

Summary

„Freiheit, Recht und Ethos in Rousseaus Contrat social“

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The thought that arguably runs through the philosophical work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and shapes it like no other is the idea of freedom. Rousseau's writings are familiar with quite a variety of very different concepts of freedom, though. The paper shows that Rousseau's political philosophy in the *Contrat social* seeks the sufficient condition for the legitimacy of state authority and legal coercion in the connection between law and ethos. Juridical freedom, i.e. the natural right of man to individual self-determination has its unadulterated reality within the living together with others only thanks to a welfare-oriented ethos he shares with his fellow human beings. Concerning this matter, Rousseau speaks of moral freedom. And therein lies another form of freedom, namely in the sense of autarchy; the republican ethos of citizens includes, among other things, the pursuit of the conservation of the economic self-sufficiency of the polity. By this connection between law and ethos, however, Rousseau's contractualism gets caught up in argumentative difficulties which, after all, it cannot resolve satisfactorily.

