Rousseau began the social contract with the words- “men are born free, yet everywhere in chains” and then, articulated ways in which the chains of civil society suppress the natural birth right of man to freedom. He regretted that civil society has failed to enforce the equality and individual liberty that were promised to man when he entered into that society. Rousseau showed how man moved from the state of autonomy in the state of nature to the modern condition dominated by inequality, dependency, violence and unhappiness. The movement from the state of nature in Rousseau was supposed to ennoble human beings by empowering them to use their reason, and to ensure individual right and freedom. The civil state was to be a stage during which man obeys the general will, obeys himself and at the same time discover his full potentials. It should produce a very remarkable change in the human being by substituting justice for instincts in his conduct and giving his actions the morality they had formerly lacked. The ideas have been corrupted, pride has become the order of the day and inequality has been corrupted, pride has become the order of the day and inequality has been established. Violence, domination and subjugation have been institutionalized, the objective of this study also is to show by drawing from the thoughts of Rousseau that man is born free but everywhere now in chains. The task of this study attempts to show that human progress that should have had alloy of positive impact on man has in some sense become a curse. The chains manifest in pride, prejudice, injustice and violence among others. Returning to some of the principles advocated by Rousseau such as civic morality in education, the chains can be broken. Consequently, this work tends to define the concept of freedom, not in the relativistic sense of the contemporary man but in line with the concept of the primitive man which imbued with qualities.

Keywords: Rousseau, Conception, Man, Nature, Education, Violence.
Introduction

Modern philosophy was not only concerned with issues in science and metaphysics, it also involved works in ethics and politics. There were concerted effort to describe the working of the society and its politics and to proffer ideas how society can make progress. One approach adopted by the philosophers was to begin by describing human beings in the state of nature. In their ideas of the state of nature, man was stripped of all the attributes that they have imbibed as a result of social convention. It was expected to uncover certain characteristics of human nature that were universal and unchanging, on the grounds of which they could make predictions on the future behaviour of man. The idea of a 'state of nature' is the idea of life without government, without a state or laws.

However, the movement from the state of nature in Rousseau was supposed to ennoble human beings by empowering them to use their reason. It was supposed to ensure individual right and freedom. The civil state was to be a stage during which man obeys the general will and at the same time obeys himself. It was meant to make man discover his full potentials. The passage to a civil state should produce a very remarkable change in the human being by subsisting justice for instinct in his conduct and giving his actions the morality they had formerly lacked.

Consequently, this work tends to define the concept of freedom, not in the relativistic sense of the contemporary man but in line with the concept of the primitive man, which is imbued with qualities.

1. Rousseau's conception of man and the state of nature

Jean Jacques Rousseau, like other social contract theorists and some other Writers in religion and international law, followed the pattern of distinguishing between man in the state of nature and
man in the civil society. According to Emer de Vattel, “the state of nature is a concept in moral and political philosophy used in religion, social contract theories and international law to denote the hypothetical conditions of what the lives of people might have been like before civil societies came into existence. Predominantly in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was a common device in political philosophy to reason in terms of the state of nature.”¹

The key question here was — what was life like for men before the emergence of statehood and government and why was there the need for the transition to civil society? It has been the case for theorists to conceive the origin of government in an original agreement called the "social contract" and this social contract was negotiated by people in the state of nature. Prominent theorists in this line of thought are Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Rousseau. These accounts of the state of nature also attempted to explain the nature of man.

Writing on the natural condition of man in his two books — *The Leviathan* and the earlier work, *On the Citizen*, Thomas Hobbes argued that all humans are by nature equal in the faculties of the body and mind. For him, no natural inequalities are so great as to give anyone a "claim" to an exclusive "behalf." From this equality and other reason in human nature, everyone is naturally willing to fight one another in what Hobbes described as bellum *omnium contra omnes*, meaning war of all against all. Hobbes writes that on this state, every person has a natural right or liberty to do anything one thinks necessary for preserving one's own life; and life is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short."² According to Hobbes, the state of nature exists at all times among independent countries over whom there is no law except for those precepts of nature in other words known as the law of nature.

Nuri Yurdusev states that,” Hobbes’s concept of the state of nature helped to serve as a basis for theories of international law and realism.”³
John Locke saw the matter rather differently from Hobbes. For Locke, in the state of nature, irrespective of one's vulnerabilities, right and wrong exist. Murder would be murder and theft would be theft. However, the only problem therein was with the enforcement of justice, especially, in that being a judge in one's case. The one is naturally inclined to inflate one's sense of injury. Hence, a just retribution could be turned into an unjust revenge. After dispensing with the idea of the divine right of Kings as was promoted by Robert Filmer in the *First Treatise*, Locke dealt with the state of nature in *The Second Treatise on Civil Government*. For Locke, “in the state of nature, all men are free to order their actions and dispose of their possessions and persons as they think fit within the bounds of the law of nature.”

"Though man in the state of nature has an unavoidable liberty to dispose of his person or possession, yet he has not the liberty to destroy himself, or so much as any creature in his possession but where some noble ruse than its bare preservation calls for it." Locke writes that, the state of nature has a law of nature to govern it and that law is reason. Reason teaches that no one ought to harm another in his life, liberty and property; and that transgressions of this may be punished. The purpose of government then for Locke is to institute and execute justice more effectively. The rights that already existed in the state of nature — life, liberty and property — are simply recognised and not created by government; any government that fails to enforce those rights would lose its legitimacy.

In stark contrast to Hobbes and Locke, Rousseau thought that, life in the state of nature was not bad, but good. Writing in the 18th century, Rousseau challenged Hobbes, claiming that Hobbes only took socialized people and simply imagined them living outside of the society in which they were raised. In Rousseau's state of nature, people did not know each other enough to come into
serious conflict and they did have normal values. It was the modern society and the ownership it entails that is blamed for the disruption of the state of nature which Rousseau sees as true freedom. Rousseau believed that, “people in the state of nature were innocent and at their best and that they were corrupted by the unnaturalness of civilization.” In the state of nature, people lived entirely for themselves possessed an absolute independence and were content. In the state of nature, people tended to be isolated, war was absent and their desires were minimal and circumscribed, that is, their desires were commensurate with their basic survival needs. There was not the drive to acquire more possessions because there was plenty to go round, an absence of reliance on others, and no real need for extensive social interaction. Although, there existed an unreflective sympathy and general compassion toward others that was indiscriminate and not based on any merits, Rousseau acknowledged the natural goodness of man and believed that one man by nature is just as good as any other. According to Rousseau, man in the state of nature was free, wise, and good and the laws of nature were benevolent. Egoism was absent and compassion was present. Rousseau saw compassion for the undeserving in particular and for mankind in general to be the greatest virtue and regarded contempt of another, which could lead to hurt feelings as a vice and always as bad. Rousseau argues that, it was civilization that enslaved and corrupted man and made him unnatural. This is because in the order of nature, all men were equal.

Also, “distinction and differentiation among man are the products of culture and civilization.” If man is by nature a saint, it must be the corrupting influence of society that is responsible for the misconduct of the individual.

2. The Social Contract and the Transition to a Civil State

The expression - social contract - describes a broad class of philosophical theories and ideas whose subject is the implied agreements by which people form states and maintain social order. Simply
explained, the social contract is an agreement made by people in the state of nature, a state without government and positive law, to give up some of their natural rights to a government in return for benefits from greater social order. The term "social contract" (or original contract) often covers two different kinds of contract and, in tracing the evolution of the theory, it is important to distinguish them. Both were current in the 17th century and both can be discovered in Greek political thought. The first generally involved some theory of the origin of the state. The second form of social contract may be more accurately called the contract of government, or the contract of submission.

Generally, “it has nothing to do with the origins of society, but, presupposing a society already formed, it purports to define the terms on which that society is to be governed: the people have made a contract with their ruler which determines their relations with him. They promise him obedience, while he promises his protection and good government. While he keeps his part of the bargain, they must keep theirs, but if he misgoverns the contract is broken and allegiance is at an end.”

Modern revivals of social contract theories have not been as concerned with the origin of the state. The social contract theory provides the justification behind the historically and morally important notion that legitimate state authority must derive from the consent of the governed.

Just like the idea of the state of nature that underlies most discussions of social contract theories, so many theorists have advocated their own formulations of the theory. In the state of nature, an individual's action is bound only by his or her conscience. From this original position, various thinkers of the social contract tradition proceed to explain the individual's rational self-interest in voluntarily subjugating his individual freedom of action under the natural state in order to enjoy the benefits provided by the formulation of social order.
Hobbes went further to contend that, without society, humans would live in a state of nature where each person has unlimited natural freedoms. The negative side of this overriding autonomy is that it includes the right to all things and as such the freedom to harm all who threaten one's own self-preservation. A situation where there are only natural laws and an endless war of all against all. To avoid this, people come together to agree to a social contract by which each gain the rights in return for subjecting themselves to civil law or to political authority. For Hobbes, “the sovereign is not a party to the contract, only a beneficiary of it and so is not bound by it. Hobbes named the state Leviathan, pointing to the artifice involved in the social contract.”

John Locke, in his *Two Treatises of Government* differs from Thomas Hobbes' conception of an absolute monarchy by arguing in favour of a right of rebellion against tyranny, maintaining that people contracted with one another for a particular kind of government could modify or even abolish the government. For this reason, he is considered (especially in America) to be one of the main exponents of liberalism.

"John Locke's conception of the social contract differed from Hobbes in several fundamental ways, retaining only the central notion that persons in a state of nature would willingly come together to form a state. Locke believed that individuals in a state of nature would be bound morally, by the Law of Nature, not to harm each other in their lives or possession, but without government to defend them against those seeking to injure or enslave them; people would have no security in their rights and would live in fear. Locke argued that individuals would agree to form a state that would provide a "neutral judge", acting to protect the lives, liberty, and property of those who lived within it.

While Hobbes argued for near-absolute authority, Locke argued for inviolate freedom under law in his Second Treatise of Government. Locke argued that government's legitimacy comes from the
citizens' delegation to the government of their right of self-defence (of "self-preservation"), along with elements of other rights as necessary to achieve the goal of security (e.g. property will be liable to taxation). The government thus acts as an impartial, objective agent of that self-defence, rather than each man acting as his own judge, jury, and executioner - the condition in the state of nature. In this view, government derives its just powers from the consent of the governed. Sabine notes the position of John Locke in *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* thus:

> Civic power can have no right except as this is derived from the individual right of each man to protect himself and his property. The legislative and executive power used by government to protect property is nothing except the natural power of each man resigned into the hands of the community...and it is justified merely because it is a better way of protecting natural right than the self-help to which each man is naturally entitled.10

Rousseau, in his 1762 treatise, *The Social Contract*, outlined a version of the social contract based on the conception of popular sovereignty, defined as indivisible and inalienable. Rousseau's theory includes a conception of a "General Will," which is more than the simple sum of individual wills but based on a collectivist or holistic notion. Rousseau argues that as an individual, the subject can be egoistic and decide that his personal interest override the collective interest. But as part of a collective body, the individual subject put aside his egoism to create a "General Will," which is popular sovereignty itself. And popular sovereignty decides only what is good for the society as a whole, Rousseau writes:

The social compact can be reduced to the following terms. Each of us puts his person and all his powers in common under the supreme direction of the general will; and in a body we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole.11
Rousseau begins the *Social Contract* with his most famous phrase: “Man is born free, yet everywhere in chains.” After showing the myriads of ways in which the society enslaves man, Rousseau posits that the only legitimate political authority is the authority consented to by all the people, who have agreed to such a government by entering into a social contract for the sake of their mutual preservation.

Rousseau was of the view that, the collective grouping of all people who by their consent enter into a civil society is called the sovereign and this sovereign may in principle, be thought of at least, as an individual person with a unified will. This principle is important, for while actual individual's may naturally hold different opinions and wants according to their individual circumstances, the sovereign as a whole expressed the general will of all the people who have agreed to such government by entering into a social contract for the sake of their mutual preservation. Rousseau defines the general will as the collective need of all to provide for the common good of all.

Rousseau maintained that, the most important function of the general will is to inform the creation of the laws of the state. These laws, though codified by an impartial, non-citizen law-giver, must in their essence express the general will. Primarily, all laws must uphold the rights of equality among citizens and individual freedom, but may take cognizance of particular local circumstances. Although, laws owe their existence to the general will of the sovereign, some form of government is needed for its enforcement. For Rousseau, this government may be a monarchy, aristocracy or democracy depending on the size of the state. Rousseau's argued that infamous phrase that man must "be forced to be free" reflects the collectivist basis of his idea. Individual subjects resign their free will, as in Hobbes' theory to form popular sovereignty; but since the indivisible and
inalienable popular sovereignty decides what is good for the whole, even if an individual relapse into his natural egoism, he is forced to resubmit his own will to that of the collectivity.

3. The Human Being and Civilisation

Rousseau, liberty is at the root of being human. Considering that all human beings are free and equal by reason of their nature, they should remain free and equal in the civil state. Rousseau distinguished among natural, civil and moral freedom. Rousseau saw human nature as basically good, hence his most famous saying is born free and everywhere in chains. By this, Rousseau means that, people were naturally good in the state of nature. This is in contrast to Hobbes who thinks that man is naturally brutal. In the state of nature, people very much lived in harmony with one another and with nature. Men are not inherently constrained by human nature, rather, men are limited and corrupted by social arrangements. For Rousseau, a man could be just without virtue and good with effort. Rousseau's major problem is not with man or nature rather with social institutions. “For him, it is the society that corrupts the pure individual. Conceiving of freedom as absolute, independent of any natural limitations, Rousseau disavows the world of nature and its inherent laws, constraints and regulations.”

Rousseau held that reason had its opportunity but had failed, claiming that the act of reflection is contrary to nature. This is what he held against Locke — Rousseau asserts that, man's natural goodness has been depraved by the progress he has made and the knowledge he has acquired. When Rousseau attacked the Age of Reason within which he had been classified by emphasizing feeling, the opposite of reason, as the key to reality and the future, his thought is said to have foreshadowed and given impetus to Romanticism.

In discussing human nature, Rousseau assigned primacy to instinct, emotion, intuition, feelings and passion. For him, these could provide better insights into what is good and real than could reason. He observed that although, life was peaceful, in the state of nature, people were unfulfilled,
People needed to interact in order to find actualization. Thus, evil, greed and selfishness emerged as human society began to develop. As people formed social institutions, they developed vices. One of such institutions was private property that encouraged avarice and self-interest. Rousseau was of the view that, private property is destructive, impulsive and egotistical institution that rewarded greed and luck. With the emergence of civil society, people began fencing off their property and claiming that it was theirs and finding that other people agreed with them. Civil state resulted from and into the degeneration of a basically good state of nature. Depravity arose from the corruption of man's essence by civilization.

4. Development of the Arts and Sciences and the Society

Rousseau's book, The Discourse on the Arts and Science was motivated by the question — whether the restoration of the arts and sciences has had the effect of purifying or corrupting morals. “Rousseau holds that uncorrupted morals prevail in the state of nature.” For him, the stage of human development associated with "savages" was the best or optimal stage in human development, between the less-than-optimal extreme of brute animals on the one hand, and the other extreme of decadent civilization on the other. The example of savages, almost all of whom have been found in the state, seems to confirm that the human race had been made to remain in its always; that this state is the veritable youth of the world; and that all the subsequent progress has been in appearance so many steps toward the perfection of the individual and in fact toward the decay of the species.

Rousseau writes that it is a noble and beautiful spectacle to see man raising himself almost from nothing but by his own exertions, dissipating, by the light of reason, all the thick clouds in which he was by nature enveloped; mounting above himself; soaring in thought even to the celestial regions; encompassing with giant strides, the vast extent of the universe. However, in the last
few centuries, Europe had relapsed into the barbarianism of the earliest ages. The inhabitants of this part of the world, which is at present, highly enlightened were plunged into a state of probably worse than ignorance. Scientific jargon, more despicable than mere ignorance, had usurped the name knowledge and opposed an almost invisible obstacle to its restoration.  

The views expressed by many of today's environmentalists can be traced back to the thoughts of Rousseau who had held that the more men deviated from the state of nature, the worse off they would be. In expressing his view that everything degenerated in the hand of man, Rousseau maintained that, “man would be free, wise and good in the state of nature and that instinct and emotion, when not distorted by the unnatural limitations of civilization, are nature's voices and instructions to the good life. Rousseau's "noble savage" stands in direct opposition to the man of care.”  

In the order of man's degeneration, first came the development of letters — what Rousseau called the scourge of letters. This was quickly followed by the science and the art of thinking joined that of writing. The world now began to perceive the principal advantage of an intercourse — that of rendering mankind more sociable by inspiring them with the desire to please one another with performances worthy of their mutual approbation. For Rousseau, the mind, as well as the body, has its needs; those of the body are the basis of society, while those of the mind are its ornaments. Thus, Rousseau avers that, “so long as government and law provide for the security and wellbeing of men in their common life, the arts, literature and the sciences, less despotic though perhaps more powerful, fling garlands of flowers over the chains which weigh them down.”  

The stifle in men's breasts, that sense of original liberty for which they seem to have been born; cause them to love their own slavery, and so make of them what is called a civilized people. “Necessity raised up
thrones: the arts and sciences have made them strong powers of the earth cherish all talents and perfect those who activate them.”

For Rousseau, depravity is due to the corruption of man's essence by civilisation. His view was that people did not have the right to rise above subsistence without everyone's consent. Everything changed as civil society developed, but permission was not given for things to change. Edward Younkins writes that, “Rousseau is distressed that some people become relatively poorer without having lost anything. Not only are their feelings hurt, their right to stagnate has been violated. The poor, weak and indolent did not want to change, but things around them changed, forcing them to steal or receive subsistence from the rich.”

The passage from the state of nature to the civil state, a passage characterised by the development of the arts and the sciences, produced a very remarkable change in man. This change is marked by the substitution of instinct for justice in conduct and giving his actions the morality they had previously lacked. In the new state, “the voice of duty takes the place of physical impulses and right of appetite; man who had so far considered only himself, only come to realized that he is forced to act on different principles and has to consult his reason before listening to his inclination.”

In the new statesman deprives himself of some advantages which he got from nature, “he gains so many others in return — his faculties are so stimulated and developed, his ideas so extended, his feelings so ennobled, and his whole Soul so uplifted, such that, if not that the abuses of the new condition often degraded him below the condition which he left, he would be bound to bless continually the happy moment which took him from it forever, and instead of a stupid and unimaginative animal, made him an intelligent being and a man.”
Thus, this was the transformation of the society that came about because of the development of the arts and sciences. Rousseau maintained that, society corrupts men only insofar as the social contract has not *de facto* succeeded. However, for Rousseau, it is impossible to go back to the state of nature or primitive natural man. Man now needs to be governed as they now are and any natural change in human nature will come later as a result of re-education to indoctrinate individuals to believe that the public interest is their personal interest.

5. The Sovereign and Government in Rousseau

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's basic problem for political theory is to find a form of association which defends and protects with all common forces the person and goods of each associate, and by means of which, each one, while uniting with all, nevertheless obeys only himself and remains as free as before. Rousseau writes,

This formula shows us that the act of association comprises a mutual undertaking between the public and the individuals, and that each individual, in making a contract, as we may say, with himself, is bound in a double capacity; as a member of the Sovereign he is bound to the individuals, and as a member of the State to the Sovereign. But the maxim of civil right, that no one is bound by undertakings made to himself, does not apply in this case; for there is a great difference between incurring an obligation to yourself and incurring one to a whole of which you form a part.24

Rousseau argued that, although laws owe their existence to the General Will of the sovereign, or the collective of all people, some form of government is necessary to carry out the executive function of enforcing laws and overseeing the day-to-day running of the state. For him, the government may take different forms including monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, according to the size and individual characteristics of the particular state, even though each of these systems of government has its own advantages and disadvantages.
The general will find its clearest expression in the general laws of the state. While the sovereign exercises legislative powers by means of the laws, the government exercises executive powers, carrying out the day-to-day business.

The public force therefore needs an agent of its own to bind it together and set it to work under the direction of the general will, to serve as a means of communication between the State and the Sovereign, and to do for the collective person more or less what the union of soul and body does for man. Here we have what is, in the State, the basis of government, often wrongly confused with the Sovereign, whose minister it is.\(^{25}\)

What then is government? “An intermediate body set up between the subjects and the Sovereign, to secure their mutual correspondence, charged with the execution of the laws and the maintenance of liberty, both civil and political.”\(^{26}\) Different states are suited to different forms of government, even though Rousseau thinks aristocracies are most stable; monarchy is the strongest form of government and is best suited to large population and hot climates.

The people exercise their sovereignty by meeting in regular, periodic assemblies. It is often difficult to persuade all citizens to attend these assemblies, but attendance is essential to the well-being of the state. When citizens elect representatives or try to buy their way out of public service, the general will shall not be heard and the state will become endangered. When voting in assemblies, people should not vote for what they want personally, but for what they believe is the general will. For Rousseau, in healthy states, the results of these votes should approach unanimity.

The government is distinct from the sovereign and the two are almost in friction.\(^{27}\) This friction ultimately destroys the state, although healthy states can last many centuries before they dissolve. To maintain awareness of the general will, the sovereign must convene regularly and periodic assemblies to determine the general will. Rousseau's idea of the general is related to the organic concepts of the state as not merely real but more real than the individuals who live within its
bounds. For him, what matters is the whole, of which the individual is a part. The individual person and his ideas, values and goals mean nothing.

The problem here is that; Rousseau makes the individual a means to an end rather than end in himself. “By regarding the individual as means to end, Rousseau greatly contributes to the intellectual collectivization of man.” In following Rousseau, it is possible for rulers to demonstrate what could be termed a vibrant deceptive humanism — expressing.

On religion, Rousseau opines that while everyone should be free to observe their personal beliefs in private, the state also requires all citizens to observe a public religion; one that encourages good citizenships. From the mere fact that God was set over every political society, it followed that there were as many gods as peoples. Two peoples that were strangers the one to the other, and almost always enemies, could not long recognize the same master: two armies giving battle could not obey the same leader. “National divisions thus led to polytheism, and this in turn gave rise to theological and civil intolerance, which, as we shall see hereafter, are by nature the same.”

Rousseau believed that religion divided and weakened the state. For Rousseau, it is impossible to live in peace with people you think are damned. He favoured a "civil religion" that accepted God, but concentrated on the sacredness of the social contract. “Rousseau writes that there is therefore a purely civil profession of faith of which the Sovereign should fix the articles, not exactly as religious dogmas, but as social sentiments without which a man cannot be a good citizen or a faithful subject.”

6. Born Free, Yet Everywhere in Chains
"Man is born free and everywhere in chains." This opening statement of Rousseau's *The Social Contract*, summarizes his whole philosophical system. With this statement, Rousseau asserts that modern states repress the physical freedom that is man's birth right, and do nothing to secure the civil freedom for the sake of which humans enter into civil society. Rousseau writes,

**This common liberty results from the nature of man. His first law is to provide for his own preservation, his first cares are those which he owes to himself; and, as soon as he reaches years of discretion, he is the sole judge of the proper means of preserving himself, and consequently becomes his own master.**

Rousseau, legitimate political authority comes only from a social contract agreed upon by all citizens for their mutual preservation. Rousseau calls these collective grouping of all citizens — the "sovereign" and claims that it should be considered in many ways to be like an individual person. While each individual has a particular will that aims for his own best interests, the sovereign expresses the general will that works for the common good. The general will find its best expression in the general laws of the state that are created early in that society’s life by an impartial, non-citizen lawgiver. For Rousseau, laws must ensure liberty and equality, beyond this, they may vary depending on local circumstances saying that all men are born free and yet everywhere in chains, Rousseau is referring to not just the legal chains of tyrannical governments that is the experience of today, but to a wide range of social chains caused by a wide variety of inequalities. Human beings are free only when they are not yet quite human, that is the condition where they lived solo lives without the full power of reason. However, once humans begin to live together and develop reason, they entered the first stage of civilization, which is ultimately characterised by inequality. “Man is a unique creature of God; he is important not only as an individual but also an integral part of human society. Man is enslaved by the chains of society; some chains hurt this soul and few chains prevent him from proceeding towards destruction.”
In the natural state, man only had the harmless natural *amour — propre* — that is self-love or self-respect, which desired only to be recognised by others as an equal, but soon perverted into vanity — pride — the desire to be seen as better than others. With this, humans created a number of institutions to be able to achieve his longings, including economic class. There was now the distinction between the rich and the poor; social classes and differences in power — culminating in government where the informal holdings of the powerful were converted into the rightful legally-enforced private property of the rich. This led to master/slave relationships of all kinds — boss/worker, husband/wife, among others. For Rousseau, even the masters are not free too, because in a lot respects, they are dependent on their slaves — even if for the psychological dependency on them for the recognition of their mastery.

Thus, everywhere people are in chains. The poor are enslaved and oppressed by the rich; the ignorant are enchainced by scholars; the oppressing classes are also enchainced because they are dependent upon those they oppress for recognition to satisfy their pride. Rousseau believes that freedom is obeying a law or principle that one agrees with. As far as the basic principle of the social contract are those rules to which each person gives consent, then in obeying those rules, and in obeying the government that expresses the general will, a citizen is obeying only himself and as such free. This is moral freedom, different from the natural Freedom which individuals had in the state of nature — the ability to do as one wishes. In the moral freedom, the initial ability is both replaced and maintained. To distinguish between a person's private will — those passions and desires that are for them private and exclusive goods — from the person's will as a citizen (the general will), is to say that under the social contract, individuals are no longer free to do what they privately wish to do but are free to do what they wish to do as citizens.
There are two realms here — the public realm and the private realm. In the public real at least, the above statement can hold true where public affairs are concerned, citizens are not free to follow their private will, they must obey the general will as have embodied in the law, because in this realm, the law has reach. Rousseau also thinks of a private realm where the law does not have reach and in which individuals retain their natural freedom to do as they wish. Thus, the condition that citizens in obeying the general will must be as free as before is fulfilled in that, in the public realm, they are obeying laws that they have consented to and in the private realm, they are following only their own private wishes.

In his *The Social Contract*, *Rousseau* attempted to establish his notion that man, at the core, is good and that he is inevitably corrupted by society, it may not be out of place to glean from Rousseau's pre-Darwinian position on human origins where he suggested that humankind began as a simian breed separated from the animal kingdom by freewill and his potential for education and growth, but ultimately corrupted by developments in agriculture, metallurgy and labour. Rousseau concludes that, only a mandated social contract was the hope for mankind — one in which man submits to the authority and the general will of the society. However, a challenge remains: if mankind has reached such alarming level of individual decadence, on what basis then, can a General Will be established that is trustworthy and suitable to submit to?

As to how man could free himself from the chains, Rousseau points the way to education. The study subsequently examines Rousseau's theory of education.

**Education for Rousseau**

Rousseau describes an early childhood educational method with the hope of minimizing the obstacles of civilization and bringing man as near to nature as possible, for "everything is good as it comes from the hands of the Maker of the world but degenerates once it gets into the hands of
Instead of an educated man being guided by societal norms, Rousseau desires for a child to have no other guide than his own reason by the time he is educated. Rousseau does not rely on social expectations to train children. Rousseau contends that, men can attain this freedom and independence of thought through naturalistic education. Rousseau does not deny that men need cultivation to overcome feebleness and to develop intelligence and judgment. He understands education to come from three sources: "from nature, from men, or from things." These three sources must "coincide and lead to a common goal" if the individual is to become well-educated. For Rousseau, early childhood ends at the age of twelve when the child passes from boyhood into the approach of adolescence. Rousseau divides Emile into five sections: infancy, boyhood, approach of adolescence, adolescence, marriage. My enquiry will focus on infancy and boyhood. "Dependence on things being non-moral is not prejudicial to freedom and engenders novices; dependence on men being capricious engenders them all. The only cure for this evil in society would be to put the law in place of the individual, and to arm the general will with a real power that made it superior to every individual will,"

Rousseau's thought on education was given in the work — Emile ou de (Emile or On Education). In Emile, Rousseau portrays the ideal of education in the story of a child who free from restrictions of an adult's will, is able to study nature and thus learn what he/she needs to know. Emile attempts to "find a way of resolving the contradictions between the natural man who is 'all for himself and the implications of life in society." However, Emile has as enlightened tutor whose purpose is to secretly manufacture the conditions under which nature will teach the pupil what the tutor wants the pupil to learn. Through the tutor's disguised intentions, the pupil, by equating his/her own will with the will of the tutor, is conditioned to identify his/her will with the general will.
Rousseau maintained that, the state must control all schooling because the objective of schooling is to develop citizens who want only what the community wants. This is because for Rousseau, every society "must choose between making a man or a citizen." Mankind was infinitely perfectible, human failings could be eradicated by education. Rousseau advocates for the moulding and socializing of the individual through universal public education. He wants to make men believe more that when they are obeying the law, they are obeying themselves, for him, obeying the law is always in one's interest — that is the interest of one's higher self, not the self who wants to be an exception.

In Book V, Rousseau turns to the education of Sophie, Emile's wife-to-be. This brief description of female education sparked an immense contemporary response, perhaps even more so than Emile itself. Rousseau begins his description of Sophie, the ideal woman, by describing the differences between men and women in a famous passage:

> In what they have in common, they are equal. Where they differ, they are not comparable. A perfect woman and a perfect man ought not to resemble each other in mind any more than in looks, and perfection is not susceptible of more or less. In the union of the sexes each contributes equally to the common aim, but not in the same way. From this diversity arises the first assignable difference in the moral relations of the two.

In Rousseau's theory which could be termed education from nature, a child could explore nature and its requirements in order to learn what he needs to know. The child would have a tutor who would secretly devise situations in which nature would teach what the tutor wants to teach. Believing he was free, the pupil would equate his/her will with that of his/her tutor. This would serve to condition the pupil to equate his/her own true will with the general will. Rousseau, like many others believed in the perfectibility of man provided that he was educated so that he could not want to do evil.

**Conclusion**
Rousseau began *The social contract* with the words "men are born free, yet everywhere in chains" and then articulated a myriad way in which the chains of civil society suppress the natural, birth right of man to physical freedom. In Rousseau's state of nature, people did not know each other enough to come into serious conflict and they did not have normal values. It was modern society and the ownership it entails that is blamed for the disruption of the state of nature which Rousseau sees as true freedom. He believed that people in the state of nature were innocent and at their best and that they were corrupted by the unnaturality of civilisation. In the state of nature, people lived entirely for themselves and possessed absolute independence and were contented. People tended to be isolated, war was absent and their desires were minimal and circumscribed, that is, their desires were commensurate with their basic survival needs. There was not the drive to acquire more possessions because there was plenty to go round. Rousseau acknowledged the natural goodness of man and believed that, one man by nature is just as good as any other. Man in the state of nature was free, wise and good and the laws of nature were benevolent. Rousseau argues that, it was civilization that enslaved and corrupted man and made him unnatural. This is because in the order of nature, all men were equal. Also, differentiations among men are the products of culture and civilization. If man is by nature a saint, it must be the corrupting influence of society that is responsible for the misconduct of the individual. This study has attempted to present how for Rousseau, civil society has failed to enforce the equality and individual liberty that were promised to man when he entered into that society. This study has also outlined how Rousseau thought that civil society failed to achieve its objectives and if anything, put every man in chains.

Moving from the *Discourse on the Arts and sciences* -1750, to the *Discourse on the Origin and Bases of Inequality*, 1755, to the *Social Contract*, 1762, Rousseau showed how man moved from the state of autonomy in the state of nature to the modern condition dominated by inequality,
dependency, violence and unhappiness; The task of the study was to show how man can be freed from the "chains that hold him down in modern society. Although, a chain may be understood as a series of connected links which are typically made of metal, however, in the contest of this study the "chain" that Rousseau postulate as holding people down leading to the failure of civilization are all oppression, obstacles to the effective and efficient functioning of the commonwealth. This "chains" mostly stem from discrimination of individuals or groups on the grounds of their attributes, social, economic or physical disadvantages. But it must be stated here that the act of discrimination is violation of human rights and fundamental freedom which are key ingredients for the commonwealth envisaged, by Rousseau.


Endnotes


7 ********** "Rousseau's 'General Will' and Well-Ordered Society" *Capitalism and Commerce*.

Leviathan is Biblical sea monster referred to in the Old Testament (Psalm 74: 13-14, Job 41; Isaiah 27:1). The word leviathan has become synonymous with any large sea monster or creature.


18 J. J. Rousseau, The Social Contract or Principles of Political Right. Book 3, Chap. 1, 4

19 J.J. Rousseau, The Social Contract or Principles of Political Right, Book3, Chap. 1, 5


