Status of the Translations

Most of Rousseau's writings were translated in English shortly after their publication in French, and 18th century translations are available of almost all the texts included in this selection. In many cases, I intend to update and revise these translations and use them as the basis of the edition, thus saving permission costs. Only when a modern translation exists that is truly outstanding will permission be requested. The breakdown of the translation status, with reference to the Table of Contents, is as follows:

I,1 and I,2


b. Social Contract and Discourses, Dutton-Dent, (Everyman) (1950)

I plan to use (b) only if the permission rights are low; the 18th century translation is good and easy to update.

I,3 Never published in English. New translation

I,4


Optional Tables of Contents

(1) The optimal table numbers nearly 950 pages in the regular format of the Viking Portables and is too long. The least damaging emendation would be achieved by dropping the Letter d'Alembert on the Theater (160 pages) and replacing it by the brief essay On Theatrical Imitation (10 pages). This would reduce the book to 800 pages, still one of the longer among the Portables, but this size seems more than warranted by the complexity and variety of Rousseau's work.

(2) If 800 pages is still considered too long, one would have to drop The Social Contract and thus reduce the text to 650 pages. I am very reluctant to recommend this, for The Social Contract remains one of the most read of Rousseau's texts, especially in an academic market. Whereas several Rousseau texts have not been retranslated since the 18th century, three new English translations of The Social Contract have appeared since 1947. This indicates a constant demand for this text in college courses. The edition would be considerably strengthened, intellectually and commercially, by the inclusion of The Social Contract. The original text is highly condensed and cannot be abridged.
I,4 d. The Social Contract and Discourses, see I,2 b


   My preference goes to (c), which ought to be inexpensive.

I,5 a. Works, ed. Becket (Vol III), 1767


   If the text were included, I'd use (a). Alternate text:


I,6 No English version. New translation.


I,8 No English version, New translation.

II,1 English version from 1779 (Kearsley, London)


   b. Julie or the New Eloisa, Trans. and abridged by Judith H. McDowell (Penn State University Press, 1950?)

   I plan to use an updated version of (a).

II,3 a. Emilius and Sophia: or a New System of Education, trans. by W. Kenrick, Becket and de Hondt, 1762

II,3 I plan to use (b) provided it is not prohibitive.

III,1 No English version. New translation

III,2 J-J Rousseau Miscellaneous Works, Becket (Longon, 1767),
    New translation

III,3 a. The Confessions of J-J Rousseau with the Reveries
    of the Solitary Walker, Part I, London, J. Bew, 1783;
    Part II in 1790.
    b. The Confessions, trans. by John Grant, Dutton-Dent
       (Everyman), 1904.

    The 20th century edition is public domain and could be used.

III,4.a. see III,3 a
    b. Reveries of a Solitary, trans. by J. Gould Fletcher

    I plan to update the 18th century edition.

Summary: Of the fifteen entries, 6 are new translations,
4 are updated versions of 18th century translations, 1 is
public domain, and 4 (2 Discourses, Social Contract, Emile)
can be the modern versions if the total permission rights
remain below $500. Permission rights belong to Dutton-Dent
(2 Discourses, Emile) and Hafner Publishers (Social Contract).