

Human Nature and Political Theorizing: An Understanding of Jean Jacques Rousseau

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Abstract:

Nature and natural surroundings as well as the 'nature of human beings' are much more essential and fundamental notions than the state of nature and the pseudo-historical account of man's evolution from primitive conditions to his existence in the modern world. These concepts provide normative and critical principals for distinguishing between beings. The original and the inessential aspects of man's 'Nature' cannot have a merely historical meaning, as history represents little more than the decline and fall of human existence from innocence into enslavement and corruption. The historical process can be judged only by a principle which transcends it and yet gives it meaning.

Key Words: Human Nature, Human Reason, Philosophers, Reproductive Instinct, Social Contractualists, Non-Altruistic, Anti-Rational, Self-Love, Primitive Disposition, Natural Law School

There is no single and simple definition of human nature, as the history of philosophy presents us with many inter-twining ideas that have contributed to our understanding of ourselves. The twin questions of the character of humanity and the nature of the individual person are always interconnected. The modern debate among philosophers revolves around the tension between viewing humans as packages of genes existing without purpose and as the special creation of a loving God. The central inquiry is whether human life is exclusively molded by physical forces of which we may be entirely unaware.

Human reason seems to have the power to raise itself beyond the constraints of its time and place, and some philosophers even perceive it as the spark of the divine. Nevertheless, more recently, the ability of our reason to control our destiny has been doubted, and all kinds of unconscious forces, both social and psychological, have been considered the genuine masters. Consequently, the free, autonomous individual has

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