

Abstract: Plato and Jean Jacques Rousseau, both giants in their own respective eras of political philosophy, are very similar in the way that they set up a political society and civilization. Yet, upon closer inspection, it is very plain to see there are a number of major differences in thought between the two. Rousseau was very heavily influenced in his own writing and oftentimes directly responded to Plato in his own texts, yet there seem to be a number of fundamental differences between the two writers. The answer boils down to the fact that there are very different views of human nature, specifically the two authors fundamentally differ in their conception of freedom and how it pertains to man's own nature. Plato, as outlined in *The Laws* posits a form of positive freedom, whereas Rousseau's view is typical of a more modern sense, believing there is a strong negative freedom that pervades society and human interaction. By looking at these two senses of freedom and the way that humankind is affected by them, we can start to draw out an explanation for the most fundamental differences between these two authors and their respective eras of philosophy.

### ***Plato, Rousseau and the Implications of Moral Freedom***

When it comes to discussing the nature of human political interaction, any discussion naturally will come to the simple nature of man. How does man see his own nature? How does man see others in relation to his own self? These questions are ones that have challenged the minds of political philosophers from the inception of political philosophy. In this discipline of political philosophy, we have two radically different answers to a very similar question. There has often been a discussion in political philosophy between the ancient school of thought, originating with Plato, and further added to by Aristotle, through the Romans and the ending within the theory of the medieval world. In stark contrast, we see modern political philosophy, a stark break from more ancient thoughts of the way man interacts with one another. Out of these two eras, we see two authors in particular that seem to be very similar in the nature and scope of their own writings; Plato and Jean Jacques Rousseau. It is quite simple to draw a connection between these two authors, as Rousseau either implicitly or explicitly refers to Plato's own work in *The Republic*, *The Laws* or different dialogues in many of his own works. But there is a problem that is lost in translation here. Though the starting points are often similar in regards to where both of these authors begin, there is an entirely different focus of society, of its nature and its function. However, when we look at these two authors it's quite clear to see where and how they differ. The Platonic idea of human nature is one that privileges positive freedom, as we can see clearly in *The Laws* where Plato discusses how someone can even be free in their own prison cell. However, this is in direct contrast to Rousseau, who sets up his own political society simple to not infringe upon the inherent rights of other humans. By examining the role of moral freedom, both negative and positive, within the context of Plato's and Rousseau's works, we can bring to light fundamental and basic assumptions that are often taken for granted when discussing Ancient and Modern political theory.

Whereas Plato is focused on explaining how man is a social creature, the most fundamental difference between these authors is the fact that Rousseau believes that man is nearly the exact opposite; that society is a construct that is seen as a lesser of two evils. The question here is how we can have such similar descriptions of societies and the interactions there within put forward, and yet have such differing opinions of the way that people see the world. How does this work? As stated before, the best way for any explanation is to further discuss the way that these visions of freedom work; to look at man's nature systematically.

When having any discussion about Plato and his conceptions of political philosophy, first we need to understand who is talking throughout the dialogues. The Socrates of *The Republic* can in ways be vastly different in opinion to the Athenian Stranger found in *The Laws*, therefore, it is vital to give a single interlocutor, such that any sort of discussion can be had. For the purpose of this paper, the Platonic dialogue being used will be *The Laws*. By using this book, we are able to more accurately assess what Plato himself would've said, rather than using the mouthpiece of "Socrates" and distorting his own views to get to this idea. Though the Athenian Stranger is still a guise that Plato uses when writing, and most likely converts his own ideas to fit the persona of the Athenian Stranger, the ideas about political philosophy are much more likely to be in line with Plato's actual viewpoints on political philosophy.

### ***Plato's and his Perfect Society***

As with any discussion of political philosophy, it is important to give contextual evidence. Though there are many other ancient political philosophers, it is no stretch to say that Plato through his dialogues was one of the most, if not the single most important political thinker in ancient Greece. Though his thoughts fluctuate throughout his own lifetime, we can use the later dialogues, specifically *The Laws* to find a definitive answer to what Plato himself actually believed about the nature of man. Though we don't have any thorough hypothetical discussions of "states of nature" that we oftentimes find in modernity, there are a number of useful resources that we can use to simulate an ancient "state of nature" in which we can discern the nature of mankind in relation to each other. In Book Three of Plato's *Laws*, the Athenian Stranger engages with Clineas in a discussion meant to take elements from his own society and that of the other interlocutor of the dialogue, Megellius, to disseminate what the Athenian Stranger believes to be virtues of a "good" city and what it would take to create a "good and virtuous city." Specifically in Book Three, Clineas and the Athenian Stranger get into a discussion about the generation of cities. They begin with a thought experiment, much like how authors in modernity begin.

The discussion starts with a question posed by Clineas asking how cities would even come into being in the first place. In Ancient Greek philosophy, the notion of man without a city, a polis, or a country was considered absurd, therefore the Athenian Stranger sets up the thought experiment by positing that a great flood had wiped out all cities on the earth, and only those persons who had lived in the mountaintops were spared from the flood. Furthermore, these persons who had lived out in the countryside were persons who were unacquainted with the manner of city life and society at large. The first major point that is introduced in this new discussion is the way that people would interact with each other in this new world. The Athenian Stranger states that "The fewness of the survivors at the time would have made them all the more desirous of seeing one another." (*Laws Bk. 3*) The Athenian Stranger further adds to this assertion by discussing that since this flood had wiped out most of mankind, there would be a natural goodwill between men. He implies that because of this natural good-will, along with an abundance of land, there would be no need for conflict, trickery, or any of the evils that man can commit upon each other.

The second point to be drawn from Book Three is the actual generation of cities that Plato describes through the Athenian Stranger here. After describing this feeling of neutrality and goodwill towards other men in this primitive society, there is an account as to how cities form. Pseudo and micro societies start to form around both family structures and tribal structures. The

Athenian Stranger speaks to Clineas about the generation of the ancient Homeric cities such as Troy:

“And were not such states composed of men who had been dispersed in single habitations and families by the poverty which attended the devastations; and did not the eldest then rule among them, because with them government originated in the authority of a father and a mother, whom, like a flock of birds, they followed, forming one troop under the patriarchal rule and sovereignty of their parents, which of all sovereignties is the most just?” (*Laws Bk. 3*)

It's clear to see this natural progression that occurs from the familial-patriarchal structure that the Athenian Stranger is suggesting here. The Stranger continues to state that not only are these familial structures important in binding people together, but that they are vital to the generation of cities from the more loosely connected tribal associations that precede them. “And they would naturally stamp upon their children, and upon their children's children, their own likings; and, as we are saying, they would find their way into the larger society, having already their own peculiar laws,” (*Laws Bk. 3*) Finally this discussion ends with Clineas nodding in agreement saying that this notion of the origin of cities according to the Athenian Stranger is in accordance with his own view of the way society works.

In sum, there are significant and consistent themes that run through the entirety of *The Laws*. When it comes to the discussion of the generation of a polis, or more broadly of the nature of mankind, there is a strong sense of the importance of the interplay between people, whether it be in a pre-society setting, or within the mightiest of Greek city-states. While the nature of man is never as explicitly discussed as it is within more modern writers thoughts, this passage from within *The Laws* gives readers a concrete example of what Ancient Greek sentiments are when it comes to the nature of man when he is without society.

### ***Rousseau and Modernity***

Before spending any time speaking about Rousseau, it is important to discuss the ways that the Enlightenment shifted the way that people started to look at political society. Starting with Machiavelli and his writings, the philosophic movement of Modernity in political philosophy seems to have made a fundamental shift from the discussion of political society. From Modernity, we get such terms and notions of a “state of nature,” “civil society,” and many other terms that are unique to this era of philosophy. Though many of the authors of the time period were intent on making a clear break from earlier political philosophy (which for the most part had been written along very Platonic lines). However, though the break may have been definite, it certainly wasn't the cleanest break from earlier historical works. Many of the themes that were discussed in ancient times (man's nature, the way society should work, etc.) do resurface in these newer writings, only under different guises. If the break in Modernity had been as stark a break as the authors writing had envisioned, there would be no possibility of discussing both ancient and modern political thought in any meaningful way. However, because of the same themes that run throughout these times, we are able to compare and contrast the different schools of thought in this way.

Our second writer is the eccentric (as some would say) is Jean Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau, though well within the bounds of the Modernity school of thought, has a number of different styles of his own writing that make him the best candidate for comparing his writing to ancient thoughts. Without too many words, Rousseau is an idealist. He approaches his own

discussions of political theory and man's nature in a manner that is more open for discussion and debate, whereas both contemporaries of his, Locke and Hobbes, would give a very cut and dry approach to political thought. Much like Plato, Rousseau gives a philosophical account of man's own nature and how this plays into civil society.

Though Rousseau was a prolific writer, there are two main texts that he has written that give context to this argument, the *Second Discourse on Human Nature* and his *On the Social Contract*. By using these two texts in tandem, we, as readers are able to have an accurate picture painted for us of what Rousseau wants to discuss in his political writings. The *Second Discourse* gives a clear notion of what man in his primal state, of the pure animalistic human being and how he comes to gain reason and compassion to his fellow man. There simply isn't a better example that Rousseau gives when he discusses his own unique conception of the "state of nature." Secondly, *On the Social Contract* is the transition that Rousseau gives when he discusses the how and why man makes the transition to dystopia-esque society from the seemingly idyllic "state of nature."

Much like his contemporaries, Rousseau starts with this hypothetical "state of nature," a term that has a number of different connotations and implications tied to it. For the purpose of this paper, "state of nature" will be defined as a thought experiment from which we can determine certain fundamental aspects of human nature. Rousseau is unique in his conception however of human nature, as he prefers to start at an "earlier" time period than even his contemporaries prefer to start from. While Locke and Hobbes prefer to start at a time in which mankind is already coming into contact with each other in regular intervals, Rousseau begins with a time in which man could wander around in the woods and valleys of the land for days and be able to be in complete solitude. Essentially, it can be said that Rousseau uses this tactic to find some sort of fundamental aspect of man's own nature that other authors don't emphasize.

Rousseau uses this earlier viewpoint of the "state of nature" to emphasize, more so than anyone else in Modernity, the notion of the freedom and self-dependence of mankind. Rousseau throughout the *Second Discourse* makes repeated allusions to his own idea that man is at his absolute best when he isn't constrained by any other human being. Negative freedom is an important notion to the rest of modernity, however, in addition to this notion of not being constricted by any other, Rousseau seems to continue to say that man is constricted even if he is not able to perform all functions of survival by himself. By this, Rousseau is speaking of the importance of self-dependence for man in his natural habitat. Rousseau posits that in order for man to be entirely free of the wills of other people, a person must be completely free of dependence from other people. To rely on someone else for your own survival is, in Rousseau's assertions, submitting yourself voluntarily to their will; to make yourself captive to their desires. This is in contrast to Locke and Hobbes, who, even though they are strong supporters of negative freedom, don't value the concept nearly as strongly as Rousseau does. In a perfect society for Rousseau, as outlined in *On the Social Contract*, a perfect civil society is one that doesn't infringe upon any of the citizen's rights (or at least as few as possible). This is in contrast of both Locke and Hobbes who believe that there should be a set quota of rights that need to be given up for civil society to work. In *On the Social Contract*, Rousseau works to create a system that values this notion of retaining as many of man's natural rights as possible. In this way, we can see the way that Rousseau values this notion of negative freedom, even more than his other contemporaries in Modernity.

Even though there is a large gap between both of these schools of thought, there is a certain amount of overlap between the two philosophic eras. Simply stated, the problems examined by Rousseau were the same problems examined by Plato in his own period, only in a different context and named in different ways. An example can be found within Book Three of *The Laws*, when the Athenian Stranger is speaking about the generation of cities, he states speaks to Clineas about the relative unimportance of material goods such as gold and silver in the early stages of political society, and further states that that there is an importance to metallurgy and the growing of crops to the creation of political associations with others, but the eventual generation of society. Rousseau writes nearly the exact same content, stating “The poets tell us it was gold and silver, but, for the philosophers, it was iron and corn, which first civilised men...” (Second Discourse). Another example where it seems clear that Rousseau is exactly responding to Plato can be found in the first section of the *Second Discourse* when discussing how family units form into societies.

### ***Scholarly Review***

In his article simply titled “Plato and Rousseau,” R.W. Hall examines and goes into detail about the ways Plato and Rousseau are intimately connected as political philosophers. “like Plato, Rousseau stresses reason, Rousseau returned to classical philosophy but on a new basis, the basis of contemporary science, etc.” (Hall 12) In his article, Hall speaks to this fundamental basis between these two authors positing that there are essentially three main points in which there is so much overlap that we simply cannot ignore that Rousseau not only highly educated about Plato’s writings, but was very heavily influenced by them. Hall states that the way that the way Rousseau critiques society in itself, the way that human nature isn’t merely a product of human society, and the different ways that each philosopher view freedom in the context of civil society are too fundamentally similar to be simply ignored when saying that Rousseau wasn’t fundamentally influenced in his writings and his own philosophy when he wrote his own works. Though Hall discusses different texts, Rousseau’s *Emile* and Plato’s *Republic*, he addresses the underlying concepts that are essential to both philosopher’s own thoughts. The notion of natural man and his self-dependence within *Emile* is something that permeates one way or another into all of Rousseau’s writings. Furthermore, though Plato’s *Republic* does have a different Socrates as the main interlocutor for Plato, there are a number of themes between *The Republic* and *The Laws* that even though they may not be concurrent in every argument, there is enough overlap between the books to draw the connections needed for the purposed of this paper.

Hall brings a number of good points to this discussion. Besides discussing how these two authors are connected, Hall’s notions of Rousseau’s critique of society and Rousseau and Plato’s assertion that man does in fact have a nature outside of political society are very on point. Hall discusses the importance of reason and how it is so very basic in both of these author’s writings. In all of Plato’s dialogues, Plato’s interlocutor of choice speaks of the value of reason, which is the single most important aspect of the human psyche. Although Rousseau isn’t as explicit in his value of reason as Plato is (the faculty of reason is given an almost divine status in Plato’s dialogues), it is still easy to see in the development of Rousseau’s man in the *Second Discourse* that there is a moment in the State of Nature where man comes into the development of reason and Rousseau calls it one of the most important aspects of the development of society.

However, the most important part of Hall’s piece is the notion of positive and negative moral freedoms. His discussion at the end of the paper is relatively short, but leads to some very

important implications. Essentially his argument is that there is a divide between the two authors in their conceptions of moral freedom, however, the role of moral freedom is the same within the structure of both Plato's view of man's nature and that of Rousseau's. Even though there are completely different notions of freedom and what rights are afforded to people, there is the same basis point for each philosopher on which both philosopher builds their assertions about the nature of man. Put clearly, the role of moralistic freedom, whether it be negative or positive, is largely similar in both authors' works. Both Plato and Rousseau, though having differing opinions on whether man is naturally a social animal or not, still construct their "ideal" societies in accordance with their own opinion of moralistic freedom.

Here is a place where the article by Hall doesn't do the relation, and more importantly, the differences between Plato and Rousseau justice. The discussion he has between the two philosophers is a rather short one, lasting roughly half of a page and doesn't give any definitive argument in either direction. The argument shows the connection between Plato and Rousseau. However, there is a fundamental building block that Hall is missing. The assertions that Hall makes in his article are sufficient for his own purpose in writing, however, he fails to take the next logical step in this argument. If these two authors are so connected, what are the differences between them? Where can we draw distinctions? Because of the same function that moral freedom holds to both philosophers in man's personal nature and the way this sense of nature shapes society, we can use this sense of moral freedom to create a comparison between these two philosophers that can give us an understanding about the true difference between not only Plato and Rousseau, but between these two epochs of political philosophy.

By using this similar sense of purpose for moralistic freedom as a method of comparison, and the definitive connection between both Plato and Rousseau, we can start to make connections between the two authors. Using Hall's essay as a springboard, it is now possible to approach our main objective: showing how this sense of moral freedom is the fundamental difference between Plato and Rousseau in their conception of man's own nature. As was stated before, Plato is an advocate of positive freedom i.e. where someone is *given* the ability to do whatever they want to pursue. Though man is capable of pursuing and doing whatever it is he pleases when he is outside of society, he is lacking the necessary structures around him in which he can order his own soul and truly become virtuous. This is best shown in the *Laws* when a citizen is in violation of the laws of the polis of Magnesia, citizens are "forced" to be free, i.e., they are given the means to pursue the improvement of their soul.

It is important to stress that a man is not able to attain the pure virtue of his own soul without society. In Book Three of *The Laws*, the Athenian Stranger gives an account of man without society, but man functions maximally with other persons around him. It is evident to see this thought process as the Athenian Stranger posits that man is excited to come into contact with other persons after this hypothetical flood that wipes out civilized humanity. The Athenian Stranger doesn't even give any discussion of whether or not the remnants of humanity even have any options of not forming the associations that are prerequisites for society. The way that people come into contact and interact with each other prior to the generation of any sort of society sets up the assumption that man is a social creature.

In stark contrast to this notion. Rousseau's conception of man's nature is one that fully embraces negative freedom, i.e., the notion that one can act in whatever they please, insomuch as it doesn't invade the rights of any other person's rights. Rousseau is so obsessed with this notion

of negative freedom that he believes man in his ideal nature is one where someone can wander for days, completely self-sufficient, without seeing so much as another soul. Rousseau paints a picture of the lost nobility of natural man, fierce and independent, unbowed and unbroken before the turbulence and trials that is survival in the State of Nature. Rousseau is so far to the extreme of preserving the rights of individual man that he sets up a legislative body in *On the Social Contract* that it is nigh impossible for any governing body, be it run by one person or the entirety of the civil society to impede on the rights of any other person. When introducing what he calls the “general will,” Rousseau suggests that he is positing a sense of legislation where no man is greater than any other in the most important of civil duties; of the creation of laws. Though it seems that he is creating a system in which there is a heavy focus on consensus building and cooperation, he does so to protect individuals from having their natural rights impeded upon. Though humanity has now entered into the bindings of the social compact, Rousseau believes he can create the society in such a way that only a very limited amount of personal rights can be taken from each individual.

### ***Moralistic Freedom as a Measure of Distinction***

With such differing opinions of how man interacts with each other, how can we draw any sort of connection between these two writers? It is vitally important to remember that Rousseau is writing, in many cases, in response to Plato. There are numerous passages in which Plato and Rousseau have nearly the same approach to discussing the way that political society functions and man’s fundamental nature. However, we see that Rousseau despises civil society, and only tolerates it due to it being a lesser of two evils (the evils being existing in a Lockean society where an individual can be subjected to the will of others and Rousseau’s own theory of the ideal state), whereas Plato essentially calls society the single most important thing that man can do.

Again, this is where the main portion of positive and negative freedom have their implications in this argument. Up to now, we have simply described the relation that moral freedom have in relation to Plato and Rousseau themselves, but we haven’t discussed what they are in relation to each other. When discussed side by side, we can see that there are a number of shocking discoveries, that it is clearly evident that the most important factor in discussing the differences between Plato and Rousseau are their connotations of moral freedom and the role that each plays in society.

When we speak of the ancient philosophy in any regard, we talk about society being the most important aspect of a man’s existence. This is even more evident in *The Laws* when the Athenian Stranger discusses the merits of Magnesia as a whole. Though there are a number of different mechanisms within the city proper (the Nocturnal Council in particular) that seem to have rather negative (in regards to moral freedom) connotations, we need to remember the whole point of the city. Any city is only made great by those who inhabit it. This is the notion of a city that Plato wants to portray. That even if a citizen was in the city prisons due to a crime so heinous as impiety, there is still a sense of positive freedom. With a city that is solely focused on the development of reason and the taming of passions, there can be no doubt that the city of Magnesia is itself a city that focuses on the betterment of its own citizens. By using reason to order this city of Magnesia, the Athenian Stranger sets up a society in which a man is able to pursue what he wills. However, what he wills is that perfection of his own soul due to the way the city is set up. A man who values reason above his spirit and his own passions will see this reasoning principle and see its importance.

In direct response to this, we have Modernity, and more specifically Rousseau, we see this expansive view of negative freedom, i.e. one can do whatever they please so long as it doesn't interfere with other's freedoms. Rousseau's viewpoint of human nature is essentially the textbook definition of what negative freedom is. Even in the language of the *Second Discourse* it's plain to see this emphasis of the importance of negative freedom to Rousseau. He describes natural man as being a creature that is most free only when others do not impede him in what he wants to do. He spends the first part of the *Second Discourse* discussing the ways that man had become weak by not being in the state of nature, of the ways that man is most free when is able to wander around in the woods and do all of these tasks for himself. Meaning, there is an overwhelming rhetoric that man in his natural habitat is the most free, where he doesn't have to depend on any other person for any means to extend his own life.

Furthermore, these ideas of negative and positive freedom not only affect the way that each philosopher looks at man's own nature, but because of man's nature, they must adjust their political societies such that man's nature can be accommodated for. While both authors stress the importance of education (Plato in *The Republic* and Rousseau in *Emile*), the education that people receive is an education that helps them to deal with the nature of people. In society, there are discipline systems that are put into place to coerce people who aren't acting according to their own nature. Conflict, both external and internal is shaped by man's own nature.

In *The Laws*, Plato stresses the fact that a man is most free within this society. He is most free when the correct structures have been set up around him by reason as a guiding principle, which will help him to become the most virtuous citizen that he can be. When every citizen within the city is virtuous, the city will flourish and prosper. Plato explains in later books of *The Laws* of what should be done with those who simply refuse to buy into this should either be imprisoned, thrown out of the city, or done away with in some other fashion. So extreme is Plato's view of the importance of positive freedom that he advocates for those who don't use reason in the way that he prescribes are excluded and kicked out of the political society that he sets up in Magnesia.

The Athenian Stranger speaks of the generation of cities in Book Three as something that is simple and natural. He discusses the way that people come together, but most importantly, there is language he includes that shows that there is a certain significance behind why people come together within society. He speaks about how when people see each other in a state of lawlessness and chaos that they feel a certain affection for each other. He states later in the discussion that through this affection, people come together and create legislative systems. Plato posits that because of the inherent nature of man, because of the engrained affection that we feel for each other, that we come together and form societies. The Athenian Stranger continues to assert in Book Three that each man comes to exist under these laws, this legislation because they believe it to be right and just that there be laws that govern a society. This point that man himself believes that laws and legislation are right and just is a critical point when looking at Rousseau and his sentiments on political societies.

On the opposite extreme of the spectrum, it is very plain to see the way that this extreme view of negative freedom that Rousseau illustrates. We have already seen the way that Rousseau speaks about how negative freedom is so very vital to natural man, but this leaves us with a question; why at all, if the state of nature is so idyllic, fall into the pitfalls and problems of society? The Athenian Stranger in the *Laws* speaks of the ills of society, however The Athenian

Stranger still speaks of the importance of society in general. Completely in contrast is Rousseau, who asserts that society is corrupted and weakens the natural strength of mankind simply because man is not only constricted in his own freedoms by laws and customs of society, but because of the structure of society, man by definition lacks the ability to be self-sufficient, and therefore loses the ability to live to the best that we can be, provided our nature. Rousseau constantly critiques society in the second section of the *Second Discourse*, calling it the root of all trickery, evils and cunning that are employed by mankind, yet still man comes into society.

Even after society is formed in Rousseau's eyes, it is still easy to see the difference in conceptions of moral freedom between the two authors. When he is describing the way the Sovereign works in *On the Social Contract*, he goes to great lengths to preserve as much as this natural freedom as he can within society. Though Rousseau cannot completely keep man free within the loving confines of the state of nature, it is important to notice that within the civil society that Rousseau suggests that there is an element of negative freedom being allowed within the society. The Sovereign is set up in such a manner that no person's individual rights are being trampled within society when it comes to legislation. Certainly one has to submit themselves to the executive branches of Rousseau's government, but in the way that the Sovereign functions, there is seemingly no man that is more important than the other, implying that there is a sense that no man is able to claim any sort of authority over his fellow citizen. This is a subtle, but important distinction that needs to be made when examining these two different authors. Even though Rousseau outlines a number of measures in which persons who don't conform to the "general will" of the Sovereign, the reason they are rebuked is because the rulings of the Sovereign are in accordance with what is best for the society. What is best for Rousseau's society? It is reasonable to say a negative sense of freedom (even if it isn't in its pure natural sense) still is at work. It is reasonable to say that the best society for Rousseau is one in which man, though he still has given up a number of his natural rights that are due to him, still retains most of his natural freedom, even within the confines of society.

Furthermore, when discussing societies, it is also important to understand the overall value that each author places upon civil society. The dichotomy here is a simple one to see, with ancient philosophy stating that it is within the nature of man to embrace society, as living with one another is something that is so central to man's own psyche that it would be foolish to an ancient thinker to even consider man living out on his own. Man's nature in Modernity again is this highly free person who is able to do basically whatever they please in life, without the constraints of society, and that this is an ideal for living. However, we see that both of these philosophers believe that man still comes into contact with one another, and because of that, form associations with one another that eventually evolve into full blown civilization. The answer here for the ancients is simple, as Plato implies that society is just what man was meant to do. However, when we discuss Rousseau, it is hard to understand why he would want his perfect state of nature to fall into civil society.

Though he espouses the values of a natural man in nearly every single one of his writings, it is important to stress that Rousseau does suggest that man does eventually find his way into society. He speaks of the ills that society causes among humanity and that this is a direct consequence of our association. However, in Book Three of the *Laws*, the Athenian Stranger also posits nearly the same problems with society. So close is the similarity between the problems with society that it wouldn't be too far from the truth to say that Rousseau copied the same problems verbatim from Plato's writings. A question should be brought up. Why is it that

the same problems are brought up with both of the writings of Plato and Rousseau and only Rousseau says that society is something that should be scorned? The answer again is the different conception of freedom that both authors are using.

In the *Laws*, there are several sections considering dissent within the city and punishment in which the Athenian Stranger offers some shocking answers. It is foolish to say the *Laws* is a book that leaves the reader content at its finish. The Athenian Stranger offers some quasi-Orwellian answers to the handling of dissenters, or even those who don't believe in the purpose of Magnesia. Since Magnesia is founded on and guided by reason itself, the Athenian Stranger doesn't hesitate to throw the people who are troublemakers out of the city, or worse, to say that they should be evicted from the city, as they will never be able to live in accordance with the laws and rules of the city. However, Plato's interlocutors simply agree with the Athenian Stranger, saying it would make sense for these dissenters to be thrown out. In this ancient conception of the way society works, the citizens are "the most free" when they are within society. This again is a prime example of the way that positive freedom is so pervasive within any of Plato's writings.

To examine the way that negative freedom affects Rousseau's final judgment of society, we need only look at the closing statement of the *Second Discourse*...

"It follows from this survey that, as there is hardly any inequality in the state of nature, all the inequality which now prevails owes its strength and growth to the development of our faculties and the advance of the human mind, and becomes at last permanent and legitimate by the establishment of property and laws. Secondly, it follows that moral inequality, authorised by positive right alone, clashes with natural right, whenever it is not proportionate to physical inequality; a distinction which sufficiently determines what we ought to think of that species of inequality which prevails in all civilised countries; since it is plainly contrary to the law of nature, however defined, that children should command old men, fools wise men, and that the privileged few should gorge themselves with superfluities, while the starving multitude are in want of the bare necessities of life." (Second Discourse)

Certainly it is harder to find a more damning view of society than the one we find in the *Second Discourse*. Rousseau makes it abundantly clear that the way that society brings mankind down is completely unacceptable in his eyes. The notion that man is no longer free in the negative sense to Rousseau is what makes this version of society different, despite Rousseau facing the exact same problems within society that Plato faces. This disjunction in views of man in political society is directly affected by the way that each writer faces the nature of man and his own perceptions of moral freedom.

Upon careful examination of the arguments offered by Plato and Rousseau in their arguments, it is easy to see there is a definite relation between these two authors. However, these ties together are ultimately overshadowed by the striking rhetorical and contextual evidence that there is too strong a disagreement to give any sort of meaningful discussion between the relations between these two men. However, as we examine the difference in perspective in moralistic freedom, it becomes clear that there is indeed a lot of overlap between these two philosophers, and that the main reason they are so disparate is the different ways that they conceive man's nature is through this difference of opinion.

### *Conclusion*

By using this model that Hall has put forth to not only describe the ties between Plato and Rousseau, but Hall also introduces the notion of moral freedom. By taking moral freedom and examining the role that it plays between these two giants in political philosophy, it shows that moral freedom can be considered if not the most important, one of the most significant factors in explaining the gap not only between Plato and Rousseau in their writings, but that of both ancient and modern philosophy. The way that moral freedom is distributed into every aspect of political philosophy is so fundamental that it simply cannot be discredited, but affirmed as the first notion to consider when we look at these two different epochs within political philosophy. By taking two both Plato and Rousseau, it is easy to spot the underlying themes between ancient and modern philosophy, to see that the same questions are being answered by these writers. The only difference between these writers is what they call these fundamental questions that we have about our very natures. Through careful examination, it is possible to see through Plato and Rousseau that because of differing views of moral freedom and its implications, we can learn more about basic assumptions that the scholarly community makes within political theory.

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