

ROUSSEAU

*DISCOURSE ON THE ORIGIN OF INEQUALITY*

Study Questions

- 1) According to Rousseau's Dedication to the Republic of Geneva, what is the greatest danger to freedom in a democratic regime?
- 2) In his Preface, Rousseau claims that there are two basic natural passions that govern human behaviour. What are they, and how are they related to human learning and our ability to reason?
- 3) In his Introduction, Rousseau argues that earlier philosophers have failed to discover the true state of nature for human beings. According to him, what mistake have they made that caused this failure?
- 4) In Part I, Rousseau examines the different ways in which human beings depend upon one another in civil society. What kinds of dependence does he find, and what arguments does he give to show that these kinds of dependence are not natural to human beings?
- 5) Given Rousseau's claim in Part I that human beings are by nature self-sufficient, how does he explain in Part II the origin of civil society, the genealogy of morals, and the fact that virtually all human beings do not lead a solitary existence, but live in political communities?
- 6) According to Rousseau, what is the fundamental principle of all political right and justice?