

Social Darwinism: Extracts from Three Seminal Texts: Worksheet

- 1) From Herbert Spencer, 'Progress: Its Law and Cause', *Westminster Review* 67:132 (April 1857) pp. 445-85.
- 2) From T.H. Huxley, 'The Struggle for Existence', *Nineteenth Century* 23:132 (February 1888) pp. 161- 80.
- 3) From Karl Pearson, *National Life from the Standpoint of Science*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1919) pp. 32-64. [originally delivered as a lecture in November 1900]

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I. General Questions (regarding each of the 3 extracts)

1. What are the central arguments of the passage?
2. What position(s) does the writer seem to be arguing against?
3. What seem to be the main weaknesses (logical, evidential, etc) in the writer's argument?

4. In what respects are the three arguments similar and in what ways different?

II. Specific Questions (regarding each extract individually)

- 1) What does Spencer mean by the following?
 - a. 'the placental mammalia . . . the quadrumana' (p. 1c/d)
 - b. 'the increased ratio which his cerebrum bears to the subjacent ganglia' (p. 2a)
 - c. 'All modes of salutation were originally obeisances' (p. 3c)
 - d. 'the incorporated guilds of Europe' (p. 4b)

- 2) What does Huxley mean by the following?
 - a. 'Ishtar' (pp. 6b & 8b)
 - b. 'a commandment traditionally much older than the ten' (p. 6c)
 - c. '*civitas Dei*' (p. 7b)
 - d. 'The insolent reproach of the first Napoleon' (p. 7d)

- 3) What does Pearson mean by the following?
 - a. 'the Aryan's success' (p. 8c)
 - b. 'the waste lands of the earth' (p. 9b/c)
 - c. 'the Kaffir' (p. 10a)
 - d. 'the standpoint of the old political economy' (p. 10b/c)