

Unit 9



Imperial Britain

“Land of Hope and Glory” (?)

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9.1

1 Preview

Preview

- Evolution of Productive Forces
- Evolution of Relations of Production
- Evolution of State Institutions
- Evolution of Ideology

9.2

1.1 Evolution of Productive Forces

Evolution of Productive Forces

- Triumph of industrial capitalism (mechanized mass production) by 1830
- 1830–1850 development of railways and of new generations of industrial plant (which British factory-owners could scarcely afford)
- Great Exhibition of 1851

9.3

1.2 Evolution of Relations of Production

Evolution of Relations of Production

- All previous class distinctions replaced by a single opposition:
- Bourgeoisie vs. Proletariat
- See the column “The People” in your chronological table.
- The novels of Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy provide insight into the conditions under which people struggled to survive in nineteenth-century England.

9.4

1.3 Evolution of State Institutions

Evolution of State Institutions

- Parliament gradually catching up with the effects of the industrial revolution: Factory Acts, Reform Bill (1832)
- Petitions by the Chartists (check dates!) seeking even more democratic reforms
- Gradual change in two-party system: Tories → Conservatives; Whigs → Liberals
- Britain’s “unwritten Constitution” (here: role of Prime Minister vis-à-vis the Crown) continued to be influenced in its development by the interplay of “wisdom and chance” (see Lytton Strachey’s biography of Queen Victoria).

9.5

1.4 Evolution of Ideology

Evolution of Ideology

- Arts:
 - Romanticism in literature, art, music – a backward-looking or a forward-looking movement?
- Sciences:
 - Towards a unified theory of energy
 - Towards a materialist theory of life (Darwin)
- Philosophy:
 - Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill
 - Towards a materialist theory of history (Marx)

9.6

2 Some Case Studies

Some Case Studies

- Productive Forces: The Great Exhibition (Q3)
- Relations of Production: A famous quotation
- State Institutions: Two-party system (Q2, Q5)
- Ideology: A paragraph by Strachey (Q1)
- Ideology: Three paragraphs by Darwin (Q4)

9.7

2.1 Productive Forces: The Great Exhibition (Q3)

Productive Forces: The Great Exhibition (Q3)

- The world's first "expo" (1 May–11 Oct 1851)
- State-initiated, privately funded
- A pet project of the Prince Consort, Albert
- Housed in the world's first steel-and-glass building, the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park.

9.8

2.2 Relations of Production: A famous quotation

Relations of Production: A famous quotation

- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: Manifesto of the Communist Party (21 Feb 1848)
- "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. (...)"
- "The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones."
- "Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinct feature: it has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other — Bourgeoisie and Proletariat."

9.9

2.3 State Institutions: Two-party system (Q2, Q5)

State Institutions: Two-party system (Q2, Q5)

- Whigs (“Schottische Landeier!”) (Liberals) vs. Tories (“Irische Schurken!”)(Conservatives)
- History (17th and 18th century)
- At time of Potato Famine (1845–49 in Ireland; 1 million deaths): Peel (Cons.) broke then repealed the Corn Laws to provide aid; Russell (Lib.) trusted market forces and let people starve
- Latter 19th century: Disraeli (Cons., novelist who persuaded Victoria to be “Empress of India”) vs. Gladstone (Lib. reformer with a social conscience)
- It’s the latter 19th century situation in Britain that contextualizes current American usage of the term “liberal” (‘big government spending’)

9.10

2.4 Ideology: A paragraph by Strachey (Q1)

Ideology: A paragraph by Strachey (Q1)

- Alexandrina Victoria, reigned 20.6.1837–22.1.1901; married her first cousin Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha; was the “grandmother of Europe”
- Lytton Strachey’s famous biography of Victoria contains an equally famous paragraph, about the English Constitution
- What happened in 1688? When did George I come to the throne? Who was Lord Grey, and what did he do, and when? What kind of man was the Prince Consort, Albert? When happened to him?
- Theme (method of development); Focus of New (main point), in relation to lexis: wisdom/chance, growth, government.

9.11

2.5 Ideology: Three paragraphs by Darwin (Q4)

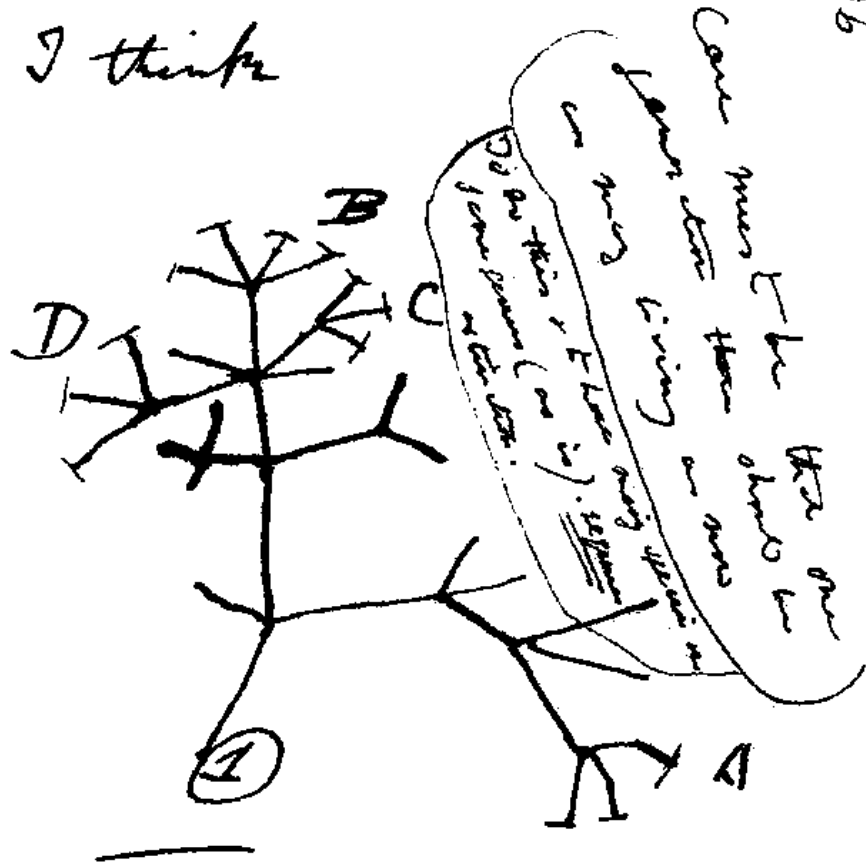
Ideology: Three paragraphs by Darwin (Q4)

- “Intelligent life on a planet comes of age when it first works out the reason for its own existence. If superior creatures from space ever visit earth, the first question they will ask, in order to assess the level of our civilization, is: ‘Have they discovered evolution yet?’ Living organisms had existed on earth, without ever knowing why, for over three thousand million years before the truth finally dawned on one of them. His name was Charles Darwin.” – Richard Dawkins
- See Scene 1 of Episode 9 of Bronowski’s “The Ascent of Man”
- Darwin published “On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection” on 24.11.1859 after Alfred Russel Wallace had independently formulated the same idea.
- Darwin died 19.4.1882, was buried in Westminster Abbey. (Why?)

9.12

9.13

I think



There between A & B. various
 sort of relation. C + B. The
 first gradation, B & D
 rather greater distinction
 than genus would be
 formed. - binary relation

Figure 1: Der Augenblick der Erkenntnis — Darwin's "B" Notebook (begun mid-July 1837), page 36