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Answer Key: Leviathans and Lawmakers: 12th Grade Political Philosophy Quest

Evaluate the friction between sovereign power and natural law through complex scenarios involving de Beauvoir, Fanon, and Grotius.

1. In the context of 'The Wretched of the Earth,' Frantz Fanon argues that decolonization is inherently a violent process because it is a 'substitution of one species of mankind by another.' This perspective radicalizes which political concept?

Answer: B) The Hegelian Master-Slave Dialectic

Fanon applies and expands the Hegelian dialectic to the colonial context, arguing that the colonizer's identity is inextricably linked to the oppression of the colonized, necessitating a violent rupture for true liberation.

2. Hugo Grotius, often considered the father of international law, argued in 'De Jure Belli ac Pacis' that natural law would still be valid even if God did not exist.

Answer: A) True

This is known as the 'etiamsi daremus' clause, where Grotius asserted that natural law is grounded in human reason and social nature, making it independent of divine revelation, a foundational step for secular international law.

3. Simone de Beauvoir's political philosophy emphasizes that because humans are 'situated' beings, freedom requires the active liberation of others. This framework is best described as ____.

Answer: A) The Ethics of Ambiguity

In 'The Ethics of Ambiguity,' Beauvoir argues that an individual's freedom is only meaningful if they also will the freedom of others, creating a communal political obligation.

4. A nation-state faces a resource crisis and implements a policy where 'merit' is defined solely by one's contribution to technological advancement. Which philosopher's critique of instrumental reason would most strongly oppose this technocratic approach?

Answer: A) Herbert Marcuse

Marcuse, of the Frankfurt School, critiqued 'one-dimensional' society where technical rationality suppresses individual potential and focuses purely on efficiency and production.

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5. The political concept of 'Agonism,' championed by thinkers like Chantal Mouffe, suggests that democracy should not aim for consensus but should instead provide a framework for ____.

Answer: B) Productive conflict

Agonism argues that conflict is a permanent feature of politics; the goal is to transform 'antagonism' (enemies) into 'agonism' (adversaries who respect the democratic rules of the game).

6. Judith Butler's political philosophy suggests that 'gender performativity' is purely an individual choice and has no connection to state power or societal regulation.

Answer: B) False

Butler argues that performativity is constrained by powerful social norms and 'regulatory practices' of the state that determine which lives are considered 'legitimate' or 'grievable.'

7. If a government uses 'Biopower'—concentrating on the regulation of biological processes like birth rates and public health—to control its population, it is exercising a form of power most famously analyzed by:

Answer: A) Michel Foucault

Foucault developed the concept of Biopower to describe how modern states manage populations through the administration of life rather than just the threat of death.

8. In 'The Human Condition,' Hannah Arendt distinguishes between 'Labor,' 'Work,' and 'Action.' She argues that true political life occurs only in the realm of ____.

Answer: C) Public Action

Arendt defines 'Action' as the way humans disclose their unique identities to others through speech and deed in the public sphere, which is the essence of politics.

9. Charles Mills' 'The Racial Contract' argues that the traditional social contract is actually an exclusionary agreement that secures white supremacy.

Answer: A) True

Mills critiques the 'color-blind' nature of classic contract theory, arguing that political foundations are often built on explicit or implicit racial hierarchies that privilege some while subordinating others.

10. A society decides to abolish all inheritance taxes, arguing that any state seizure of property at death violates 'self-ownership.' This policy aligns most closely with the philosophy of:

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Answer: C) Murray Rothbard

Rothbard, a leading thinker of anarcho-capitalism, advocated for absolute property rights and self-ownership, viewing any form of taxation as theft.