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Sommario/riassunto

On the State of Nature and On the Sovereignty of the People are Maistre's most comprehensive treatment of Rousseau's ideas and his most sustained critique of the ideological foundations of the revolution. On the State of Nature, a detailed critique of Rousseau's Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality, focuses on Rousseau's belief in the natural goodness of man; On the Sovereignty of the People, a critique of Social Contract, explores Rousseau's theory of popular sovereignty. In Maistre's eyes Rousseau encouraged the socially destructive individualism that lay at the heart of the French Revolution. However, the essays reveal some surprising ambiguities in the relationship between two seminal thinkers who are usually thought of as polar opposites, suggesting that Maistre's vision was more akin to Rousseau's than he would have admitted. Against Rousseau offers valuable insights into the evolution of Maistre's counter-revolutionary ideas during the crucial years of 1792-97 and illustrates his remarkable insights into society and politics. It is vital to any consideration of his thought or the counter-revolutionary movement in eighteenth-century France.
