

Jacob Riis's *How the Other Half Lives* (Modified)

The Italian in New York

The Italian comes in at the bottom. In the slums he is welcomed as a tenant who "makes less trouble" than the Irishman: is content to live in a pig-sty and lets the rent collector rob him.

Ordinarily he is easily enough governed by authority—except for Sunday, when he settles down to a game of cards and lets loose all his bad passions. Like the Chinese, the Italian is a born gambler. His soul is in the game from the moment the cards are on the table, and very frequently his knife is in it too before the game is ended.

Chinatown

Red and yellow are the holiday colors of Chinatown, but they do not lend brightness in Mott Street. Rather, the colors only add a general dullness. Whatever happens in Chinatown goes on behind closed doors in stealth and secretiveness. His business, as his domestic life, shuns the light, less because there is anything to conceal than because that is the way of the man. The stranger who enters through the doorway is received with sudden silence, a sullen stare, and an angry "Vat you vant?" that breathes annoyance and distrust.

Jewtown

Poverty always goes along with dirt and disease, and Jewtown is no exception. The diseases these people suffer from are not due to intemperance or immorality, but to ignorance, want of suitable food, and the foul air in which they live and work. The homes of the Hebrew quarter are its workshops also. Every member of the family, from the youngest to the oldest, works, shut in the stuffy rooms, where meals are cooked and clothing washed and dried besides, all day long. It is not unusual to find a dozen persons--men women, and children--at work in a single small room. It has happened more than once that a child recovering from small-pox, and in the most contagious stage of the disease, has been found crawling among heaps of half-finished clothing that the next day would be offered for sale on the counter of a Broadway store.

Source: Excerpts from Jacob Riis's book *How the Other Half Lives*, 1890. Jacob Riis was a "muckraker" who photographed poverty in New York City's slums in the 1880s.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

SOCIAL REFORM

Problems the “Progressives” were responding to:

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)
- e)
- f)

“Progressives” are...

Who was uncovering all this ‘dirt’?

Muckrakers

Jacob Riis:

TENEMENT HOUSING

Who/How did we deal with tenement housing and poverty?

Jane Addams	
Settlement Houses	
Hull House	

Public Education:

PRIMARY SOURCE ACTIVITY #1 – JACOB RIIS
Documenting Urbanization

Read the segment from Jacob Riis and answer the guiding questions.

SOURCING:

Who wrote this? What type of document is this?

The author's purpose in writing this was . . .

I think the sort of people who read this were. . .

I do/don't trust this document because. . .

CONTEXTUALIZATION:

I already know that at this time . . .

From this document I would guess that people at this time. . .

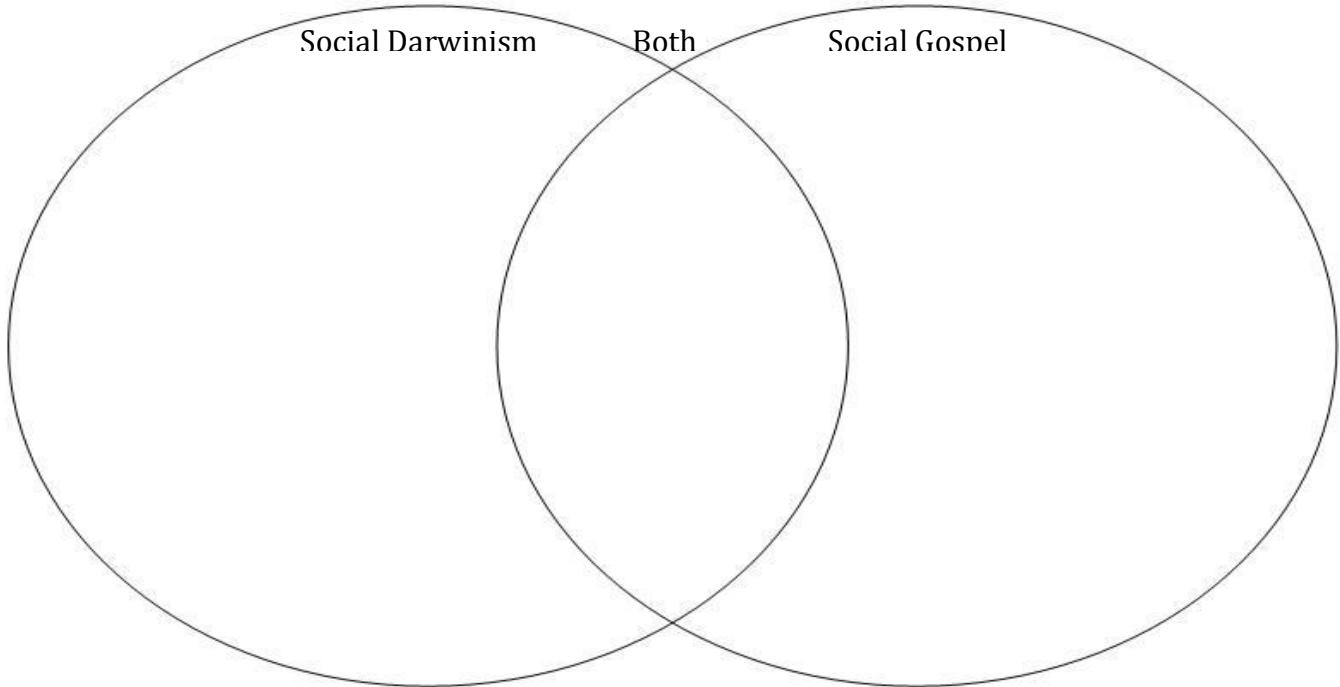
This document might not give me the whole picture because . . .

CLOSE READING:

The author is trying to convince the readers that...

The author tries to convince the readers by using the words...

Social Darwinism vs Social Gospel



1. Which statement might be made by a supporter of Social Darwinism?

- A Government should help the poor overcome their circumstances.
- B People who acquire wealth and social status should work for social justice.
- C Government should intervene to ensure a fair and competitive marketplace.
- D Government should not interfere with the success or failure of businesses.

2. What arguments might be made against Social Darwinism?

- A The poor are responsible for their own situation in life.
- B Natural law determines which businesses succeed or fail.
- C Biological evolution and social evolution are different.
- D People become wealthy and influential through hard work.

3. Why might Andrew Carnegie support the principles of Social Darwinism?

- A He succeeded by eliminating most of his competitors.
- B He was born into a wealthy and privileged family.
- C He supported social justice for the poor.
- D He favored government regulation of mergers and trusts.

4. Which statement about the Social Gospel movement is true?

- A It was based on the theory of evolution.
- B It preached salvation through service to the poor.
- C It preached salvation through acquiring influence and wealth.
- D It suggested that natural law determines who is poor.

5. What was one effect of the Social Gospel movement?

- A It influenced industrial leaders
- B It eliminated poverty.
- C It influenced other progressive reformers.
- D It led to laissez-faire policies.

6. Which statement describes a link between Social Darwinism and the Social Gospel movement?

- A Social Darwinism was a response to the message of the Social Gospel movement.
- B Both tried to address the social conditions of an industrial society.
- C Both said that the poor are responsible for their living and working conditions.
- D Both supported laissez-faire policies in the marketplace and society.

Which of these theories do you think would be the most effective in solving social problems? Why?
