UNIT 8 JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU

Structure

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of this unit is to understand and critically appreciate the political thought of Jean Jacques Rousseau, as well as the influence he had in the historiography of western political thought. Rousseau was a ,brilliant philosopher, provocative, equally controversial and highly critical of his times. A modem Promethean, he inspired the French revolution. He lived in the age of reason, French Enlightenment, and while he attacked the ancien regime, he was also critical of the Enlightenment. He is best remembered for his concept of popular sovereignty, and the theory of General Will, which provides a philosophical justification for democratic governance.

Rousseau seems to be straddling two traditions of political theorising at the same time. While his language belongs to the will and artifice tradition, tlie import of his writings clearly favours organic theory of state. As a result lie has been interpreted in diverse and often contradictory ways; for he is at once an individualist and a collectivist; an incomparable democrat and an apotheosis of modern totalitarianism.

Rousseau wrote lucidly and prolifically. I-Iis writings can be classified in two periods. The first period saw Discourse on the Sciences and Arts, and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality, wherein Rousseau attacks the morally decadent ancien regime but lends only a qualified support to modernity, lamenting the unnaturalness of reason, the eclipse of sentiments and the corruption of humanity brought about by advancements in arts and sciences; and appears as a romantic rebel, castigating civil society for its injustices. In the second phase, that saw the Social Contract, Rousseau is more sober, in tune with tlie age of reason, no longer tearing down society but building it up, tlie rationalist way.

There thus seems to be a logical discrepancy between the two periods. This is understandable as the moods are different, but there is no contradiction as his purpose is clear—to provide a philosophical justification for democratic governance. The first phase is a prelude to second that saw the theory of General Will. To understand his purpose and theory we need to begin with Rousseau, the tnan, and his times.

8.2 LIFE AND TIMES

Rousseau was born of a poor family in Geneva. Rousseau's mother died a few days after giving birth to him, and his father was unable to raise Rousseau in any coherent fashion. From the age of twelve he was apprenticed to various masters, but lie failed to establish himself in any trade or art. For most of his life he remained in poverty, surviving by dint of his ingenuity and benevolence of women. For temporary material advantages he even changed his religion and accepted charity from people he detested. In 1744 he went to Paris; tried his hand at various schemes—the theatre, opera, music, poetry, without making much success of anything. Yet his personality opened for him tlie doors of the best salons in Paris, where he met leading encyclopedists as well as influential, charming women, with several of whom he maintained close liaison. But he shunned the exalted society, never shedding his plebian, puritanical background of a low-middle class family.

Rousseau lived at a time when the absolutist feudal order presided over by Louis XV reigned France. Political power, privilege and social prestige was the monopoly of the king, clergy and the nobility, who lived extravagantly at the expense of the masses engaged in a grim battle of survival. Having been denied even the minimum required of decent living by the corrupt and inefficient bureaucracy of the King, discontent was rampant and the desire for change had created a climate of defiance. Sharing the discontent and the desire for change was a new emergent class of the French bourgeoisie, which found the extant order too restrictive for its ow11 development and had joined hands with the peasantry.

In shaping the climate of opinion and the spirit of dissent against the ancien regime the French Enlightenment played a major role. Enlightenment judged everything based on reason and experience alone. Inevitably it brought under attack many things that had hitherto been taken for granted, including the church and tlie traditional political institutions of France. Rousseau shared some of the enlightenment ideas, but not wholly. In so far as the *philosophes* desired change, pinned their faith in man as a fsee agent, Rousseau was with them, but he did not share their idea of progress implied in their modernity and had greater regard for feeling than respect for rationality. Rousseau believed that the part of what was wrong with modern man is that he had lost touch with his feelings. *Philosophes*' insensitivity towards feelings and emption led him to revolt against 'reason'.

8.3 REVOLT AGAINST REASON

Rousseau attacked Enlightenment, in a prize-winning essay written in 1749 on tlie question: "Has the progress of science and arts contributed to corrupt or purify morality?" Rousseau argued that science was not saving but bringing moral ruin upon us. Progress was an illusion. Wliat appeared to be advancement was in reality regression. The arts of civilised society served only to 'cast garlands of flowers over the chains men bore'.The development of modern civilisation had not made men either happier or more virtuous. Virtue was possible in a simple society, where men lived austere and frugal lives. In the modern sophisticated society man was corrupted, and greater the sophistication the greater the corruption.

As for the grand Baconian hope of creating abundance on earth, Rousseau saw more evil than good in it. Abundance to him spelt luxury, and luxury was notoriously the breeder of corruption. Luxury, undermined nations as it undermined men. Athens, the centre of vices, was doomed to perish because of its elegance, luxury, wealth, art and sciences. He also found support in

Roman history—so long as Rome was poor and simple she was able to command respect and conquer an empire; after having developed luxury and engulfed the riches of the Universe Rome 'fell prey to peoples who knew not even what riches were,'

Rousseau argued that 'our minds have been corrupted in proportion as the arts and sciences have improved'. The much-vaunted politeness, the glory of civilised refinement, was for Rousseau, a 'uniform and perfidious veil' under which he saw 'jealousy, suspicion, fear, wildness, reverse, hate and fraud.'

Against intelligence, the growth of knowledge and the progress of sciences, which the Enlightenment believed to be the only hope of civilisation, Rousseau set amiable and benevolent sentiments, the goodwill and reverence. He privileged sentiments and conscience over reason, and proposed that all moral valuations he had done on the basis of sentiments. Intelligence was dangerous because it undermined reverence; science was destructive because it takes away faith; reason was bad because it sets prudence against moral intuition. Without reverence, faith and moral intuition there is neither character nor society.

8.4 CRITIQUE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The themes introduced in his prize winning essay were developed further in his second essay written in 1754 on "what is the origin of inequality among men, and is it authorised by natural law?" The second Discourse, as this essay is called, is a narrative of the fall of man—how his nature got twisted, warped and corrupted with the emergence of civil society, which in turn was necessitated by the rise of the institution of private property and the need to defend it by institutionalising social inequality through 'law'. Here, Rousseau is extolling the 'natural man' and pouring scorn over the so-called 'civilised men'. The problem evidently was not with man, but the nature of society in which he was living.

Tracing the fall, Rousseau says that in the state of nature, which is a condition prior to tlie emergence of society, man was a 'noble savage'; lived in isolation and had a few elementary, easily appeased needs. It was neither a condition of plenty nor scarcity; neither there was conflict nor cooperative living. There was no language or knowledge of any science or art. In such a situation man was neither happy nor unhappy, had no conception of just and unjust, virtue and vice. The noble savage was guided not by reason but by two instincts—self love or the instinct of self-preservation, and sympathy or the gregarious instinct.

The state of nature, which was one of innocence, did not last forever. In course of time, tlie noble savage who lived in isolation discovered the utility and usefulness of labor. Without yet having given up their primitive dispersal, men began to collaborate occasionally and created a degree of provisional order. Later men began to build shelters for themselves and families stayed ,together—a stage Rousseau calls the patriarchal stage. But as lie consolidated his first social relations, he gave himself to labor and to tliought, i.e, to the use of reason and language. This brought in the first fall for man, wrenching him from tlie happiness of the 'patriarchal stage' even as the discovery of division of labor, enabled men to pass from a subsistence economy to an economy of productive development. The emergence of metallurgy and agriculture was indeed a great revolution, But iron and corn, which civilised men, ruined humanity.

The cultivation of earth led to the enclosure of land, and this necessarily gave rise to the idea of property, As Rousseau puts it in a famous statement: "The first man who after fencing off a piece of land, took it upon himself to say "This belongs to me" and found people simple-minded enough to believe, was the true founder of the civil society".

Once men began to claim possessions, the inequality of men's talents and skills led to an inequality of fortunes. Wealth enabled sotne men to enslave other's; the very idea of possession excited men's passions, and provoked competition and conflict.

Conflict led in turn to a demand for a system of law for sake of order and tranquility. The rich especially voiced this demand, for while the state of violence threatened everyone's life it was 'worse for the rich because it threatened their possessions also. Hence the expedient of a 'social contract' was thought of by a rich man to tlie detriment of the poor.

The result, says Rousseau, was the origin of civil society and laws, which gave new fetters to the poor, and new powers to the rich; which destroyed natural liberty for ever, fixed for all the law of property and inequality, transformed shrewd usurpation into settled right, and to benefit a few ambitious persons, subjected the whole of human race thenceforth to labor, servitude and wretchedness.

Rousseau suggests however, that things need not have turned out as badly as they had. If, with the establishment of the government, men, 'ran headlong into chains', that was because men had the sense to see the advantages of political institutions, but not the experience to foresee tlie dangers. To this theme Rousseau was to return some years later in the *Social Contract*.

It may however be noted here that Rousseau was not depicting the transition frorn state of nature to 'civil society' as a historical fact. Rather the above account has to be understood as hypothetical reasoning calculated to explain the nature of things, than to ascertain their actual origin.

8.5 SOCIAL CONTRACT

Though Rousseau critiqued 'civil society', he did not suggest man to choose the savage existence, as some of liis contemporaries mistook him. In fact Voltaire even ridiculed Rousseau for wanting us to walk on all four. In tlie *Discourse* itself, Rousseau exclaims: "What then is to be done? Must societies be totally abolished? Must meum and tuum be annihilated, and must we return again to the forests to live among bears? This is a deduction in the manner of my adversaries, which I would as soon anticipate and let them have the shame of drawing."

There was thus no going back to the state of nature. For Rousseau society was inevitable, without which man could not fulfill him or realise liis native potentials. If lie was critiquing civil society it was because it was not founded on just principles and had corrupting influence. The task therefore was to create a new social order that would help man realise his true nature.

To such a task Rousseau devoted himself in Social Contract. The key to tlie construction of the ideal social-political order was to handle the problem of political obligation, namely, why should man obey the state through a proper reconciliation of authority with freedom, as it ought to be—a task which, according to Rousseau, was unsatisfactorily and inadequately done by his predecessor philosophers.

Social Contract opens dramatically: "Man is born free, and he is everywhere in chains". His purpose is how to make tlie chains legitimate in place of the illegitimate chains of the contemporary society. With such a purpose, Rousseau's theoretical problem is: "To find a form of association capable of defending and protecting with the total common forae, the person and tlie property of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before", through a social contract.

The social contract involves: "the total alienation of each associate, together with all his rights, to the whole community." Each man gives himself to all, he gives himself to nobody in particular: "As there is no associate over whom he does not acquire the same right as he yields over himself, he gains an equivalent for everything he loses, and an increase of force for the preservation of what he has." Reduced to its essence, the participants of the social contract agree amongst themselves that: "each of us puts his person and all his power to the common use under the supreme direction of the General Will; and as a body we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole".

As a result of the contract, the private person ceases to exist for the contract produces a moral and collective Body, which receives from the same act its unity, its common identity, its life and its will. This public person formed from the union of all particular individuals is the State when it is passive; the Sovereign when it is active; a Power, when compared with similar institutions.

After the institution of a state, Rousseau visualises a great transformation in the human being. It substitutes in his conduct a rule of justice for the rule of instinct and gives to his action a moral character which theretofore lie had lacked. Rousseau goes to tlie extent of saying that he is transformed from a stupid and limited animal into an intelligent creature and man.

But such a transformation would be fantastic, quite improbable, if the contract is conceived as a single, specific occurrence. But for Rousseau, the contract is not a single event, but a way of thinking. Thus conceived, contract becomes a process and we can think of alteration of human nature as also being gradual and not instantaneous. Here we have a conception of man whose moral sensibilities and intellectual prowess gradually evolves and develops *pari pasu* with the widening and deepening of man's social relations brought about by a continuous participation in the General Will.

8.6 THEORY 'OF GENERAL WILL

By making the General Will sovereign and individuals as participants in the General Will, Rousseau reconciled authority with freedom as none before him liad done. In order to understand how Rousseau achieved this end, we need to appreciate the nature of the General Will.

In the *Discourse* on *Political Economy*, where lie had first stated the concept of General Will, Rousseau says that "General will tends always to the preservation and welfare of the whole and of every part, and is tlie source of the laws, constitutes for all the members of the state, in relation to one another and to it, the rule of what is just and unjust." It aims always at the public good and is different from the will of all, for while the former aims at the common interest, the latter aims only at the private interests and is a sum of particular wills.

The generality of tlie will is not so much a matter of numbers as of intrinsic quality and goodness, It is not an empirical fact so much as a moral fact. It is an outcome of the moral attitude in the hearts of citizens to act justly. It is produced whenever all individual members of group, sacrificing their private interests, unite in aiming at some object believed to be good for tlie whole group. The general will comes from all and apply to all and embodies the free rational will of all.

Rousseau however recognises that unanimity amongst members on general will may not be possible at times, because while people may be willing the good; they might not always be understanding or knowing it correctly, This happens, particularly when factions make it difficult

for independent citizens to pursue the common good. In such situation Rousseau suggests that if we "...take away from the wills the various particular interests which conflict with one another, what remains as tlie sum of tlie differences is the general will." But there is one important condition here—the result will be general will, only if and so far as, all the individuals of a group are moved (even in the pursuit of their private interest) by the thought of themselves as members of a group, all of whose members have interests deserving respect and consideration,

Such being the nature of general will, there is no problem in obeying the general will but if some one refuses to obey it, Rousseau says that he will be compelled to do so: "This means nothing less than that he will be forced to be free", otherwise the social contract will become an empty formula. Moreover, such compulsion is justified because the individual has given his prior consent for being restrained by the state, knowing well that socially cohesive conduct in the long run best promotes his own interests, and knowing also that lie will occasionally find the attractions of some more immediate selfish good too strong to resist and therefore lie should be restrained whenever lie yields to such temptation.

In other words, when a man is being compelled to obey the general will, by the whole body of citizens, it only means that lie is being aslted to follow his own best interest, which he at a particular instance is unfortunately unaware of. Obeying the General Will is then, an expression of the moral freedom of the individuals. Thus, when general will rules over the people, the latter should have no grumble about the corrosion of their liberty. Because obedience to the sovereign is no longer an obedience to any external authority or arbitrary rule by one or few; it is actually an obedience to the rational part of their own selves or to a self-government—a government that would do what one's rational self would, indeed, want to do.

8.7 GENERAL WILL AS THE SOVEREIGN

From the above, it is also clear that Rousseau's conception of sovereignty is different from both Hobbes and Locke. In Hobbes, the people set up a sovereign and transfer all powers to him. In Locke's social contract the people set up a limited government for limited purposes, but Locke shuns the conception of sovereignty—popular or monarchical—as a symbol of political absolutism. Rousseau's sovereign, on the otlier hand, is the people, constituted as a political community through social contract.

Unlike nearly all other major political thinkers, Rousseau considers sovereignty of the people inalienable and indivisible. The people cannot give away, or transfer, to any person or body their ultimate right of self-government, of deciding tlieir own destiny. Whereas Hobbes sets up a ruler as sovereign, Rousseau draws a sharp distinction between sovereignty, which always and wholly resides in the people, and government, which is but a temporary agent (as in Locke's conception) of the sovereign people. Whereas, in Locke, the people transfer the exercise of their sovereign authority, legislative, executive and judicial, to organs of government, Rousseau's concept of inalienable and indivisible sovereignty does not permit the people to transfer their legislative function, tlie supreme authority in tlie state. As to the executive and judicial functions, Rousseau realises that they have to be exercised by special organs of government, but they are completely subordinate to tlie sovereign people, and that there is no hint or suggestion of separation or balance of powers.

As Sovereignty of the General Will is inalienable and indivisible, it cannot be represented. Second, representative assemblies tend to develop particular interest of their own, forgetting those of the community. Not surprising, Rousseau 's preference was always for direct democracies

of Swiss city-republic though such a preference was anachronistic, when modern nation-states were emerging. Nor can tlie General Will be delegated in any way whatever. Any attempt to, delegate will means its end. As he said; "The moment there is a master, there is no longer a sovereign." It is only tlie "voice of people" that is "the voice of God."

8.8 CRITICAL APPRECIATION

There seems to be an obvious divide and fundamental logical discrepancy between his earlier writings in Discourse on *Inequality* and the later work *Social Contract.* As Vaughan says, the first phase of his work is marked witli defiant individualism, while in tlie latter there is an equally defiant collectivism.

Rousseau himself however never felt such an opposition. In the *Confessions* he says that every strong idea in the *Social Contract* liad been before published in the *Discourse on Inequality.* Sabine opines that Rousseau is correct in his opinion, though it is also true that incompatible ideas abound in his writings. Much that seems defiant individualism persists in *Social Contract:* As for instance, tlie use of the concept of social contract for generation of General will.

The difference between the earlier works and the *Social Contract* is merely that in the former lie is writing himself free from the uncongenial social philosophy and in the latter he was expressing a counter-philosophy of his own. The social philosophy from which he disengaged himself was that of systematic individualism, which believed that man was moral and rational; liad sense of ownership and inherent rights; that man cooperated out of enlightened self-interest; that community or social group was created out of universal selfishness and was utilitarian in nature meant for the protection of rights and promotion of happiness or self-satisfaction; and that in itself it had no value tliougli it protects values.

Rousseau was critical of this systematic individualism in Locke because, it did not concur with human nature, the way lie understood it. For Rousseau, the attributes of rationality, the power to calculate, tlie desire for happiness, the idea of ownersliip, the power to communicate with others and enter into agreement for creating a government are all attributes acquired by man through living in society and not attributes of a natural man. Besides, Rousseau thought that it was absolutely false to think that reason by itself would ever bring men together, if they were concerned only witli their individual happiness, because even the idea of self-interest arises from the communities in which men live. Secondly self-interest is not more natural or innate than tlie social needs that draw men together in communities. Rousseau considered that over and above self-interest, men have an innate revulsion against sufferings in others. The common basis of sociability is not reason but feeling. The calculating egoist of tlie theories exists not in nature but only in perverted society. Consequently, their theories were wrong and had shades of tlie 'evil contract' in the *Discourses on Inequality.* Human nature could best be understood by going beyond the stage of socialisation. This neither Hobbes nor Locke do; for them the state of nature, is a stage prior to political order. Though Hobbes says state of nature is pre-social, it is in fact not because the attributes of the Hobbessian man are those of a public person. Natural egoist is a fiction for Rousseau.

In developing his counter-philosophy, Rousseau got immense help from the classical Greek thought: (I) that it is in tlie nature of man to associate with others in organic ways, which means that the development of each is dependent upon the development of all. Without such organic relations man cannot realise his true nature or attain his full stature as a man; solitude and separatism is contrary to his nature—Robinson Crusoe is thus a false model. (2) that it is only

in society that man acquires right, freedom and morality—outside the society there might be independence, and right as mere force only but no morality; (3) that man is what the community makes him; if the socialisation is bad, his nature will be twisted and warped; (4) that community is the chief moralising agent and therefore represents the highest moral value; and (5) that political subjection is essentially ethical and only secondarily a matter of law and power.

With insights gleaned from Classical Greek philosophy, Rousseau worked out his own political theory. It rejected systematic individualism, compelling one to think that society was more than a heap of individual atoms; that good of all—the 'public good' cannot be produced through each individual's pursuit of private interests or universal selfishness. Unless men thought beyond their private interests, in terms of public interest or the good of the whole of which they are integral part, they could not attain their own good.

Moreover, only when individuals are disposed towards thinking in terms of public good, that authority, which is required for order and, freedom, which is needed for felicity or self-development can be reconciled. Locke and Hobbes both failed in this reconciliation because they had a false theory of man. Locke becomes fearful of authority while securing liberty; Hobbes for the sake of order and tranquility sacrifices individual at the altar of the sovereign.

There is much value in the philosophical insight of theory of General Will and it led to an alternative conceptualisation of state, not as a machine but as an organism; but Rousseau did not care to work out the practical implications of his theory. One consequence of this has been that whereas Rousseau had set out to provide a philosophical justification for democratic governance and resolve the tension between authority and freedom found in the mechanistic theory of state, quite contrary to his intentions, Rousseau became for many an apotheosis of modern totalitarianism.

His theory of General Will unfortunately provided a pretext for any arbitrary ruler to coerce recalcitrant subjects, pleading that they, much as they are enslaved to their particular wills, do not know what the general will is. In this context 'the paradox of freedom' in Rousseau, acquired dangerous propensities. Liberty became an 'honorific' word, the name for a sentiment with which even attacks on liberty could be baptised.

But even more dangerous was the implied view that a man whose moral convictions are against those commonly held in his community is merely capricious and ought to be suppressed. As Sabine comments this was perhaps not a legitimate inference from the abstract theory of General Will, because freedom of conscience really is a social and not merely an individual good. But in every concrete situation the general will has to be identified with some body of actual opinion, and moral intuitionism usually means that morality is identified with standards, which are generally accepted. Forcing a man to be free thus becomes a euphemism for making him blindly obedient to the mass or the strongest party.

In a way such abuse happened because the theory of general will was too abstract and there was difficulty with regard to its location or identification. That general will is always right is merely a truism because it stands for social good, which is itself the standard of right. But how does this absolute right stand in relation to many possibly conflicting judgments about it? Who is entitled to decide what is right? Sabine writes that Rousseau's attempt to answer these questions produced a variety of contradictions and evasions. Similarly Wayper comments that unfortunately Rousseau cannot help us here. "He can never tell how we can be sure of finding the General Will. ...So much vagueness about something as important as the finding of the General will is to be regretted."

Notwithstanding such criticisms, the significance of Rousseau cannot be ever diminished. In defence of Rousseau it may be said, as Ebenstein has observed, that he was the first modern writer to have attempted, though not always successfully, to synthesise good government with self-government in tlie key concept of the general will. The classical doctrine of Plato and Aristotle had emphasised good government at the expense of self-government. And the more modern ideas of Locke and the liberal'school were concerned principally with self-government; it relegated the problem of good government into background.

Secondly, Rousseau also was clearer than the conventional liberal doctrines that the end of government is not confined to the protection of individual liberty but also includes equality because 'liberty cannot exist without it.' In the ***Social*** *Contract* one may not notice the hostility tliat he showed to the institution of private property in the ***Discourse on*** *Inequality* but he does not abandon the ideal of economic equality. No citizen "shall be ever wealthy enough to buy another, and none poor enough to be forced to sell himself." Rousseau realises that in practice it is very difficult to maintain the ideal of equitable distribution of property, but it is precisely because the force of circumstances tends continually to destroy equality that the force of legislation should always tend to its maintenance. Whereas Locke failed to see property as a relation of domination of man over man, Rousseau clearly recognised property as a form of private domination that had to be kept under control by the general will.

Third, Rousseau was not socialist in the modern sense of the term, yet indirectly this part of Rousseau—the stress on equality—has aided the development of the socialist sentiment by sharpening the awareness that political 'liberty and crass economic inequality are ultimately incompatible if democracy is to survive and expand. And secondly that all rights, including those of property, are rights within the community and not against it.

Fourth, Rousseau himself was in no sense a nationalist, though his philosophy contributed to nationalism. By reviving the intimacy of feeling and the reverence connoted by citizenship in the city-state, he made it available, at least as an emotional coloring, to citizenship in the national state. The cosmopolitanism implied by natural law, he chose to regard as merely a pretext for evading the duties of a citizen.

To our present times, Rousseau's ideas are still very relevant, for, how often we have lamented the unrepresentative character of the representative, party-democracy and feared the state turning against tlie people. And as bulwark against such depredation, have wished to strengthen the civil society for the sake of protecting and retrieving our freedom. No less frequent has been the lament that the problems of our society caused by the spawning of several primordial tie's have arisen because of the failure to take the value of citizenship seriously. His theory of popular sovereignty is a constant reminder to citizens to guard against the usurpation of power by the executive, The record of free government everywhere has proved that there can be no reliance on contrivances and institutions alone in the eternal struggle for liberty, and that its survival depends, in the last analysis, on those moral qualities that Rousseau calls General will, justice, virtue. In addition, we an also find presence of Rousseau in Rawlsian theory of distributive justice, in the conception of developtnent as-expansion of human capabilities. And perhaps it would not be wrong to suggest that Rousseau, as critic of civil society is a precursor of Marx and much of the radical thought ever since.

8.9 SUMMARY

Although many classify him as an enlightenment thinker, because in many ways he did advocate Enlightenment ideas, Rousseau is also highly critical of the enlightenment and modernity in

general. Rousseau thinks that civilisation corrupts human beings. He equated civilisation with vanity and arrogance. Rousseau believed that what was wrong with the modern man was that he had lost touch with his feelings. Rousseau's regard for rationality is mixed with an equal or greater regard for feeling.

Critiquing the civil society of his contemporary times he pointed out that the social order was founded for the protection of private interest and property; that private property was at the root of social inequality, injustices and exploitation and that such a civil order was contrary to man's nature.

Since society was inevitable; man couldn't unlearn himself to return to the woods; and the realisation of man's nature depended on the nature of socialisation, the task for him was to suggest the just principles upon which to found a social-political order that would be conducive to the realisation of human freedom. Rousseau accomplishes this task in his *Social Contract,* wherein Rousseau lays dowr the blue print of the required political society. This ideal political-society is set up through a social contract, in the image of a community, possessing a general-will , which is sovereign and which while always aiming at the general good, comes from all and applies to all equally. In Rousseau's theory of General Will, freedom and authority automatically gets reconciled, as there is no tension between the two. The earlier theories, which were premised on individual separatism, and the need to preserve and protect private interests through setting up an authority, failed to properly reconcile authority with freedom because it had a faulty theory of man and society.

8.10 EXERCISES

1) "Man is born free, and every where he is in chains." Explain and examine Rousseau's attempt to bring about reconciliation between liberty and authority.

2) How far is it correct to say that Rousseau's Sovereign is Hobbes' Leviathan with its head chopped off?

3) Evaluate Rousseau as a critic of civil society.

4) Examine the nature and characteristic of Rousseau's General 'Will.