Jean-Jacques Rousseau was one of the 18th century’s most influential writers and philosophers, notably in Switzerland and France. His epistolary novel Julie ou la Nouvelle Héloïse (1761) was one of the most widely read books of the period. This story of two lovers from different social classes appealed to the spirit of the age. In Du contrat social ou principes du droit politique (1762) Rousseau proposed a form of government based on the democratic will of the people, taken as a provocation by the ruling classes. The book was banned and Rousseau had to flee Paris, which had been his adopted home since the 1740s. In the same year he published Emile ou De l’éducation (1762), expounding his pedagogical principles. In his writings Rousseau was critical of the powers that be in a manner that exacerbated class prejudices. Subsequently, particular importance has been attached to Rousseau’s political philosophy and pedagogy and such seminal concepts as general will and state of nature. The romantic view of nature in his oeuvre inspired a number of imitators. Through his writings he is considered as one of the spiritual fathers of the French Revolution.