

The Conception of Inequality in Rousseau's Thought: Implications for Contemporary Social Relations

Orji, Chidi Paul Ph.D

Department of Philosophy,
University of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences,
Umuagwo, Imo State.

E-mail: hipaulco@gmail.com, paul.orji@uaes.edu.ng
+234 (0)8149412995

Abstract

The problem of inequality has come to stay with humanity. This study aims to explore the contemporary implications inequality has placed on human social relations in society from Rousseau's perspective. Part of the objective of this essay is to show that modernity, civilization, and political advancements in human society are built on inequality. Thus, the study argued that nature itself has made humans unequal since individuals are endowed differently, but then humans should devise means of ameliorating the divisions caused by inequality through the institutions of law and making opportunities equally accessible to all. This will, in turn, reorganize the menace of inequality in our social relations. Rousseau's idea of Inequality is discussed in context using Nigeria's experience. This study is anchored on expository analysis, which offers the opportunity to expose the menace inequality has caused in our society in the light of Rousseau's postulation and how those challenges can be ameliorated.

Keywords: Inequality, Social Relations, Rousseau, Gender Inequality, Corruption, Private Property

Introduction

The discourse aims to examine the foundations of inequality among men and determine whether this inequality is authorized by natural law. Rousseau attempts to demonstrate that modern moral inequality, which is created by an agreement between men, is unnatural and unrelated to the true nature of man. To examine natural law, Rousseau argues that it is

necessary to consider human nature and talk about how that nature has evolved over the centuries to produce modern man and modern society. To do this, he begins with the imaginary state of nature, a condition before society, and the development of reason. Discarding biblical accounts of human creation and development, Rousseau attempts to conjecture what a man in this state would be like. He examines man's physical and mental characteristics and Finds him to be an animal like any other, motivated by two key principles: pity and self-preservation.

The only real attribute that separates him from animals is his perfectibility, a quality that is vitally important in the process Rousseau goes on to describe. In nature, man has few needs, no idea of good and evil, and little contact with other humans.

Rousseau's discourse on Inequality holds that the inequality that prevails in society is a result of environmental factors and imperfection, as will be discussed in this study. For him, the rich get richer while the poor get poorer. Inequality prevails as a result of competition, greed, and desire, and people are not treated as humans. Inequality brings about the class difference in society, and the majority of people in society, instead of being carried along, are left behind, where only the strong and capable strive and even trample on others just to reach their end, a case of "survival of the fittest".¹ To curtail the problem of inequality, Rousseau aimed at constructing a political institution that allowed the co-existence of free and equal citizens in a community where they were sovereign.

This study will employ expository analysis. This has to do with, among other things, conceptual clarifications, definitions, and explanations. By

^{1.} Claeys Gregory, "The Survival of the Fittest and the Origin of Social Darwinism" *Journal of the History of Ideas* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press 2000), 223.

this method, terms, notions, and concepts are broken down into understandable units of connected ideas. To aid in a clearer understanding, this study will analyze the key terms involved, which include inequality. It will also examine the different kinds of inequality and show at what point one is said to be naturally, politically, and morally unequal and equal. Then it will discuss the natural man in the state of nature and how man progressed from the natural state to civil society, which was where inequality emerged. After establishing the origin of inequality, it will discuss the ways Rousseau suggested to prevent inequality in society. This will be followed by an analysis of the work and a conclusion.

Philosophical Perspectives on Inequality

A study of the concept of inequality may mean different things to different people; whether inequality should encapsulate ethical concepts such as the desirability of a particular system of rewards or simply mean differences in income is the subject of much debate.² It appears that inequality has always been an inherent factor in society, where we are faced with different challenges and questions. Inequality has existed right from the ancient era through the medieval era, the modern era, and finally the contemporary era. Inequality has a lot to do with humans and our society, as it is present everywhere we find ourselves. Inequality is a social problem that has existed over the years and has been discussed by so many scholars in different ways.

Inequality prevailed in the ancient era; the early Greeks did not have their laws written on stone or walls, but they had their laws in the minds of their leaders. In Athens, we see the theme of inequality in their leadership and educational system. Osuji argued that the idea of inequality

² Anthony Atkinson, *The Economic of Inequality* 2ed, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 15.

influenced the writings of the Greco-Roman philosophers on gender, slavery, and the master-slave dialectic. The boys and girls were separated; the girls were to help serve and to help in reproduction in order to multiply their military to help in defending Athens. The boys were divided into two groups: the able boys (strong boys) and the weak boys. The strong boys were sent into the military for training at a tender age to help defend the city of Athens, while the weak boys were used as servants to help in the production of food in the city.³ After the Persian War, which lasted from 500 to 499 BC, Athens became the center of ancient Greek culture, and through inequality at that time, "men began to question the older blind loyalty to the powers, and many began to assert their independence and their right to a life more or less free from the dominance of the reestablished government."⁴

The Sophists focused on questions concerning human affairs, such as knowledge, value, and actions, and expanded the range of philosophy beyond merely cosmological concerns. Gorgias perceived inequality in society and argued that "the laws were mere inventions of the weaker members of the group of the society, to enslave and hold down the strong."⁵

For Gorgias, the maker of the laws is weak; they make laws to suit themselves and their interests, thereby intimidating the strong members of society. Gorgias established the fact that inequality existed; there were weak and strong members of society, and the weak made laws to protect their interests, thereby making the strong tremble on their feet.

^{3.} Ucheoma C. Osuji, *Philosophy of Feminism*, (Lagos: Pelican Publishers, 2004) 35-39.

^{4.} Samuel Frost, *Basic Teachings of Great Philosophers* (New York: A division of Random House, Inc, 1989), 179.

^{5.} William Lawhead, *The Voyage of Discovery: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy* (United State: Wadsworth 2002), 31.

Niccolo Machiavelli's *The Prince* revolves around the pursuit, attainment, and substance of state power. He identified two means of acquiring power: by law, which is fair to man, and by brute force, which is the way of the beast.⁶ For him, man has to do anything he can to attain power, even if it means killing.

People do whatever it takes to attain power, thereby bringing inequality to society. The strong become stronger while the weak become weaker, which brings about inequality in society. Thomas Hobbes's *The Leviathan* stated that inequality existed in the state of nature. The state of nature was one of lawlessness, chaos, and war. Men then decided to come together and surrender their rights and properties to one authority in order for their rights and properties to be safeguarded. Thus, power is being given to one man, which makes him very powerful and above others in society, thereby establishing inequality. John Locke's state of nature is a state of perfect freedom and equality. Men were their judges and masters, each seeking good individually. Locke agreed to the personal ownership of private property. For him, you can acquire as many properties as you can so it does not affect the other person adversely.⁷ This gives room for poverty in society, creating a division between the rich and the poor.

In the contemporary era, inequality can be easily spotted from the end of World War II until 1971, when John Rawls published his famous work titled *A Theory of Justice*, which addressed the problem of distributive justice. He postulated two principles of justice: he believed that "a society should be structured so that the liberty of a member should not infringe upon that of another. Secondly, inequities, either social or economic, are to be allowed if the worst will be better than they might be

^{6.} Samuel Frost, *Basic Teachings of Great of Philosophers*, 180. -55

^{7.} William Lawhead, *The Voyage of Discovery*, 66

under an equal distribution”⁸. Rawls established the fact that inequality existed in society and concluded that this inequality should not make it harder for those without resources to occupy positions, e.g., public offices. The problem of inequality is the problem of humanity. It persists in our society today. This justifies the need to revisit the problem of inequality in this study from Rousseau's perspective.

Inequality in the Nigerian System

The Nigerian state has evolved through the laws of nature and is now a nation-state with territorial integrity. The experience of inequality in Nigeria is seen in social relations, political spheres, religion, economics, and gender. It is such that it has influenced daily transactions in Nigeria. The experience of inequality is not normal, which is why part of the objective of this study is to expose it and reexamine this phenomenon from Rousseau's perspective. This explanation of the various manifestations of inequality is given below.

Natural or Physical Inequality

We often neglect to consider the concept of inequality as preserved by nature. Naturally, all Nigerians are unequal. Nature has allowed for some diversity, as can be seen from its endowments. In Nigeria, there is an age distribution in labor; everyone is not of the same age group. In this respect, we have infants, teenagers, adults, and the elderly. However, this is broad; the Nigeria population census used a class boundary to present the population of people within a particular age boundary.

Political Inequality

Another concept of inequality proposed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau that we cannot turn a blind eye to is political inequality. In Nigeria, the

⁸. Paul Voice, *Rawls explained from fairness to Utopia* (Chicago: Open Court, 2011), 41-48.

suffrage system allows all people eighteen years of age and older with stable mental conditions to vote. The electoral system in almost all nation-states allows for two classes: the elected (the term elected here is used loosely to refer to all elected officials and all political appointees) and the electorate (The elected are loosely part of the electorate because holding public offices does not restrict holders from casting their votes). The electorate, as claimed by many political analysts, is more powerful when it recognizes or uses its power effectively at the polls and after the polls in case of a recall. The elected enjoy more privileges and honor than the electorate in most ramifications. This creates political inequality. The Nigerian situation worsened this case; they elected to enjoy access to the best health care system in Nigeria and abroad; they have ready access to use state properties at will; and they have the power and will to demand and supply. This shows that political inequality exists in Nigeria, especially in salaries and wages, national honors and awards, and immortalizations, showing that politicians are classed.

Among the holders of elected positions, there exist some inequalities concerning functions. The president is the first citizen of Nigeria and, as such, is greater than every other citizen in Nigeria. Nigeria operates three levels of government, which are the federal, state, and judiciary, as recognized by the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. As Jean-Jacques Rousseau states, as in the Nigerian situation, men made these rules. Our constitution was prepared by men, not gods.

Religious Inequality

Nigeria is a religious nation-state. It has three major religions (this indicates that there are other religions), namely Christianity, Islam, and African traditional religion (ATR). Before the arrival of Usman Dan Fodio and his holy war and the British colonizers, the different empires and ethnic groups practiced indigenous religious systems, which are akin

to traditional religion. The three major religions hold so dearly that every person is equal before the Supreme Being. The question is how the notion of inequality creeps into the religious zone. Religious Inequality in Nigeria is an ideology- a set or system of ideas or practices that sees non-adherents of a particular religion as less spiritually or religiously qualified for worship or communion. This ideology of inequality among religious groups also manifests itself in their relationships with non-adherents of their religious groups. They are presented in sermons, leaflets, rules, and regulations, and the whole idea of equality in religion is lost. The idea buttressed here is not to be seen as akin to fundamentalism or religious extremism but as a sort of intersection that exists whether one is a fundamentalist or not. There exists a class of initiates and non-initiates; the traditional religions and Christian religions recognize this distinction. Non-members of their religious group do not enjoy certain rights and privileges unless they have passed probationary stages before initiation. Religious fundamentalism is a problem in Nigeria. Most fundamentalists believe that their religion is true and possesses an exclusive path toward salvation; other religions do not hold necessary and sufficient means and channels for salvation.

Gender Inequality

A definition of gender inequality and some forms of inequality are needed. Most women have suffered maltreatment at the hands of men, and vice versa. Gender inequality is an ideology that motivates the ill-treatment of women and men. Most men unconsciously abuse women. The cultures, customs, and norms they grew up with had gender bias; they believed in their natural ideology that women were inferior to men. Gender bias, sexism, and discrimination are the bane of National socialization. Gender inequality impacts national development. Both genders suffer gender biases and inequalities at different levels in Nigeria. Statistically, and from mere assumption, the feminine gender

suffers the most discrimination and inequality in Nigeria. They are denied certain jobs, positions, and rights because they are found to be unequal to their male counterparts. After all, Nigerian society is patriarchal. In the pre-colonial era, most Igbo husbands preferred male children to female ones and sometimes left them no inheritance. The unequal justice served because of the faltering of conjugal fidelity places women on the bitter end of the judicial system.

Social Inequality

Social class is the cause of social inequality in Nigeria. Nigeria is a nation where individuals control the means of production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. In this capitalist nation, individuals, as enunciated by Rousseau, are unequal concerning their capacity to make demand and supply, all things being equal. Many economists believe that our country is roughly divided into three social classes: the upper class, the middle class, and the lower class. However, this classification is not held by all; some sociologists and economists have posited that there are only two classes: the middle class and the upper class. The upper class consists of members who have greater control over wealth and prestige and yield greater power in various spheres of society than any other class. Membership in this class is determined by the proportion of wealth, prestige, and power, and it is hereditary. The middle class has some control over the means and factors of production and the distribution of labor. The members are less powerful and affluent than the members of the upper class and more powerful and affluent than the members of the lower class. Most members of this group aspire to become members of the upper class. The greater population of Nigerian society is made up of members of the lower class, but they have less control over labor and are accorded little or no prestige in society. Most members aspire to the middle class, while some members are interested in the upper class. The issues of unequal distribution of wealth, prestige,

and power among the three social classes are the causes of social inequality in Nigeria. Also, there is the drive to become a member of a class with greater control over another class.

Rousseau on Inequality

Looking at Rousseau's discourse on inequality, some basic themes are of major interest, such as corruption, freedom, need, and the authenticity of modern life. There is a gap that needs to be filled in order to make Rousseau's concept of inequality solid and complete. Even though Rousseau looked at the main concern of inequality in mankind, thereby proving how inequality was established in society and how man is said to be unequal naturally, morally, and socially, The incomplete nature of Rousseau's work was a result of his not succeeding in providing a possible solution to the problem of inequality. This becomes a problem this study will look into because merely establishing the origin or cause of inequality and how inequality is measured naturally, morally, and socially does not put an end to the inequality in society. This was what properly stimulated Jean-Jacques Rousseau to address the issues of inequality in society, thereby showing how inequality was established in society. For Rousseau, the origin of inequality was established in society due to one man enclosing a piece of land to him, which brought about the establishment of pride, shame, envy, and contempt; thereby, revenge became bloody and cruel.

The Inequality that Rousseau was concerned about was the type of inequality among mankind, not economic or income inequality. He was more concerned about men, and according to him, such questions are not raised by people who are afraid to acknowledge the truth. He stands to defend the human cause before men of wisdom, and his critics must prove worthy of the subject. Rousseau mentioned two types of inequality and added one more. We have natural or physical inequality, moral or

political inequality, and social inequality. Natural or Physical Inequality: It is called natural or physical inequality because it is established by nature and consists of differences in age, health, physical or bodily strength, and the qualities of the mind or soul. Natural or Physical inequality results from a difference in physical and mental abilities and is established by nature. "It consists of the various privileges that some persons enjoy at the expense of others, such as being wealthier, more honored, and more powerful than others, and even getting themselves obeyed by others."⁹ One cannot ask what the source of inequality is because the answer is expressed by the very definition of the word. Again, it is still less if one can inquire whether there is not some essential connection between the two kinds of inequality, for this would be only asking, in other words, whether bodily or intellectual vigor, wisdom, and virtue are always to be found in individuals in proportion to their power or wealth, and whether those who command are necessarily better than those who obey. So, the subject of the discourse is to pinpoint the moment in the development of events when right replaced violence and nature was subjected to law, and to explain by what sequence of marvelous events the strong could resolve to serve the weak and the people to purchase a semblance of peace at the price of true felicity.¹⁰

Rousseau retorted by laying facts aside and saying that in treating the subject, it must not be considered historical truths but only as mere conditional and hypothetical reasoning, rather calculated to explain the nature of things than to ascertain their actual origin. Just like the hypotheses that our physicists form daily in order to respect the formation of the world. Religion commands us to believe that God Himself has taken men out of the state of nature immediately after creation; they are unequal only because it is His will that they be so, but it

⁹. Jean Rousseau, *The Social Contract and Discourses*, 23.

¹⁰. Jean Rousseau, *The Social Contract and Discourses*, 23.

does not forbid us to form conjectures based solely on the nature of man and the beings around him concerning what might have become of the human race if it had been left to itself.

Social Inequality: Rousseau's main concern was not social inequality; he was concerned with moral inequality, and as such, he only pointed out a few things about social inequality in society. For him, inequality is not just a social fact; it conditions our very perception of the world. This is why he permitted moral and natural inequality but advocated for social inequality, which is equality of opportunities in society. Rousseau stated that:

Let us begin by distinguishing the moral from the physical in the sentiment of love. The physical is this general desire that moves one sex to unite with the other; the moral is what gives this desire its distinctive character and focuses it exclusively on a single object, or at least gives it a greater measure of energy for this preferred object. Now it is easy to see that the moral aspect of love is a factitious sentiment; born of social practice, and extolled with much skill and care by women to establish their rule and to make dominant the sex that should obey.¹¹

For Rousseau, this feeling, being founded on certain ideas of beauty and merit that a savage is not in a position to acquire and on comparisons that he is incapable of making, must be for him almost non-existent; for, as his mind cannot form abstract ideas of proportion and regularity, so his heart is not susceptible to the feelings of love and admiration, which are even insensibly produced by the application of these ideas.

An Analysis of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Concept of Inequality

The study considers both arguments for and arguments against

^{11.} Jean Rousseau, *On the inequality Among Mankind*, 21.

Rousseau's concept of inequality. Starting with the argument for Rousseau' made great contributions to the theory and practice of modern politics. One question that occupied his thoughts more than any other was "How can humans live freely within society?"¹²

His thoughts stem from his concept of human nature. In contrast to some of his forerunners and contemporaries (such as Montesquieu and Thomas Hobbes), he believes that humans possess natural goodness and that caring properly for oneself does not exclude concern for the welfare of others. Rousseau also believed that men were socially equal. Inequalities, he argues, are the artificial creation of a social system based on private property and an organized labor system, which leads to the domination and exploitation of some people by others. He has been influential and has specific ideas that people should consider. He endorses direct democracy, in which every citizen has an equal responsibility to agree on the laws that govern them.¹³ Rousseau needs moral dignity in order not to recoil in horror from his kind. Man cannot be savage and noble at the same time because he is brutal, irrational, weak, and dumb. Savage men cannot make objective and national decisions, and the idea of making a social institution of such men is doomed to failure.

Implications of Inequality for Nigeria's Social Relations

Having x-rayed some inequalities in Nigeria above, the study must highlight some of the implications that result from the unequal Nigerian society, using the already listed inequalities as a basis. Natural inequality implies that some are inferior in terms of abilities or that we are not all

^{12.} UNHCR. The UN Refugee Agency. *The Relevance of Jean Jacques Rousseau*.

^{13.} UNHCR. The UN Refugee Agency. *The Relevance of Jean Jacques Rousseau*.⁴³UNHCR. The UN Refugee Agency. *The Relevance of Jean Jacques Rousseau*.

gifted equally by nature. This is the tendency for people who supposedly possess certain natural qualities to look down on others; this can be rephrased as creating a superiority complex in some individuals. From the same perspective, those who lack certain natural qualities are inclined to experience inferiority complexes. These complexes, which are the results of natural inequality, harm the individual and affect society.

Political inequality, on the other hand, creates instability in the country. Many people think that the cause of instability in the country is corruption, whose origins are in the political sphere. However, the study would add that the origin of corruption in Nigeria is inequality. Political leaders enjoy absolute power, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. This inequality makes political leaders subjugate the citizens and avail them of opportunities to adopt corrupt practices. Positively, political inequality can instill in those who have lesser powers the desire to align together to divest corrupt political leaders of absolute power. In the same vein, if a person holds a lower political office and has ambitions for higher positions in the political sphere, it can lead one to cherish competence and increase public image through service to the country. Religious inequality has made many people lose their sense of sacredness. The anomaly created by religious inequality in Nigeria can lead to the proliferation of churches whose mission is to promote equality in Nigeria. Inequality in Nigeria can give rise to religious fundamentalism, which could escalate into terrorism and religious clashes. Gender inequality has eaten deep into the fabric of our nation. It is a thorny issue that should be characterized as a national problem. Gender inequality is a global issue, and Nigeria should also recognize this. Gender inequality can lead to sexism. Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines sexism as prejudice or discrimination based on sex.¹⁴

¹⁴. [https://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/equality“sexism”](https://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/equality%20sexism) Accessed 16/06/2023

From the same source, it is a behavior, condition, or attitude that fosters stereotypes of social roles based on sex. Sexism is especially perpetrated by women. Gender inequality, when nurtured in people, can lead to violence or subjugation based on gender. It does not promote genuine love among men and women but insists on hatred, malice, and so on. People should be judged on their personalities, not based on sex.

Social inequality creates a social-complex syndrome. Most people often say they are not in my class in terms of social standing. Social inequality promotes marginalization and discrimination in Nigeria. In Nigeria, social inequality is not mainly based on castes and estates but on social class.

Evaluation

Jean-Jacques Rousseau posited that all men are born equal and that equality only exists in nature. In his work, when drawing out the origin of inequality, he said that men are naturally and physically unequal. This gives us two ideas of what Rousseau means. How can an equal man suddenly turn out to be unequal? The study does not agree with his first thought, that men are born equal. All men are different right from birth; even if they have some semblance, they will naturally have different DNA and different levels of intelligence quotient (I.Q.). They do not reason the same way; one may be brighter than the other in some way, and this makes them unequal. Another question that should be answered is if Rousseau is totally against modernity or civilization because, in his work, he explained inequality by demonstrating how humans who were naturally healthy, good, and roughly equal to one another became sickly evil, intelligent, and highly unequal when they mixed in society. As argued by Mukherjee and Ramaswamy, "The greatest horror of modern society was the fact that it was a highly unequal one. The human being was capable of being perfect, which enabled him to come out of the state

of nature, but in the process, he created an imbalance between needs and the inability to satisfy them through civilization”.¹⁵ Civilization had, therefore, multiplied the desire for needs, and the inability to fulfill these needs made human beings in civil society unhappy and highly unequal.¹⁶

To Rousseau, civilization was corrupting and wrong. Looking at the state of nature and the society in which we live today, there is a great difference. Economists will always say that men's wants are insatiable. Naturally, knowledge is what every man strives for, and as such, he always wants to know more. If man were still to remain in the state of nature, there would be no way he would have advanced in knowledge. Even without one man enclosing a piece of land for himself, one thing would have led to another, and men would certainly realize that they are not equal.

The invention of property and the division of labor represents the beginning of moral inequality. The property allows for the domination and exploitation of the poor by the rich. Initially, relations between rich and poor are dangerous and unstable, leading to a violent state of war. As an attempt to escape from this war, the rich trick the poor into creating a political society. The poor believe that this creation will secure their freedom and safety, but it merely fixes the relations of domination that existed before, creating laws to establish inequality.

Rousseau acknowledges that man does not necessarily know what he wants or what is best for him and so needs the guidance of wisdom and experience in the form of these institutions to aid in the formation of the

¹⁵ Mukherjee, S. and Ramaswamy, S. *A History of Political Thought: Plato to Marx* (New Delhi: Prentice Hall Limited, 1999), 219.

¹⁶ OP Gauba, *Introduction to Political Theory* (Delhi: Macmillan India Limited, 2003), 45.

social contract. If that is done, public enlightenment leads to the union of understanding and will in the social body: the parts are made to work exactly together, and the whole is raised to its highest power. For this, there has to be a lawmaker. Thus, Rousseau depicts a figure who is distinct from the sovereignty of the people and hence neither superior (a master) nor inferior to the community: he works in the interest of discovering the general will using influence and thus by deduction solely motivated by the protection of liberty and freedom of the individual.

Rousseau claims that justice triumphs over instincts, intelligence, over-stupidity, and irrationality. Thus, in forming a civil community or state, man develops an appreciation of the liberty of another individual within that community, which is mutually protective; the moral intelligence that man formulates is of greater benefit to individual freedom and autonomy than his very same (absolute) liberty is to the state of nature.

Conclusion

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's theory has attained its quintessential states because he made an antic effort to procure the freedom of the individual in trying to evolve a sane socialsphere.¹⁷ Many of Rousseau's ideas were put into practice during the latter and more terrible phases of the revolution. This is because he unearthed the crucial nature and place of ethics within the practice of politics, as he was not interested merely in happiness or unity. Rousseau saw the state as the source of morality, freedom, and community, and its main objective was to liberate the individual from the uncertainties, incongruity, and hypocrisy of traditional society and even civil society after the contract. Rousseau's idea is quite different from Hobbes's in *The Leviathan* and Locke's in the

¹⁷. Mathew Izibili, and Nelson Ukwamedua, "The General Will and Human Freedom in Rousseau; A Philosophical Appraisal" *African Journal of Stability and Development* 4 no. 2(July, 2010): 18.

two treatises on government. He tried to understand human nature, which amounts to understanding man in the pure state of nature. Rousseau discusses two types of inequality: natural and physical. Natural inequality is the difference in the human body due to factors such as food, gender, and physique. It is a product of nature, and for Rousseau, natural inequality is not the root of the inequality found in society. While physical inequality deals with resources, property, etc., there is the invention of men in the state of nature, which leads the civil society and gives room for comparison, pride, envy, and greed and therefore brings about the inequality of man in the civil society. He seeks to elucidate the historical development of human beings in our present-day society. Rousseau starts by examining man in his state of nature. For Rousseau, man in his state of nature is driven by two principles, which are pity and preservation.

Rousseau traced the origin of inequality to a social contract between individuals after an experience in nature. His state of nature initially guaranteed freedom and a good life for the inhabitants until the institution of private property ushered in inequality that called for an organized or civil society mainly to protect lives and property. He considered property to be the root cause of inequality and injustice, which consequently made the individual lose his freedom. However, Rousseau argued that property had to be controlled by the general will, which was the universal law that regained man's freedom and liberty in civil society. He understood liberty as participation and popular sovereignty. For him, both the individual and the state were simultaneously sovereign; both were needed to realize a just social and political order. Rousseau was, all in all, proposing a simple and free life for all, a life with no struggles, no war, and nothing to worry about in terms of pain and hunger. But we have gone far past that; we live in the 21st century and in a world full of advancements. Living a kind of life

that was once lived in the state of nature will not fit into our present world. Thus, property and society have not only helped to facilitate a higher standard of living but also endorse inequality among human beings. Rousseau's conclusions from the discourse are clear: inequality is natural only when it relates to physical differences between men. In modern societies, however, inequality derives from a process of human evolution that has corrupted man's nature and subjected him to laws and property, both of which support a new, unjustifiable kind of inequality, termed moral inequality. Rousseau's theory remains relevant. It is still the originator of those purposes that the state can serve and which alone can justify the state's existence. To this end, this work establishes that inequality is present in our society and cannot be wiped out because it has led to the establishment of an organized society through the implementation of laws. However, to forestall abuse and the negative burden of inequality, the burden of cruelty should be removed, the oppressed should be enlightened, and human reason should take precedence over our sentiment in our mode of operation.

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