De Sociale Contracttheorie van Jean-Jacques Rousseau

De eerste tekst van dit college bestaat uit hoofdstukken uit Rousseau’s “Het Sociale Contract”. We hebben eerder gelezen uit een ander werk van hem (namelijk, “A Discourse Upon the Origin and the Foundation of the Inequality”).

In dit (latere) werk, introduceert Rousseau de concepten algemene wil (general will), individuele wil (“particular will”) en wil van allen (“will of all”). Deze concepten zijn fundamenteel voor Rousseau’s visie op politieke filosofie en sociale organisatie.
Leesvragen:

Vraag 1 (Boek 1, Ch. 7):
Wat bedoelt Rousseau met de schijnbaar paradoxale uitspraak "This means nothing less than that he will be forced to be free"? Wat betekent het volgens hem voor een individu om 'gedwongen vrij' te zijn?

Vraag 2 (Boek 2, Ch. 1):
Hoe verhoudt de algemene wil zich tot het concept van het gemeenschappelijk goed?

Vraag 3 (Boek 2, Ch. 2):
Hoe onderscheidt Rousseau de algemene wil van de individuele wil?

BOOK I

1. SUBJECT OF THE FIRST BOOK

MAN is born free; and everywhere he is in chains. One thinks himself the master of others, and still remains a greater slave than they. How did this change come about? I do not know. What can make it legitimate? That question I think I can answer.

If I took into account only force, and the effects derived from it, I should say: "As long as a people is compelled to obey, and obeys, it does well; as soon as it can shake off the yoke, and shakes it off, it does still better; for, regaining its liberty by the same right as took it away, either it is justified in resuming it, or there was no justification for those who took it away." But the social order is a sacred right which is the basis of all other rights. Nevertheless, this right does not come from nature, and must therefore be founded on conventions. Before coming to that, I have to prove what I have just asserted.

6. THE SOCIAL COMPACT

I SUPPOSE men to have reached the point at which the obstacles in the way of their preservation in the state of nature show their power of resistance to be greater than the resources at the disposal of each individual for his maintenance in that state. That primitive condition can then subsist no longer; and the human race would perish unless it changed its manner of existence.

But, as men cannot engender new forces, but only unite and direct existing ones, they have no other means of preserving themselves than the formation, by aggregation, of a sum of forces great enough to overcome the resistance. These
they have to bring into play by means of a single motive power, and cause to act in
congress.

This sum of forces can arise only where several persons come together: but, as the
force and liberty of each man are the chief instruments of his self-preservation,
how can he pledge them without harming his own interests, and neglecting the care
he owes to himself? This difficulty, in its bearing on my present subject, may be
stated in the following terms:

The problem is to find a form of association which will defend and protect with the
whole common force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each,
while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as
before." This is the fundamental problem of which the Social Contract provides the
solution.

The clauses of this contract are so determined by the nature of the act that the
slightest modification would make them vain and ineffective; so that, although
they have perhaps never been formally set forth, they are everywhere the same and
everywhere tacitly admitted and recognised, until, on the violation of the social
compact, each regains his original rights and resumes his natural liberty, while
losing the conventional liberty in favour of which he renounced it.

These clauses, properly understood, may be reduced to one — the total alienation
of each associate, together with all his rights, to the whole community; for, in the
first place, as each gives himself absolutely, the conditions are the same for all;
and, this being so, no one has any interest in making them burdensome to others.

Moreover, the alienation being without reserve, the union is as perfect as it can be,
and no associate has anything more to demand: for, if the individuals retained
certain rights, as there would be no common superior to decide between them and
the public, each, being on one point his own judge, would ask to be so on all; the
state of nature would thus continue, and the association would necessarily become
inoperative or tyrannical.

Finally, each man, in giving himself to all, gives himself to nobody; and as there is
no associate over whom he does not acquire the same right as he yields others over
himself, he gains an equivalent for everything he loses, and an increase of force for
the preservation of what he has.

If then we discard from the social compact what is not of its essence, we shall find
that it reduces itself to the following terms:
“Each of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme
direction of the general will, and, in our corporate capacity, we receive each
member as an indivisible part of the whole.”

At once, in place of the individual personality of each contracting party, this act of
association creates a moral and collective body, composed of as many members as
the assembly contains votes, and receiving from this act its unity, its common
identity, its life and its will. This public person, so formed by the union of all other
persons formerly took the name of city,4 and now takes that of Republic or body
politic; it is called by its members State when passive. Sovereign when active, and
Power when compared with others like itself. Those who are associated in it take
collectively the name of people, and severally are called citizens, as sharing in the
sovereign power, and subjects, as being under the laws of the State. But these
terms are often confused and taken one for another: it is enough to know how to
distinguish them when they are being used with precision.

7. THE SOVEREIGN

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.

Attention must further be called to the fact that public deliberation, while
competent to bind all the subjects to the Sovereign, because of the two different
capacities in which each of them may be regarded, cannot, for the opposite reason,
binding the Sovereign to itself; and that it is consequently against the nature of the
body politic for the Sovereign to impose on itself a law which it cannot infringe.
Being able to regard itself in only one capacity, it is in the position of an individual
who makes a contract with himself; and this makes it clear that there neither is nor
can be any kind of fundamental law binding on the body of the people — not even
the social contract itself. This does not mean that the body politic cannot enter into
undertakings with others, provided the contract is not infringed by them; for in
relation to what is external to it, it becomes a simple being, an individual.

But the body politic or the Sovereign, drawing its being wholly from the sanctity of
the contract, can never bind itself, even to an outsider, to do anything derogatory to
the original act, for instance, to alienate any part of itself, or to submit to another
Sovereign. Violation of the act by which it exists would be self-annihilation; and
that which is itself nothing can create nothing.
As soon as this multitude is so united in one body, it is impossible to offend against one of the members without attacking the body, and still more to offend against the body without the members resenting it. Duty and interest therefore equally oblige the two contracting parties to give each other help; and the same men should seek to combine, in their double capacity, all the advantages dependent upon that capacity.

Again, the Sovereign, being formed wholly of the individuals who compose it, neither has nor can have any interest contrary to theirs; and consequently the sovereign power need give no guarantee to its subjects, because it is impossible for the body to wish to hurt all its members. We shall also see later on that it cannot hurt any in particular. The Sovereign, merely by virtue of what it is, is always what it should be.

This, however, is not the case with the relation of the subjects to the Sovereign, which, despite the common interest, would have no security that they would fulfil their undertakings, unless it found means to assure itself of their fidelity.

In fact, each individual, as a man, may have a particular will contrary or dissimilar to the general will which he has as a citizen. His particular interest may speak to him quite differently from the common interest: his absolute and naturally independent existence may make him look upon what he owes to the common cause as a gratuitous contribution, the loss of which will do less harm to others than the payment of it is burdensome to himself; and, regarding the moral person which constitutes the State as a persona ficta, because not a man, he may wish to enjoy the rights of citizenship without being ready to fulfil the duties of a subject. The continuance of such an injustice could not but prove the undoing of the body politic.

In order then that the social compact may not be an empty formula, it tacitly includes the undertaking, which alone can give force to the rest, that whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be compelled to do so by the whole body. This means nothing less than that he will be forced to be free; for this is the condition which, by giving each citizen to his country, secures him against all personal dependence. In this lies the key to the working of the political machine; this alone legitimises civil undertakings, which, without it, would be absurd, tyrannical, and liable to the most frightful abuses.

BOOK II

1. THAT SOVEREIGNTY IS INALIENABLE
THE first and most important deduction from the principles we have so far laid down is that the general will alone can direct the State according to the object for which it was instituted, i.e., the common good: for if the clashing of particular interests made the establishment of societies necessary, the agreement of these very interests made it possible. The common element in these different interests is what forms the social tie; and, were there no point of agreement between them all, no society could exist. It is solely on the basis of this common interest that every society should be governed.

I hold then that Sovereignty, being nothing less than the exercise of the general will, can never be alienated, and that the Sovereign, who is no less than a collective being, cannot be represented except by himself: the power indeed may be transmitted, but not the will.

In reality, if it is not impossible for a particular will to agree on some point with the general will, it is at least impossible for the agreement to be lasting and constant; for the particular will tends, by its very nature, to partiality, while the general will tends to equality. It is even more impossible to have any guarantee of this agreement; for even if it should always exist, it would be the effect not of art, but of chance. The Sovereign may indeed say: "I now will actually what this man wills, or at least what he says he wills"; but it cannot say: "What he wills tomorrow, I too shall will" because it is absurd for the will to bind itself for the future, nor is it incumbent on any will to consent to anything that is not for the good of the being who wills. If then the people promises simply to obey, by that very act it dissolves itself and loses what makes it a people; the moment a master exists, there is no longer a Sovereign, and from that moment the body politic has ceased to exist.

This does not mean that the commands of the rulers cannot pass for general wills, so long as the Sovereign, being free to oppose them, offers no opposition. In such a case, universal silence is taken to imply the consent of the people. This will be explained later on.

2. THAT SOVEREIGNTY IS INDIVISIBLE

SOVEREIGNTY, for the same reason as makes it inalienable, is indivisible; for will either is, or is not, general: it is the will either of the body of the people, or only of a part of it. In the first case, the will, when declared, is an act of Sovereignty and constitutes law: in the second, it is merely a particular will, or act of magistracy — at the most a decree.

But our political theorists, unable to divide Sovereignty in principle, divide it according to its object: into force and will; into legislative power and executive power; into rights of taxation, justice and war; into internal administration and
power of foreign treaty. Sometimes they confuse all these sections, and sometimes
they distinguish them; they turn the Sovereign into a fantastic being composed of
several connected pieces: it is as if they were making man of several bodies, one
with eyes, one with arms, another with feet, and each with nothing besides. We are
told that the jugglers of Japan dismember a child before the eyes of the spectators;
then they throw all the members into the air one after another, and the child falls
down alive and whole. The conjuring tricks of our political theorists are very like
that; they first dismember the Body politic by an illusion worthy of a fair, and then
join it together again we know not how.
This error is due to a lack of exact notions concerning the Sovereign authority, and
to taking for parts of it what are only emanations from it. Thus, for example, the
acts of declaring war and making peace have been regarded as acts of Sovereignty;
but this is not the case, as these acts do not constitute law, but merely the
application of a law, a particular act which decides how the law applies, as we shall
see clearly when the idea attached to the word law has been defined.
If we examined the other divisions in the same manner, we should find that,
whenever Sovereignty seems to be divided, there is an illusion: the rights which
are taken as being part of Sovereignty are really all subordinate, and always imply
supreme wills of which they only sanction the execution.

It would be impossible to estimate the obscurity this lack of exactness has thrown
over the decisions of writers who have dealt with political right, when they have
used the principles laid down by them to pass judgment on the respective rights of
kings and peoples. Every one can see, in Chapters III and IV of the First Book of
Grotius, how the learned man and his translator, Barbeyrac, entangle and tie
themselves up in their own sophistries, for fear of saying too little or too much of
what they think, and so offending the interests they have to conciliate. Grotius, a
refugee in France, ill-content with his own country, and desirous of paying his
court to Louis XIII, to whom his book is dedicated, spares no pains to rob the
peoples of all their rights and invest kings with them by every conceivable artifice.
This would also have been much to the taste of Barbeyrac, who dedicated his
translation to George I of England. But unfortunately the expulsion of James II,
which he called his "abdication," compelled him to use all reserve, to shuffle and to
tergiversate, in order to avoid making William out a usurper. If these two writers
had adopted the true principles, all difficulties would have been removed, and they
would have been always consistent; but it would have been a sad truth for them to
tell, and would have paid court for them to no one save the people. Moreover, truth
is no road to fortune, and the people dispenses neither ambassadorships, nor
professorships, nor pensions.

3. WHETHER THE GENERAL WILL IS FALLIBLE

IT follows from what has gone before that the general will is always right and
tends to the public advantage; but it does not follow that the deliberations of the
people are always equally correct. Our will is always for our own good, but we do
not always see what that is; the people is never corrupted, but it is often deceived,
and on such occasions only does it seem to will what is bad.

There is often a great deal of difference between the will of all and the general will;
the latter considers only the common interest, while the former takes private
interest into account, and is no more than a sum of particular wills: but take away
from these same wills the pluses and minuses that cancel one another,7 and the
general will remains as the sum of the differences.

If, when the people, being furnished with adequate information, held its
deliberations, the citizens had no communication one with another, the grand total
of the small differences would always give the general will, and the decision would
always be good. But when factions arise, and partial associations are formed at the
expense of the great association, the will of each of these associations becomes
general in relation to its members, while it remains particular in relation to the
State: it may then be said that there are no longer as many votes as there are men,
but only as many as there are associations. The differences become less numerous
and give a less general result. Lastly, when one of these associations is so great as
to prevail over all the rest, the result is no longer a sum of small differences, but a
single difference; in this case there is no longer a general will, and the opinion
which prevails is purely particular.

It is therefore essential, if the general will is to be able to express itself, that there
should be no partial society within the State, and that each citizen should think
only his own thoughts: which was indeed the sublime and unique system
established by the great Lycurgus. But if there are partial societies, it is best to
have as many as possible and to prevent them from being unequal, as was done by
Solon, Numa and Servius. These precautions are the only ones that can guarantee
that the general will shall be always enlightened, and that the people shall in no
way deceive itself.
Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-97) was een Engelse schrijfster, filosoof en vroege feministe. Ze heeft geen officiële opleiding genoten, maar las zelf veel op het gebied van literatuur, sociaal denken en filosofie. Ze werkte als gouvernante, vertaalde geschriften uit het Frans en Duits en gaf les op een school die ze mede had opgericht. Ze trouwde met William Godwin (1756-1836), een vroege theoreticus van het anarchisme. Hun dochter, Mary Shelley (1797-1851), schreef Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus (1818).
Leesvragen:

Vraag 4 (Chap II)
In welk opzicht gelooft Wollstonecraft dat de bestaande ideeën over vrouwelijkheid vrouwen meer schaden dan helpen in termen van hun rol in de samenleving?

Vraag 5 (Chap III)
Op welke manier betoogt Wollstonecraft dat de huidige sociale en opvoedkundige praktijken vrouwen beletten hun volledige potentieel als menselijke wezens te bereiken?

Vraag 6 (Chap XII)
Hoe ziet Wollstonecraft de relatie tussen de opvoeding van vrouwen en hun bijdrage aan de samenleving? Wat zijn haar argumenten voor het verbeteren van deze opvoeding?

INTRODUCTION

AFTER considering the historic page, and viewing the living world with anxious solicitude, the most melancholy emotions of sorrowful indignation have depressed my spirits, and I have sighed when obliged to confess that either nature has made a great difference between man and man, or that the civilisation which has hitherto taken place in the world has been very partial. I have turned over various books written on the subject of education, and patiently observed the conduct of parents and the management of schools; but what has been the result?—a profound conviction that the neglected education of my fellow-creatures is the grand source of the misery I deplore, and that women, in particular, are rendered weak and wretched by a variety of concurring causes, originating from one hasty conclusion.

The conduct and manners of women, in fact, evidently prove that their minds are not in a healthy state; for, like the flowers which are planted in too rich a soil, strength and usefulness are sacrificed to beauty; and the flaunting leaves, after having pleased a fastidious eye, fade, disregarded on the stalk, long before the season when they ought to have arrived at maturity. One cause of this barren blooming I attribute to a false system of education, gathered from the books written on this subject by men who, considering females rather as women than human creatures, have been more anxious to make them alluring mistresses than affectionate wives and rational mothers; and the understanding of the sex has been so bubbled by this specious homage, that the civilised women of the present century, with a few exceptions, are only anxious to inspire love, when they ought to cherish a nobler ambition, and by their abilities and virtues exact respect.

In a treatise, therefore, on female rights and manners, the works which have been particularly written for their improvement must not be overlooked, especially when it is asserted, in direct terms, that the minds of women are enfeebled by false
refinement; that the books of instruction, written by men of genius, have had the same tendency as more frivolous productions; and that, in the true style of Mahometanism, they are treated as a kind of subordinate beings, and not as a part of the human species, when improvable reason is allowed to be the dignified distinction which raises men above the brute creation, and puts a natural sceptre in a feeble hand.

Yet, because I am a woman, I would not lead my readers to suppose that I mean violently to agitate the contested question respecting the quality or inferiority of the sex; but as the subject lies in my way, and I cannot pass it over without subjecting the main tendency of my reasoning to misconstruction, I shall stop a moment to deliver, in a few words, my opinion. In the government of the physical world it is observable that the female in point of strength is, in general, inferior to the male. This is the law of nature; and it does not appear to be suspended or abrogated in favour of woman. A degree of physical superiority cannot, therefore, be denied, and it is a noble prerogative! But not content with this natural pre-eminence, men endeavour to sink us still lower, merely to render us alluring objects for a moment; and women, intoxicated by the adoration which men, under the influence of their senses, pay them, do not seek to obtain a durable interest in their hearts, or to become the friends of the fellow-creatures who find amusement in their society.

I am aware of an obvious inference. From every quarter have I heard exclamations against masculine women, but where are they to be found? If by this appellation men mean to inveigh against their ardour in hunting, shooting, and gaming, I shall most cordially join in the cry; but if it be against the imitation of manly virtues, or, more properly speaking, the attainment of those talents and virtues, the exercise of which ennobles the human character, and which raises females in the scale of animal being, when they are comprehensively termed mankind, all those who view them with a philosophic eye must, I should think, wish with me, that they may every day grow more and more masculine.

This discussion naturally divides the subject. I shall first consider women in the grand light of human creatures, who, in common with men, are placed on this earth to unfold their faculties; and afterwards I shall more particularly point out their peculiar designation.

... 

My own sex, I hope, will excuse me, if I treat them like rational creatures, instead of flattering their fascinating graces, and viewing them as if they were in a state of perpetual childhood, unable to stand alone. I earnestly wish to point out in what true dignity and human happiness consists. I wish to persuade women to endeavour to acquire strength, both of mind and body, and to convince them that the soft
phrases, susceptibility of heart, delicacy of sentiment, and refinement of taste, are almost synonymous with epithets of weakness, and that those beings who are only the objects of pity, and that kind of love which has been termed its sister, will soon become objects of contempt.

Dismissing, then, those pretty feminine phrases, which the men condescendingly use to soften our slavish dependence, and despising that weak elegance of mind, exquisite sensibility, and sweet docility of manners, supposed to be the sexual characteristics of the weaker vessel, I wish to show that elegance is inferior to virtue, that the first object of laudable ambition is to obtain a character as a human being, regardless of the distinction of sex, and that secondary views should be brought to this simple touchstone.

...
... It seems scarcely necessary to say that I now speak of the sex in general. Many individuals have more sense than their male relatives; and, as nothing preponderates where there is a constant struggle for an equilibrium without it has naturally more gravity, some women govern their husbands without degrading themselves, because intellect will always govern.

CHAPTER II  THE PREVAILING OPINION OF A SEXUAL CHARACTER DISCUSSED

... I may be accused of arrogance; still I must declare what I firmly believe, that all the writers who have written on the subject of Female education and manners, from Rousseau to Dr Gregory, have contributed to render women more artificial, weak characters, than they would otherwise have been; and consequently, more useless members of society. I might have expressed this conviction in a lower key, but I am afraid it would have been the whine of affectation, and not the faithful expression of my feelings, of the clear result which experience and reflection have led me to draw. When I come to that division of the subject, I shall advert to the passages that I more particularly disapprove of, in the works of the authors I have just alluded to; but it is first necessary to observe that my objection extends to the whole purport of those books, which tend, in my opinion, to degrade one-half of the human species, and render women pleasing at the expense of every solid virtue.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78) was a Genevan philosopher and social critic. John Gregory (1724–73) was a Scottish physician and author.

... Gentleness of manners, forbearance and long-suffering, are such amiable Godlike qualities, that in sublime poetic strains the Deity has been invested with them; and, perhaps, no representation of His goodness so strongly fastens on the human affections as those that represent Him abundant in mercy and willing to pardon. Gentleness, considered in this point of view, bears on its front all the characteristics of grandeur, combined with the winning graces of condescension; but what a different aspect it assumes when it is the submissive demeanour of dependence, the support of weakness that loves, because it wants protection; and is forbearing, because it must silently endure injuries; smiling under the lash at which it dare not snarl. Abject as this picture appears, it is the portrait of an accomplished woman, according to the received opinion of female excellence, separated by specious reasoners from human excellence. ...
I love man as my fellow; but his sceptre, real or usurped, extends not to me, unless the reason of an individual demands my homage; and even then the submission is to reason, and not to man. In fact, the conduct of an accountable being must be regulated by the operations of its own reason; or on what foundation rests the throne of God?

... CHAPTER III THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

... I once knew a weak woman of fashion, who was more than commonly proud of her delicacy and sensibility. She thought a distinguishing taste and puny appetite the height of all human perfection, and acted accordingly. I have seen this weak sophisticated being neglect all the duties of life, yet recline with self-complacency on a sofa, and boast of her want of appetite as a proof of delicacy that extended to, or, perhaps, arose from, her exquisite sensibility; for it is difficult to render intelligible such ridiculous jargon. Yet, at the moment, I have seen her insult a worthy old gentlewoman, whom unexpected misfortunes had made dependent on her ostentatious bounty, and who, in better days, had claims on her gratitude. Is it possible that a human creature could have become such a weak and depraved being, if, like the Sybarites, dissolved in luxury, everything like virtue had not been worn away, or never impressed by precept, a poor substitute, it is true, for cultivation of mind, though it serves as a fence against vice.

... Women are everywhere in this deplorable state: for, in order to preserve their innocence, as ignorance is courteously termed, truth is hidden from them, and they are made to assume an artificial character before their faculties have acquired any strength. Taught from their infancy that beauty is woman’s sceptre, the mind shapes itself to the body, and roaming round its gilt cage, only seeks to adore its prison. Men have various employments and pursuits which engage their attention, and give a character to the opening mind; but women, confined to one, and having their thoughts constantly directed to the most insignificant part of themselves, seldom extend their views beyond the triumph of the hour. But were their understanding once emancipated from the slavery to which the pride and sensuality of man and their short-sighted desire, like that of dominion in tyrants, of present sway, has subjected them, we should probably read of their weaknesses with surprise...

CHAPTER XII ON NATIONAL EDUCATION

... To render mankind more virtuous, and happier of course, both sexes must act from the same principle; but how can that be expected when only one is allowed to see
the reasonableness of it? To render also the social compact truly equitable, and in
order to spread those enlightening principles, which alone can meliorate the fate of
man, women must be allowed to found their virtue on knowledge, which is
scarcely possible unless they be educated by the same pursuits as men. For they are
now made so inferior by ignorance and low desires, as not to deserve to be ranked
with them; or, by the serpentine wrigglings of cunning they mount the tree of
knowledge, and only acquire sufficient to lead men astray.

It is plain from the history of all nations, that women cannot be confined to merely
domestic pursuits, for they will not fulfil family duties, unless their minds take a
wider range, and whilst they are kept in ignorance they become in the same
proportion the slaves of pleasure as they are the slaves of man. Nor can they be
shut out of great enterprises, though the narrowness of their minds often make
them mar, what they are unable to comprehend.

The libertinism, and even the virtues of superior men, will always give women, of
some description, great power over them; and these weak women, under the
influence of childish passions and selfish vanity, will throw a false light over the
objects which the very men view with their eyes, who ought to enlighten their
judgment. Men of fancy, and those sanguine characters who mostly hold the helm
of human affairs, in general, relax in the society of women; and surely I need not
cite to the most superficial reader of history the numerous examples of vice and
oppression which the private intrigues of female favourites have produced; not to
dwell on the mischief that naturally arises from the blundering interposition of
well-meaning folly. For in the transactions of business it is much better to have to
deal with a knave than a fool, because a knave adheres to some plan; and any plan
of reason may be seen through much sooner than a sudden flight of folly. The
power which vile and foolish women have had over wise men, who possessed
sensibility, is notorious; I shall only mention one instance.

In France or Italy, have the women confined themselves to domestic life? though
they have not hitherto had a political existence, yet, have they not illicitly had great
sway? corrupting themselves and the men with whose passions they played. In
short, in whatever light I view the subject, reason and experience convince me that
the only method of leading women to fulfil their peculiar duties, is to free them
from all restraint by allowing them to participate the inherent rights of mankind.
Make them free, and they will quickly become wise and virtuous, as men become
more so; for the improvement must be mutual, or the injustice which one half of
the human race are obliged to submit to, retorting on their oppressors, the virtue of
man will be worm-eaten by the insect whom he keeps under his feet.

Let men take their choice, man and woman were made for each other, though not
to become one being; and if they will not improve women, they will deprave them!

...
Amartya Kumar Sen’s Democracy as a Universal Value

Amartya Sen is een vooraanstaande Indiase econoom en filosoof, en Nobelprijswinnaar voor de Economie. Sen is vooral bekend om zijn significante bijdragen aan de welvaartstheorie, sociale keuzetheorie, en ontwikkelingseconomie. In "Democracy as a Universal Value" onderzoekt hij de geldigheid en toepasbaarheid van democratische principes over culturele en economische grenzen heen.

De tekst is niet vrij beschikbaar in het publieke domein, maar is te lezen via de volgende link: https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/democracy-as-a-universal-value/

Leesvragen:

Vraag 7) Hoe werd de transitie van democratie van een lokale naar een universele norm verwezenlijkt volgens Sen?

Vraag 8) Hoe draagt democratie volgens Sen bij aan het voorkomen van economische rampen zoals hongersnoden?

Vraag 9) Hoe weerlegt Sen de stelling dat democratie niet universeel zou zijn vanwege culturele verschillen?