2011. "Convergence and Consensus in Public Reason." *Public Affairs Quarterly* 25(4): 261–279.

Von Villiez, Carolina. 2006. "Double Standard—Naturally! Smith and Rawls: A Comparison of Methods." In *New Voices on Adam Smith*, edited by Eric Schliesser and Leonidas Montes, 115–139. Routledge.

Walraevens, Benoît. 2023. "Sentiments moraux et sens de la justice chez Smith et Rawls." *Oeconomia-History-Methodology-Philosophy* 13(4): 1187–1222.

Ragip Ege is Emeritus Professor in Economics at the University of Strasbourg, France, and member of the Bureau d'Economie Théorique et Appliquée (BETA). His recent research activities focus on the problems of ethics and justice and he is particularly interested in Hegelian political and economic thought.
Contact e-mail: <ege@unistra.fr>

Herrade Igersheim is a CNRS Research Professor at the University of Strasbourg, France, and Director of the Bureau d'Economie Théorique et Appliquée (BETA). Her research focuses on economics and philosophy, welfare economics and experimental economics devoted to voting methods.
Contact e-mail: <igersheim@unistra.fr>

Benoît Walraevens is Associate Professor in Economics at Paris 8 University, France, and member of the Laboratoire d'Economie Dionysien (LED). His research focuses on Eighteenth Century French and Scottish

Political Economy and on issues of inequality and social justice in an historical and contemporary perspective.
Contact e-mail: <benoit.walraevens@univ-paris8.fr>