

Discussion Questions for *Citizens of the World: Readings in Human Rights*

1. "Hortensia's Protest"
 - A. Why were women singled out for taxation when they were not legal citizens? Did their lack of citizenship make it easier to justify taxing them?
 - B. Hortensia states that women contributed to the war efforts which involved the Roman State against other states. She then makes a distinction between civil and national wars, and vows never to contribute funds to a civil war. Why is this distinction important? Why does she justify one type of war, and not another?

2. "State of the Union Address"
 - A. Andrew Jackson states that "Two important tribes have accepted the provision made for their removal. . ." and later says that "With full understanding of the subject, the Choctaw and Chickasaw tribes have with unanimity determined to avail themselves of the liberal offers. . ." Why does he stress the fact that the Indian tribes have entered into this agreement voluntarily? What is voluntary acceptance of the treaty so important? Do you believe that the two tribes "voluntarily" entered into a treaty with the United States with a "full understanding of the subject"? Why or why not?
 - B. Jackson draws an analogy between the loss of Indian lands and the death of one generation to make room for another. Is this a valid comparison? Jackson later goes on to say that the removal of Indians from their present lands will prevent the type of annihilation that occurred in the eastern states to "make room for the whites." Are either of these valid arguments which would allow the United States government to seize Indian lands?
 - C. Jackson says that the current treaties will be "probably the last which will be made with them [i.e. the Indian tribes]." Was he talking about these specific tribes, or was he referring to treaties with other Indian nations? Jackson noted that the treaties were made with "great liberality on the part of the government." Who benefitted from the liberality of the government?

3. "Independence v. Swaraj"
 - A. Why does Gandhi believe that non-violence is infallible?
 - B. Gandhi believes that self-government is necessary before political government can be attained. Why does he believe this? How does Gandhi define self government?

4. "Universal Declaration of Human Rights"
 - A. Is there an effective mechanism to ensure that the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" is enforced? Why or why not? If the "Declaration" cannot be enforced, of what good is it?

- B. How do signatory governments of the “Declaration” defend the use of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment, while at the same time affirming their belief in Article 5, which prohibits these practices?
 - C. Is the “Declaration” an aspirational document, or is it meant to be used as a practical tool?
5. “We Say No”
- A. Galeano says the “system” assigns “prices to people and things.” What does he mean by this statement? Who or what constitutes the system?
 - B. Why does Galeano believe that the mass media perpetuates a lie that “man can be merchandise”?
 - C. What does Galeano mean when he says that “Visible colonialism forbids us to speak, to do, to be. Invisible colonialism, more efficient, convinces us that one cannot speak, cannot do, cannot be.”?
 - D. Why does Galeano locate the center of greed in North America? How does this correspond to the “American Dream”? Have recent financial events (Enron, World Comm, Adelphia Communications) lent credence to Galeano’s theories?