

Questionnaire: John Stuart Mill's "On Liberty"

1. Chapter I

- a. What is the subject of the text?—at the beginning and the end of the chapter.
 - i. Describe the concept
- b. How has the struggle between Liberty and Authority changed?
 - i. Explain and describe the understanding of each concept in the different contexts.
 - ii. Why did the old model center more on the limitations of the ruler?
 - iii. What was the new model's emphasis?
 - iv. Identify the prominent figures for each model.
- c. How did they try to achieve "Liberty" in the old model?—two modes.
- d. What does the new model guarantee to the community?
- e. What is Mill's criticism of this new model when put into practice?
 - i. What is Mill's conclusion?
- f. Explain Mill's thoughts on the "tyranny of the majority".
 - i. What type of protection do people need in this new model?
- g. How is Ethics involved in Mill's reasoning to find an adjustment between individual independence and social control?
 1. Explain the relationship between morality of community and the ruling classes?
 2. How are the propriety or impropriety of the government generally judged?
- h. What is the principle to limit the control of the society over the individual?
 - i. What is not a sufficient warrant to interfere with other's liberties against their will?
 1. What does "paternalistic" mean?
 - ii. What is within and what is beyond society's responsibilities?
- i. Why does Mill emphasize that the human beings referred to by the principles are those that are in their "maturity of their faculties"?
 - i. What are the implications of this qualification?
- j. Justify the claim that John Stuart Mill is a Utilitarian.
 - i. Explain the concept of negative responsibility and relate it to his theory.
- k. What is the proper domain of human liberty?

2. Chapter II

- a. What is the purpose of the "liberty of press"?
- b. Why is silencing other's opinion inherently wrong?
 - i. Explain the objections to his arguments.
 - ii. What is Mill's answer?
 - iii. Note the importance of discussion in the acquisition of knowledge.
- c. What is the attitude that shows infallibility?
- d. Why does Mill recount the story of Socrates?

- e. What is the problem with basing the right of the government to abolish or impart certain opinions on the basis of their usefulness?
- f. Why does Mill claim the ban on dissenting opinion harm the orthodox more than the heretics?
- g. Why is for Mill freedom of thinking required?
 - i. Relate it to the idea of the dignity of humanity.
- h. What does Mill mean when he claims that when one hold an uncontested idea to be true, “truth thus held... [is] accidentally clinging to the words which enunciate a truth”?
- i. Explain the following claim, “...a party of order or stability, and a party of progress or reform, are both necessary elements of a healthy state of political life”.

3. Chapter III

- a. What are the reasons that support the performance of his/her individuality?
- b. What is the proviso for the carrying out the individuality of men?
- c. What is the difference between opinions and actions?
- d. When can an opinion incur in punishment?
- e. Why is individuality important?
 - i. What is the consequence of understanding this importance?
 - ii. How is it related to the condition of man?
- f. Why is individuality not valued?
 - i. Go back to the concept of the “tyranny of the majority”.
- g. What reasons has Mill to support that man need to be able to interpret and judge history and culture?
- h. Explain the relationship between **individuality** and **the comparative worth as an individual**.
 - i. Why is private judgment more accepted than private impulses?
 - ii. What has the effect of society on individuality been?
 - 1. What does he mean by “governments make themselves the organ of the tendencies and instincts of masses”?
- i. What types of laws are beneficial for human beings/society?

4. Chapter IV

- a. How much of life should be given to individuality?
- b. How much of life should be given to society?—**Jurisdiction of society over the individual**
 - i. Why and what do we owe to society?
 - 1. What does this consist of?
 - ii. What is off limits?—you need to keep reading.
 - 1. Why are these actions off limit?
- c. Support the following claim, “It would be a great misunderstanding of this doctrine to suppose that it is one of selfish indifference”.
- d. What are the only inconveniences a person can suffer for those actions that only involve him/her?
 - i. Why?

- e. How are those actions that concern other to be punished?
- f. What is the realm where morality exists?
- g. What is the objection posed to the distinction between the part of a person's life that concerns himself and that that concerns other?
 - i. Answer?