

Questionnaire: "On the Social Contract, or Principles of Political Right" Jean-Jacques Rousseau

1. Introduction

- a. What is Rousseau's objective in the text?
 - i. Distinguish the realm of normative and descriptive politics respectively.
 - 1. Describe them.

2. Chapter I and II and IV

- a. What does Rousseau mean by "Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains"?
 - i. How does he explain this happening?
- b. How is social order created?
- c. Describe the nature of man in Rousseau's theory.
 - i. What is Rousseau's view on Hobbes' theory regarding equality?
 - ii. Slavery?

3. Chapter III

- a. Explain his argument that supports that "force does not bring about right".

4. Chapter IV

- a. Why, according to Rousseau, the relationship of the slave to the master is not analogous to that of the subjects to the king?
 - i. Explain the contradictory nature of conventions under the state of alienation.
 - ii. Explain the differences between public interest v. private interest in **chapter V**
 - 1. According to **chapter V**, what would happen after the despot dies?
- b. Why does conflict among men arise?
 - i. Why is it not possible in a state of nature?
 - ii. Why is it not possible in a civil state?
 - iii. Under what circumstances are men enemies?

5. Chapter V and VI

- a. What is the true foundation of society?
 - i. What happens if this first convention does not exist?
- b. What is the "fundamental problem" that arises from the need for a civil society and the nature of men?
- c. Why would men enter into a social compact?
- d. What is the main clause of the compact?
 - i. What are its consequences?
 - ii. What is its product?

6. Chapter VII

- a. Explain the twofold commitment contracted by each person through the social convention.
- b. Explain Rousseau's statement, "The sovereign, by the mere fact that exists, is always all that it should be".
- c. Why does he state that different from the sovereign, the subjects do need to offer guarantees of fidelity?

- d. Explain why, according to Rousseau, by being obligated by the community to follow the general will, the individual recovers his/her freedom?
7. Chapter VIII
 - a. Explain the change the passage from the state of nature to the civil state produces in men.
 - b. Differentiate natural from civil liberty and possession from proprietary ownership.
 - c. Explain why Rousseau's claim that moral liberty is what makes man *master of himself*.
8. Book II: Chapter I, II, III, IV
 - a. Explain the ideas expressed in Chapter I and II regarding the rights and the characteristics of the sovereign.
 - b. Reading Chapter III, do you find any connections with our discussions about Socrates'/Plato's theory? If so, explain.
 - c. Reading Chapter IV, explain what is an act of sovereignty? Expand on its legitimacy.
9. Chapter VI
 - a. What is a law? What are its functions? What are its consequences?
 - b. Why does Rousseau favors a Republic?