



## ROUSSEAU AND THE CONCEPT OF POLITICAL LIBERTY AND EQUALITY

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### ABSTRACT

The paper titled '*Rousseau and the Concept of Political Liberty and Equality*' focuses on Rousseau's postulation that the original man, in his natural state, was entirely free and virtuous and that if human beings were able to return to their "natural state" they would be happy forever after. This position was adopted by Rousseau because of His belief that the State through the instrument of Law limits Man's excesses viz negative exhibition of his political freedom. Efforts were also geared towards exploring Marxist perspective to the concept of Equality., employing the analytical and content tools of analysis, the study established that Marx believed that there were a number of inequalities in capitalist system and that this will continue till the State with its instruments of inequalities are abolished. The paper therefore recommended that understanding the origin and importance of Political Liberty and Equality is necessary as this will help increase our understanding on how peace and development can be engendered in Contemporary States.

**Keywords:** *Political Liberty, Equality, Political Philosophy, Legitimacy, Liberalism*

## INTRODUCTION

Rousseau believed that the original man, in his natural state, was entirely free and virtuous. It was only when human beings gathered together and formed societies that they became capable of jealousy, greed, malice, and all the other vices which we are capable of committing. In this respect, Rousseau appears to have created a philosophical basis for the staunchly individualistic thinkers like Emerson, and the major literary writers of Romanticism throughout Europe who all argued, in one way or another, that humans would be better off in their old natural state, one without the interference of the State.

However as studies would reveal, Rousseau's ideas were not that simplistic. Although he felt that society (especially monarchical society) had exerted a corrupting influence on humanity, he believed that if humanity was guided only by natural instincts it would inevitably descend into brutality. Rousseau believed that what was needed by humankind was not a return to primitivism, but a complete reevaluation of the social order. Although Rousseau is often labeled as a "proto-socialist" political thinker whose views would inspire the socialist theories of Karl Marx, the form of government which Rousseau would spend his life fighting for was not socialism but direct, non-representative democracy. Nor was Rousseau an atheistic thinker like Marx. Although his views on religion in his own time were highly controversial - in the *Social Contract* he infamously wrote that followers of Jesus would not make good citizens - what Rousseau meant by this was that religious feeling, like the naturally good instincts of man, would not fit in with a society of oppression and injustice.

### **Issues and socio-economic conditions of the society during His Time:**

During the period of the French Revolution, Rousseau was the most popular of the philosophers among members of the Jacobin Club. Rousseau was born in Geneva, which was at that time a city-state and a Protestant associate of the Swiss Confederacy. Since 1536, Geneva had been a Huguenot republic and the seat of Calvinism. Studies reveal that Five generations before Rousseau, his ancestor Didier, a bookseller who may have published Protestant tracts, had escaped persecution from French Catholics by fleeing to Geneva in 1549, where he became a wine merchant. Rousseau had no recollection of learning to read, but he remembered how when he was 5 or 6 his father encouraged his love of reading:

*Every night, after supper, we read some part of a small collection of romances [i.e., adventure stories], which had been my mother's. My father's design was only to improve me in reading, and he thought these entertaining works were calculated to give me a fondness for it; but we soon found ourselves so interested in the adventures they contained, that we alternately read whole nights together and could not bear to give over until at the conclusion of a volume. Sometimes, in the morning, on hearing*

*the swallows at our window, my father, quite ashamed of this weakness, would cry,  
"Come, come, let us go to bed; I am more a child than thou art." (Confessions, Book 1).*

When Rousseau was 10, his father, an avid hunter, got into a legal quarrel with a wealthy landowner on whose lands he had been caught trespassing. To avoid certain defeat in the courts, he moved away to Nyon in the territory of Bern, taking Rousseau's aunt Suzanne with him. He remarried, and from that point Jean-Jacques saw little of him. Jean-Jacques was left with his maternal uncle, who packed him, along with his own son, Abraham Bernard, away to board for two years with a Calvinist minister in a hamlet outside Geneva. Here, the boys picked up the elements of mathematics and drawing. Rousseau, who was always deeply moved by religious services, for a time even dreamed of becoming a Protestant minister. I must confess that virtually all my information about Rousseau's youth has come from his posthumously published *Confessions*, in which the chronology is somewhat confused, though recent scholars have combed the archives for confirming evidence to fill in the blanks. At age 13, Rousseau was apprenticed first to a notary and then to an engraver who beat him. At 15, he ran away from Geneva (on 14 March 1728) after returning to the city and finding the city gates locked due to the curfew.

J. J. Rousseau was a Francophone Genevan philosopher, writer, and composer of the 18th century. His political philosophy influenced the Enlightenment in France and across Europe, as well as aspects of the French Revolution and the overall development of modern political and educational thought. In most of his writings, not merely in the *Contrat social*, Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) was obsessed by the demands of life in society, by the relationships of dependence and subordination which it creates among men, and by the rivalries and enmities which it engenders. Society, which should bring men together, in fact sets them apart and makes them enemies to their fellow men. Rousseau first became aware of this paradox not in terms of clearly conceived ideas but of deeply felt experience. In the course of a tormented and eventful life, he felt poignantly the injustice of a social order founded on the inequality of status and the impossibility of achieving happiness in such a society. To an unusual extent it is necessary to know about Rousseau's life in order to understand his work.

Rousseau was proud that his family, of the *moyen* order (or middle-class), had voting rights in the city. Throughout his life, he generally signed his books "Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Citizen of Geneva" Geneva, in theory, was governed democratically by its male voting "citizens". The citizens were a minority of the population when compared to the immigrants, referred to as "inhabitants", whose descendants were called "natives" and continued to lack suffrage. In fact, rather than being run by vote of the "citizens", the city was ruled by a small number of wealthy families that made up the "Council of Two Hundred"; these delegated their power to a twenty-five member executive group from among them called the "Little Council".

## Conceptualizing Political Liberty and Equality:

Generally speaking, Liberty is the state in which people can act and speak freely, and equality is the state of being equal in rights and opportunities. In different situations freedom or liberty means different things, but the core remains but the same and these include: self-government, the absence of personal and impersonal power amongst others. Political freedom is rooted in the physically frail, hence communally organized and conscious human being, having to pay for the miraculous development of his mind with fear, with the knowledge of death and having to cope with this knowledge.

The declaration of human rights is well founded when it is guaranteed by everyday practice. The late 18th- century formulation of liberty and equality was not an abstract and exclusive principle. Underlying the wording of the principle of liberty was Montesquieu's definition of the offsetting and balancing of the foci of power as the main line-ament of the English exercise of power, which he generalized and declared to be a constitutional requirement against the concentration of power, despotism. Rousseau's concept of equality was based on his experience of the aristocratic self-government of Geneva.

Hobbes bequeathed a classic statement of this point of view - one that is still repeatedly invoked-in his chapter '*Of the Liberty of Subjects*' in Leviathan. It begins by assuring us, with typical briskness, that '*liberty or freedom signifieth (properly) the absence of opposition*' - and signifies nothing more. Locke makes the same point in the Essay, where he speaks with even greater confidence. '*Liberty, 'tis plain, consists in a power to do or not to do; to do or forbear doing as we will. This cannot be denied*'.

By liberty Hobbes means non-interference. He identifies the domain in which the individuals remain free from the State with the area where the State does not intervene. The monstrous State, the Leviathan, the sovereign does exist, he claims, and it has to exist because thereby it can prevent the worst from happening: the fight of all against all. The area that it leaves free for the individuals is their liberty. It is that which does not depend on the nature of the state. For Tocqueville, because equality is granted by providence, it cannot be alienated. This is why the tyranny of the majority through public opinion is an aberration—it is an alienation of the liberty of the individual, a liberty all men equally possess, to a larger body, which becomes a force inhibitive to individual liberty. Equality and liberty were artificial constructs for the free citizens of the Greek polis:

... our notion [of equality is] that men are born or created equal and become unequal by virtue of social and political, that is man-made, institutions.... The equality of the Greek polis, its isonomy, was an attribute of the polis and not of men, who received their equality by virtue of citizenship, not by virtue of birth. Neither equality nor freedom was understood as a quality inherent in human nature, they were both not physei, given by nature and growing out by themselves; they were nomo, that is, conventional and

artificial, the products of human effort and qualities of the man-made world (Bernard, p.249).

People not as human beings but as citizens of a city-state were entitled to freedom.

...freedom was understood as being manifest in certain, by no means all, human activities, and ... these activities could appear and be real only when others saw them, judged them, remembered them. The life of a free man needed the presence of others. Freedom itself needed therefore a place where people could come together - the agora, the market-place, or the polis, the political space proper (Bernard, p.69).

### **Political Liberty and sovereignty Explained:**

Rousseau notes that the laws of liberty might prove to be more austere than the yoke of tyranny. This is because according to him, tyranny is service to human masters. The law cannot be a tyrant. Rousseau does not mean by liberty the 'negative' freedom of the individual not to be interfered with within a defined area, but the possession by all, and not merely by some, of the fully qualified members of a society of a share in the public power which is entitled to interfere with every aspect of every citizen's life. The French Revolution, like all great revolutions, was the desire for 'positive' freedom of collective self-direction on the part of a large body of Frenchmen who felt liberated as a nation, even though the result was, for a good many of them, a severe restriction of individual freedoms. The liberals of the first half of the nineteenth century correctly foresaw that liberty in this 'positive' sense could easily destroy too many of the 'negative' liberties that they held sacred. They pointed out that the sovereignty of the people could easily destroy that of individuals.

Mill explained, patiently and unanswerably, that government by the people was not, in his sense, necessarily freedom at all. For those who govern are not necessarily the same 'people' as those who are governed, and democratic self-government is not the government 'of each by himself, but, at best, 'of each by all the rest'. J. S. Mill and his disciples spoke of 'the tyranny of the majority' and of the tyranny of 'the prevailing opinion and feeling', and saw no great difference between that and any other kind of tyranny which encroaches upon men's activities beyond the sacred frontiers of private life and thus brings to question the concept of personal liberty.

### **On the Concept of Political Equality:**

*Every plausible political theory has the same ultimate value, which is equality. They are all 'egalitarian theories'.... Some theories, like Nazism, deny that each person matters equally. But sch theories do*

*not merit serious consideration (Kymlicka 1990; p.89).*

Equality originates from *aequalis*, *aequus* and *aequalitas*. These are all old French or Latin words. These French/Latin words mean even, level and equal. Thus the meaning of the word equality used in political science corresponds to the meaning from which it originates. The term equality used in political science differs from uniformity, identity and sameness. Some people, of course, want to use it to denote uniformity. But this does not convey the meaning when it is used by political scientists. Equality does not mean obliteration of diversity. Equality in its prescriptive usage has, of course, a close connection with morality and justice in general and distributive justice in particular. From antiquity onward, equality has been considered a constitutive feature of justice. Throughout history, people and emancipatory movements use the language of justice to pillory certain inequalities. A number of political scientists have tried to define the concept of Political Equality with Prof. Laski amongst them. According to Laski, equality means "*coherence of ideas*". He notes that;

In the treatment meted out to different individuals there shall persist coherence. While privileges are distributed among the individuals justice and reason must be maintained so that no individual can think that he is neglected or is deprived of his due share. In the distribution of privileges attention shall be paid to the development of personality.

Laski's definition leads us to another meaning (definition) of Political equality. It means the absence of special privileges. Individual's claim for the privileges rests on the ground that without it he cannot develop his personality and because of this reason an individual's claim for something is logical and legitimate. In that case, if some individuals are deliberately made to suffer that will be a gross violation of equality. Of course, the deprived person must prove that others have been given more than what is reasonably his due. The concept of equality can therefore be described as being more often prescriptive than descriptive. The exponents of the doctrine, through the idea of equality, want to prescribe some norms or ideals. For example, they want to say that there shall be political or racial or economic equality or it is suggested that both women and men shall be on equal footing.

Also, according to Jarrett B. Wollstein in *The Freeman*, political equality refers to the equality of each citizen's individual rights and liberty. In a politically equal society, citizens who are unequal socially or financially still possess identical voting rights and have the right to expect equitable treatment under the law. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy discusses philosopher John Rawls' definition of political equality as being embodied by a society in which each citizen is an equal participant in choosing that society's governing. The most direct means for providing political equality is through the universal right to vote, no matter the voter's personal background, wealth or social status.

Rawls sees political equality as one part of a larger theory of justice. His theory includes several elements. First is an assumption that people begin as equals under the law, regardless of their personal talents or the circumstances in which they were born. Next is the assumption that all humans are equally valuable and have a sense of what is good and just. Third is the notion of equality of opportunity. Finally, there is the recognition that no one inherently deserves the talents or socioeconomic position they were born into but that these things are simply circumstantial chance. Often, this specific sort of equality is wrongly conflated with other types of equality, such as equality of outcome or equality of resources.

Rousseau famously views private property as the origin of inequality, whereas Tocqueville sees the development of private property, as well as all social and political innovations since the beginning of the decline of the aristocracy in France as leading toward radical equality. Equality for Rousseau was integral to the institution of civil society, which found its ideal form in a democratic political order. For Tocqueville, equality left unchecked threatened social, political, and individual liberty, and required conscious recognition to be kept in balance. How could these thinkers come to such radically different conclusions about the function of equality as a political idea? The answer to this question in part lies in the fact that Tocqueville was writing almost a century after Rousseau—he lived in a different France, and he had the unique position of being able to analyze American democracy in the first decades of its founding. For Tocqueville, the bourgeois conceptions of equality and liberty that had come to full recognition in Rousseau were in crisis. For Rousseau political equality, in order to be legitimately enacted in law, had to be grounded in theoretical truth. This meant a justification of equality as a natural right of man. While Rousseau viewed equality as a natural right residing in the constitution of man at his origin, he did not see a natural progression of equality through history. Rather, he saw its degradation beginning with the first spontaneous claim to private property among men. Since that time, society had been driven by inequality, with property ownership and wealth determining the level of freedom or unfreedom for the individual, particularly insofar as it directly corresponded to political influence or public esteem. Property, then, placed a massive constraint on some, and an unnatural one. Because the institution of society could not be reversed—man could not revert to a state of nature—society found itself in a position of conflict.

### **Rousseau on man, nature and Freedom:**

Rousseau saw a fundamental divide between society and human nature. Rousseau contended that man was good by nature, a "noble savage" when in the state of nature (the state of all the "other animals," and the condition humankind was in before the creation of civilization and society), but is corrupted by society. He viewed society as artificial and held that the development of society, especially the growth of social interdependence, has been inimical to the well-being of human beings. In his analysis, J. J. Rousseau notes that;

... equality, which we... frequently see as a danger to freedom, was originally almost

identical with it. But this equality within the range of the law... was not equality of condition,... but the equality of those who form a body of peers. Isonomy guaranteed isotes, equality, but not because all men were born or created equal, but, on the contrary, because men were by nature (physei) not equal, and needed an artificial institution, the polis, which by virtue of its nomos would make them equal. Equality existed on in this specifically political realm, where men met one another as citizens and not as private persons.

Society's negative influence on otherwise virtuous men centers, in Rousseau's philosophy, on its transformation of *amour de soi*, a positive self-love comparable to Emerson's "self-reliance," into *amour-propre*, or pride. *Amour de soi* represents the instinctive human desire for self-preservation, combined with the human power of reason. In contrast, *amour-propre* is not natural but artificial and forces man to compare himself to others, creating unwarranted fear and allowing men to take pleasure in the pain or weakness of others. Rousseau was not the first to make this distinction; it had been invoked by, among others, Vauvenargues.

In his work "*Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*" Rousseau argued for instance that the arts and sciences had not been beneficial to humankind, because they were advanced not in response to human needs but as the result of pride and vanity. Moreover, the opportunities they created for idleness and luxury contributed to the corruption of man. He proposed that the progress of knowledge had made governments more powerful and had crushed individual liberty. He concluded that material progress had actually undermined the possibility of sincere friendship, replacing it with jealousy, fear and suspicion, which invariably makes the society unsafe for human beings.

Rousseau's subsequent *Discourse on Inequality* tracked the progress and degeneration of mankind from a primitive state of nature to modern society. He suggested that the earliest human beings were isolated semi-apes who were differentiated from animals by their capacity for free will and their perfectibility. He also argued that these primitive humans were possessed of a basic drive to care for themselves and a natural disposition to compassion or pity. As humans were forced to associate together more closely, by the pressure of population growth, they underwent a psychological transformation and came to value the good opinion of others as an essential component of their own wellbeing. Rousseau associated this new self-awareness with a golden age of human flourishing. However, the development of agriculture and metallurgy, private property and the division of labor led to increased interdependence and inequality. The resulting state of conflict led Rousseau to suggest that the first state was invented as a kind of social contract made at the suggestion of the rich and powerful. This original contract was deeply flawed as the wealthiest and most powerful members of society tricked the general population, and thus instituted inequality as a fundamental feature of human society. Rousseau's own conception of the social contract can be understood as an alternative to this



fraudulent form of association. At the end of the *Discourse on Inequality*, Rousseau explains how the desire to have value in the eyes of others, which originated in the golden age, comes to undermine personal integrity and authenticity in a society marked by interdependence, hierarchy, and inequality.

## **Dimensions of Political Equality:**

### **Formal Equality:**

When two persons have equal status in at least one normatively relevant respect, they must be treated equally with regard to this respect. This is the generally accepted *formalequality* principle that Aristotle formulated in reference to Plato: “treat like cases as like”. Of course the crucial question is which respects are normatively relevant and which are not. Some authors see this formal principle of equality as a specific application of a rule of rationality: it is irrational, because inconsistent, to treat equal cases unequally without sufficient reasons (Berlin 1955-56). But most authors instead stress that what is here at stake is a moral principle of justice, basically corresponding with acknowledgment of the impartial and universalizable nature of moral judgments. Namely, the postulate of formal equality demands more than consistency with one's subjective preferences. What is more important is possible justification vis-à-vis others of the equal or unequal treatment in question — and this on the sole basis of a situation's objective features.

### **Proportional Equality:**

According to Aristotle, there are two kinds of equality, numerical and proportional (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1130b-1132b; cf. Plato, *Laws*, VI.757b-c). A form of treatment of others or as a result of it a distribution is equal *numerically* when it treats all persons as indistinguishable, thus treating them identically or granting them the same quantity of a good per capita. That is not always just. In contrast, a form of treatment of others or distribution is *proportional* or relatively equal when it treats all relevant persons in relation to their due. Just *numerical* equality is a special case of proportional equality. Numerical equality is only just under special circumstances, viz. when persons are equal in the relevant respects so that the relevant proportions are equal. Proportional equality further specifies formal equality; it is the more precise and detailed, hence actually the more comprehensive formulation of formal equality. It indicates what produces an adequate equality.

### **Proportional equality:**

In the treatment and distribution of goods to persons involves at least the following concepts or variables: Two or more persons ( $P_1, P_2$ ) and two or more allocations of goods to persons ( $G$ ) and  $X$  and  $Y$  as the quantity in which individuals have the relevant normative quality  $E$ . This can be represented as an

equation with fractions or as a ratio. If  $P_1$  has  $E$  in the amount of  $X$  and if  $P_2$  has  $E$  in the amount  $Y$ , then  $P_1$  is due  $G$  in the amount of  $X'$  and  $P_2$  is due  $G$  in the amount of  $Y'$ , so that the ratio  $X/Y = X'/Y'$  is valid. (N.B. For the formula to be usable, the potentially great variety of factors involved have to be both quantifiable in principle and commensurable, i.e., capable of synthesis into an aggregate value.)

### **Moral Equality:**

Until the eighteenth century, it was assumed that human beings are unequal by nature - i.e., that there was a natural human hierarchy. This postulate collapsed with the advent of the idea of natural right and its assumption of an equality of natural order among all human beings. Against Plato and Aristotle, the classical formula for justice according to which an action is just when it offers each individual his or her due took on a substantively egalitarian meaning in the course of time, viz. everyone deserved the same dignity and the same respect. This is now the widely held conception of substantive, universal, moral equality. It developed among the Stoics, who emphasized the natural equality of all rational beings, and in early New Testament Christianity, which elevated the equality of human beings before God to a principle: one to be sure not always adhered to later by the Christian church. This important idea was also taken up both in the Talmud and in Islam, where it was grounded in both Greek and Hebraic elements in both systems. In the modern period, starting in the seventeenth century, the dominant idea was of natural equality in the tradition of natural law and social contract theory. Hobbes (1651) postulated that in their natural condition, individuals possess equal rights, because over time they have the same capacity to do each other harm. Locke (1690) argued that all human beings have the same natural right to both (self-)ownership and freedom. Rousseau (1755) declared social inequality to be a virtually primeval decline of the human race from natural equality in a harmonious state of nature: a decline catalyzed by the human urge for perfection, property and possessions (Dahrendorf 1962). For Rousseau (1755, 1762), the resulting inequality and rule of violence can only be overcome by tying unfettered subjectivity to a common civil existence and popular sovereignty. In Kant's moral philosophy (1785), the categorical imperative formulates the equality postulate of universal human worth. His transcendental and philosophical reflections on autonomy and self-legislation lead to a recognition of the same freedom for all rational beings as the sole principle of human rights (Kant 1797, p. 230). Such Enlightenment ideas stimulated the great modern social movements and revolutions, and were taken up in modern constitutions and declarations of human rights. During the French Revolution, equality — along with freedom and fraternity — became a basis of the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* of 1789.

### **Marxist Concept of Equality:**

Like his other political concepts, equality is also a part of his entire political philosophy which is primarily linked with the unmasking the real nature of capitalist system, its abolition and emancipation of

working class. From the study of various aspects of society Marx concluded that there were number of inequalities in capitalist system. For example, social, political, economic etc; and these were due to the bourgeois structure. In any capitalist state there were inequalities between men and women, rich and poor, there were discriminations among various religious groups. Even the inequalities were institutionalized by the capitalists. Theoretically the bourgeois scholars and political scientists propagate for equality and strongly argue for formal or legal equality. Even the bourgeois constitutions (constitutions framed by the bourgeois scholars to meet the needs of a particular class) pontifically announce the inclusions of rights, liberties and equalities as parts of the constitution and also make provision for their protection.

But in actual situation most of the rights, liberties and equalities remain unfulfilled. Marxists claim that all “these allegations against the bourgeois society are not based on any concoction or emotion. It is their claim that Marx and Engels studied the capitalist society from a very close distance.” In the second half of the nineteenth century the capitalist systems of Britain, Germany and France were matured. A serious analysis of Marxist thought reveals that Marx had two types of equality in his mind though an unambiguous conclusion cannot be drawn. The writer of the essay published in Dictionary of Marxist Thought has said that the two principles of equality are—“From each according to his abilities, to each according to the amount of work performed”. There is another principle: “Each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs”. This principle indicates that each person in the society will perform his duties as far as his abilities permit him to do. That is, none will be asked to do any work beyond his capacity.

On the basis of these two criteria the remuneration will be decided. It is believed by the Marxists that if this criterion is strictly adhered to that will lay the foundation of equality because none will be deprived of his due share of wealth. But the Marxists believe that only in a post-revolutionary society such an aim can be realised. In the first stage of the post-revolutionary society, Marx claimed, this objective or principle could be achieved. Marxists did not treat this stage as the stage of just equality. It was apprehended that due to differences in ability and talent there might appear differences among men in many respects. Nevertheless, this principle might be regarded as the stepping stone to equality.

There is another principle delineated by Marxists: “From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs”. Marxists (including Lenin) stressed this principle and held that only in a communist society this principle could be achieved. Explaining this principle the author of the above-noted article has said,

This principle corresponds with the higher communist phase of post-revolutionary society. Under communism will there be equal treatment of unequal human beings with all their necessarily unequal needs?

(Amartya, 220)

A musician needs musical instruments for the performance of music. A physicist requires huge amount of money to purchase sophisticated instruments for his research. All these are not always for the large scale public benefit. However, these expenditures are to be met. Some people call it Utopian approach to the concept of equality because all the legitimate and rational requirements cannot be met by the society. Naturally the system of private property is essential.

But Marxists do not share this view. They are of opinion that when everybody in the society is assured of satisfactory activities and requirements there shall not arise the urge for private property. This will clear the way for the emergence of equality. A good social relation will develop among all persons in the body-politic. Marxists have further said that, in communism, when such a situation will arise, nobody will try to acquire private property because that will appear to them a useless venture.

## CONCLUSION

This study sought to evaluate Rousseau's position on the concept of Political Liberty and Equality. It was established that Rousseau's position could be summarized thus: the original man, in his natural state, was entirely free and virtuous. It was only when human beings gathered together and formed societies that they became capable of jealousy, greed, malice, and all the other vices which we are capable of committing. In other words, Rousseau believed that Man's political liberty was hindered by the industrializing society which invariably limited Man's freedom in the State. Judging from the above, we can rightly conclude that contrary to many misinterpretations associated with Rousseau's concept of Political Liberty and Equality, Rousseau acknowledges the fact that although all humans will originally want to be free and do whatever it is that pleases them, even to kill, the State ensures that such negative freedom which will endanger others in the society is curtailed through the instrument of Law.

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