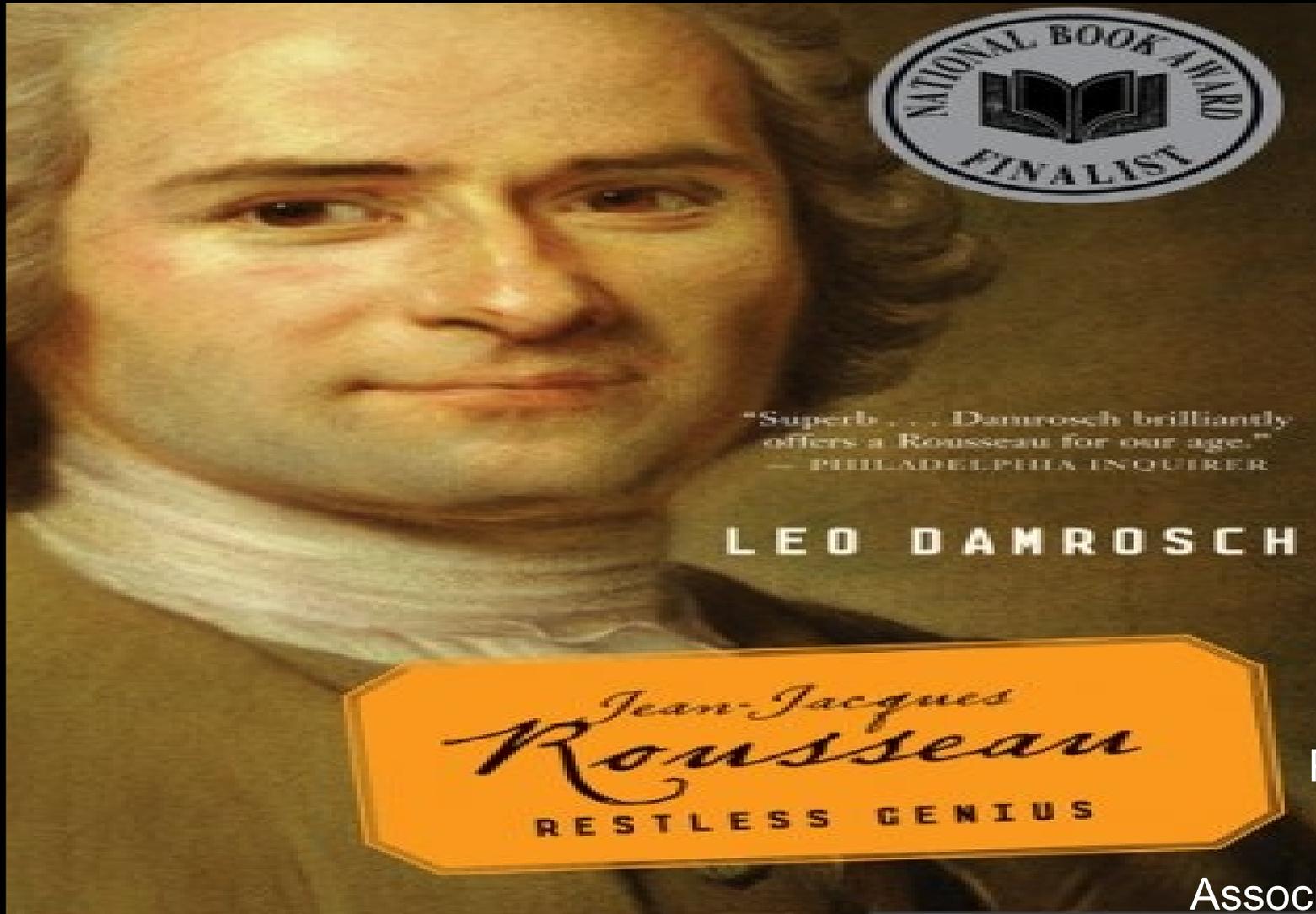


# J.J.ROUSSEAU (1712-78)



Presented by:

Thomas G.M.

Associate professor,

Pompei College Aikala.

# Introduction:

- ⦿ He was a French Political Philosopher.
- ⦿ His works were-
- ⦿ Discourse on moral effects of Arts and Science(1751)
- ⦿ Discourse on the origin of Inequality(1755)
- ⦿ The Social Contract.
- ⦿ 11 years after his death the French revolution broke out.
- ⦿ “French Revolution would not have taken place if Rousseau was not born” Napoleon Bonaparte.
- ⦿ He has a great mass appeal because he stood for the abolition of rights for the privileged class.

# 1. Rousseau on Human Nature:

- ◎ His views on human nature was found to be there in his book called “**Discourse on Inequality**”.
- ◎ He called the man in the state of nature as “**Noble Savage**”.
- ◎ Man lived the happy, carefree life of the brute without fixed abode without articulate speech, with needs or desires that was satisfied through mere instincts.

# Introduction....

- ◎ Men were **equal self sufficient** and self controlled.
- ◎ Man's conduct was **not based on reason** but on emotions of self interest and pity.
- ◎ Man **was similar to animals**, having just animal instincts like hunger and procreation.

# Nature of man in the post Primitive Stage:

- ◎ Nature of human beings did not continued perpetually.
- ◎ According to changes in population, climate, soil, season, manner of life of men also changed.
- ◎ Men started of thinking of the differences between men and made comparisons, led to the feeling of preferences, jealousy.

# Two Original Instincts of Men:

1. Self- love or the instinct of self-preservation.
2. Sympathy or gregarious instinct.
  - When self-love and sympathy began to clash each other- to resolve he clash- conscience arose.
  - Conscience is a blind sentiment which does not tell us what is right.
  - Therefore, man develops reason to guide his actions.

# Two original Instincts of men....

- ◎ Reason teaches us what to do and conscience makes him to do it.
- ◎ It is this conscience and reason that helped man to successfully harmonise the instincts of self- love and sympathy.
- ◎ In an organized society, instincts of man is suppressed when reason is perverted and conscience sleeps.

## 2. State of Nature:

- ◎ His men in the state of nature was a “Noble Savage” leading a natural and innocent life experiencing “Idyllic happiness”.
- ◎ Men were equal self sufficient and contented.
- ◎ There were no social laws and institutions.
- ◎ To start with man had no private property, not conscious about right and wrong, virtue and vice, riches and poverty.
- ◎ Everyone could live happily as he pleased.

# State of Nature.....

- ◎ In course of time, certain factors were responsible for changing the conditions of men and creating unhappiness-
  1. The growth of population and the rise of science and reason were harmful to the state of 'idyllic happiness'.
  2. Secondly, with the evolution of family, private property and other social institutions, the sense of equality which originally prevailed disappeared.

# State of Nature....

- ◎ The emergence of private property people who were formerly noble savages became selfish and started speaking in terms of mine and thine.
- ◎ This led to greediness and everyone tried to get as much as possible for himself.
- ◎ Some get more as they are strong and clever.
- ◎ Others got little as they were weak and dull.
- ◎ This led to the creation of a wide gap between the rich and poor.
- ◎ This led to endless quarrels resulting in the loss of peace.

### 3. Rousseau on Social Contract:

- ◎ To escape from the state of continuous strife people made a social contract each with all and all with each – gave rise to the creation of a civil society.
- ◎ In this state all depended on each & each depended on all.
- ◎ The contract was for the common good & also for the good of each individual.

# Basic Features of Rousseau Social Contract:

1. The individual is made to surrender everything to society, but receives back what he surrendered as a member of the society. In this sense he is not a loser but a gainer.
2. Individual surrenders all his rights not to any individual but to a body of which he himself is a part.
3. The contract give rise to a organic society. It is a moral being possessing its own life will and entity. Rousseau calls it a public person.

# Basic features of Social contract....

4. The contract leads to material and moral transformation of the individual.

When man made a social contract he lost his original simple happiness. That is why he says man is born free but is everywhere in chains.

## 4. Rousseau on the concept of General Will:

- ◎ General Will is the central concept in Rousseau's theory.
- ◎ Society is a living organism with the will of its own.
- ◎ According to Rousseau the will of the sovereign society is the general will.
- ◎ The state is functioning on the basis of general will and not arbitrarily.
- ◎ General will is sovereign and supreme.

# Concept of G. Will.....

- ◎ General will is derived from the wills of the contracting individuals and rule over all other wills.
- ◎ Difference between general will and actual will:
- ◎ The actual will is selfish, irrational, personal and motivated, individualistic and self oriented.
- ◎ Real will is something higher, nobler and supreme. It aims at the common good.
- ◎ General will is the synthesis of the real will of all individuals.
- ◎ It is the voice of all for the good of all.

# Concept of G. Will.....

- ◎ There is also a difference between the general will and the will of all:
- ◎ General will is the sum total of the will of all.
- ◎ General will may become identical with the will of all if they all are willing the common good.

# Features of General Will:

- 1. G.W. is the expression of the inner will:**
  - is the best will of all – inner will is the dictate of the conscience and is always right, altruistic and universal which considers only common interests.
- 2. G. W. is not always a unanimous will:** It is neither possible nor necessary after the state is established.
- 3. G. W. is infallible:** G. W. is always right as it stands for the general welfare of all.

# Features of G. Will.....

4. G. W. is the best will of every individual: The best will of every individual is that which aims at securing the common good.
5. G.W. is permanent, inalienable and indivisible: it is the voice of the people, voice of the people is the voice of God. It cannot be divided or alienated. If a nation appoints representatives, it loses its freedom.

# Features of G.Will....

6. **Compulsion to follow the G.Will:** Obedience to general will means obedience to one self as everyone is the maker of the G.W. By following the general will man is forced to follow the good path rather than the dangerous one.
7. **G.W. is impersonal:** He distinguishes the general will from that of the executive will. As executive is the agent of the people executive will is subordinate to the peoples will. While executive will is personal the general will is said to be impersonal.

# Features of G.Will.....

## 8. **Law as the expression of the G.Will:**

Law is the expression of the G.Will.

Individual is not only the law maker but also law respecter. To him, one who does not obey the general will, will be forced to be free.

## 9. **Security of life dependent on the general will:** it provides rights and liberties to the people.

## 5. Rousseau on State:

- ◎ His ideas on state are found in his book **“Contract social”**
- ◎ He regarded contract or agreement as the basis of the origin of the State. By asking for loyalty to the general will he actually required **the individual to be loyal and obedient to the state.**
- ◎ To him, **the state is infallible** therefore everyone should show loyalty to the state.

# His views on state...

- ◎ To him, other associations are not equal to the state. Thus upholds the **sovereignty of the state**.
- ◎ He tried to give legitimacy or moral foundation to state power.
- ◎ He favoured small states with direct democracy.
- ◎ State is not external to the individual but of very essence of his being **as without the state he cannot** enjoy his liberties in the best possible way.
- ◎ The state is not an aggregate of individual but he views **the state as an organism**.

# Evaluation of Rousseau: Merits

1. **Upheld the concept of Popular Sovereignty:** through his general will concept he held that sovereignty lies with the people & the government the agent of the sovereign people.
2. **Will or consent the creator of the state:** To him, it is the will & not force the creator of the state.
3. **Upheld Democracy:** supported direct democracy & popular sovereignty and rights of the people.

merits.....

4. **Provoked revolutions:** law as the expression of the general will created revolution in political thought & prepared the ground for French revolution.

# Criticisms:

1. Man in the state of nature a “Noble Savage” **is incredible.**
2. **Many inconsistencies are found in his ideas on state of nature and general will.**
3. The concept of general **will is vague & confusing.**
4. It is difficult to distinguish **between actual and real will.**
5. There is no guarantee that the general will **is always work for the good of all.**

# Criticisms .....

6. In actual practice, general will is nothing **if it is not identified with majority will**
7. The doctrine of general will promote the **rise of Totalitarianism.**
8. Rousseau's doctrine of general will **cannot be applied to large states.**
9. Rousseau **makes no difference between state and society.** This could be easily misutilised by the totalitarians to suppress individual's freedom.

