**SOCIAL EFFECTS OF INDUSTRIALIZATION**

**Industrial changes: Social Classes**

A major social change brought about by the Industrial Revolution was the development of a relatively large middle class, or "bourgeoisie" in industrialized countries. This class had been growing in Europe since medieval days when wealth was based on land, and most people were peasants. With the advent of industrialization, wealth was increasingly based on money and success in business enterprises, although the status of inherited titles of nobility based on land ownership remained in place. However, land had never produced such riches as did business enterprises of this era, and so members of the bourgeoisie were the wealthiest people around.

However, most members of the middle class were not wealthy, owning small businesses or serving as managers or administrators in large businesses. They generally had comfortable lifestyles, and many were concerned with respectability, or the demonstration that they were of a higher social class than factory workers were. They valued the hard work, ambition, and individual responsibility that had led to their own success, and many believed that the lower classes only had themselves to blame for their failures. This attitude generally extended not to just the urban poor, but to people who still farmed in rural areas. The urban poor were often at the mercy of business cycles; swings between economic hard times to recovery and growth. Factory workers were laid off from their jobs during hard times, making their lives even more difficult. With this recurrent unemployment came public behaviors, such as drunkenness and fighting,that appalled the middle class, who stressed sobriety, thrift, industriousness, and responsibility. Social class distinctions were reinforced by Social Darwinism, a philosophy by Englishman Herbert Spencer. He argued that human society operates by a system of natural selection, whereby individuals and ways of life automatically gravitate to their proper station. According to Social Darwinists, poverty was a "natural condition" for inferior individuals.

**Industrial changes: gender roles**

Changes in gender roles generally fell along class lines, with relationships between men and women of the middle class being very different from those in the lower classes.

Lower class men and women:

Factory workers often resisted the work discipline and pressures imposed by their middle class bosses. They worked long hours in unfulfilling jobs, and in their leisure time often engaged in things thought unrespectable by the middle class such as going to bars and pubs, and staging dog or chicken fights. Meanwhile, most of their wives were working, most commonly as domestic servants for middle class households, jobs that they usually preferred to factory work. Young women in rural areas often came to cities or suburban areas to work as house servants. They often sent some of their wages home to support their families in the country, and some saved dowry money. Others saved to support ambitions to become clerks or secretaries, jobs increasingly filled by women, but supervised by men.

Middle class men and women:

When production moved outside the home, men who became owners or managers of factories gained status. Industrial work kept the economy moving, and it was valued more than the domestic chores traditionally carried out by women. Men's wages supported the families, since they usually were the ones who made their comfortable life styles possible. The work ethic of the middle class infiltrated leisure time as well. Many were intent on self-improvement, reading books or attending lectures on business or culture. Many factory owners and managers stressed the importance of church attendance for all, hoping that factory workers could be persuaded to adopt middle-class values of respectability. Middle class women generally did not work outside of the home, partly because men came to see stay-at-home wives as a symbol of their success. What followed was a "cult of domesticity" that justified removing women from the work place. Instead, they filled their lives with the care of children and the operation of their homes. Since most middle-class women had servants, they spent time supervising them, but they also had to do fewer household chores themselves.

Historians disagree in their answers to the question of whether or not gender inequality grew because of industrialization. Gender roles were generally fixed in agricultural societies, and if the lives of working class people in industrial societies are examined, it is difficult to see that any significant changes in the gender gap took place at all. However, middle class gender roles provide the real basis for the argument. On the one hand, some argue that women were forced out of many areas of meaningful work, isolated in their homes to obsess about issues of marginal importance. On the farm, their work was "women's work," but they were an integral part of the central enterprise of their time: agriculture. Their work in raising children was vital to the economy, but industrialization rendered children superfluous as well, whose only role was to grow up safely enough to fill their adult gender-related duties. On the other hand, the "cult of domesticity" included a sort of idolizing of women that made them responsible for moral values and standards. Women were seen as stable and pure, the vision of what kept their men devoted to the tasks of running the economy. Women as standard-setters, then, became the important force in shaping children to value respectability, lead moral lives, and be responsible for their own behaviors. Without women filling this important role, the entire social structure that supported industrialized power would collapse. And who could wish for more power than that?

**Industrial changes: The Family**

Because machinery had to be placed in a large, centrally located place, workers had to go to factories to perform their work, a major change in lifestyles from those of agricultural societies. In previous days all family members did most of their work on the farm, which meant that the family stayed together most of the time. Now, people left their homes for hours at a time, often leaving very early and not returning till very late. Usually both husband and wife worked away from home, and for most of this period, so did children. Family life was never the same again. In agricultural societies, what one meant by the word “family” usually consisted in a larger group of people than what we typically mean by that word today. Farm work required many members of extended families two work together: parents, children, aunts uncles and cousins blended together and usually thought of themselves as a single family unit. In industrial societies, parents and their children earned wages and became economically independent from other members of the extended family. This “nuclear” family lived under a single roof, often married later in life, were not arranged marriages like in previous times, and had fewer children.

**Industrial changes: Demographics**

This era saw a basic change in the population structures of industrialized countries. Large families had always been welcome in agricultural societies because the more people a family had, the more land they were able to work. Children's work was generally worth more than it costs to take care of them. However, in the west, including the United States, the birth rate declined to historically low levels in the 19th century. This demographic transition from high birth rates to low reflected the facts that child labor was being replaced by machines and that children were not as useful as they were in agricultural societies. Instead, as life styles changed in urban settings, it became difficult to support large families, both in terms of supporting them with salaries from industrial jobs and in housing them in crowded conditions in the cities. High birth rates continued elsewhere in the world, so the west's percentage of total world population began to slip by 1900 even as its world power peaked.

Urban life During the Industrial Revolution, cities often grew faster than the infrastructure that supported them; rapid urbanization outpaced the implementation of sewage systems and other utilities. In this unsanitary environment, disease spread rapidly. In 1854, an outbreak of cholera in London led the city government to install a massive network of underground sewers. Dr. John Snow, by applying the scientific method, discovered the contamination source in a single water pump on Broad Street. Civil engineers designed a major underground sewage system to solve the problem of contaminated drinking water. Government action and science were solving major urban problems caused by industrialization and urban growth