

WATCH AND STUDY THE 3 EXTRACTS

THE AMERICAN DREAM : FROM RAGS TO RICHES

(Rags : old worn-out clothes)

EXTRACT 1 : Salvatore has traded all his cattle for some new clothes to go to America.

- 1) What sort of social background does Salvatore come from ? List all the elements which can support your answer.
- 2) How is America represented in this scene ? Pay attention to what the characters say about it.
- 3) What sort of clothes have Salvatore and the boys been given? What does the change of clothes symbolize ? What is ironic about it ?
- 4) Compare the attitude of the two brothers when they try on the hats. How can you interpret it ?

THE SELECTION OF IMMIGRANTS

EXTRACT 3 : Salvatore has arrived on Ellis Island, the Federal immigration Station.

After a medical examination, he has to take some intelligence tests.

- 1) Watch the extract and fill in the following grid :

	Nature of the task	Expected solution	Salvatore's solution
Test 1			
Test 2			

- 2) Circle the adjectives best characterizing Salvatore and explain your choice.

sophisticated – stupid – intelligent – intellectual

– stingy – pragmatic – sensible – unreasonable

- 3) What do you think about the tests ?

A NEW LAND

EXTRACT 4 : Salvatore is still in the Immigration Station, with a group of Italians.

1st PART : the window

- 1) What are they looking at through the window ?
- 2) What is the "wooden box" they are talking about ?
- 3) What can you conclude from their descriptions ?
- 4) Why does the view remain hidden from the spectator of the movie ?

2nd PART : the prayer

- 1) Which ethnic group is represented in this scene besides the Italians ?
- 2) Which group starts praying first ? Imagine why the others start praying as well.
- 3) Read the following text and explain how the scene of the prayer illustrates its content.

*“ Optimists had envisioned the American nation as a **melting pot**, where various nationalities would blend to become a new unified people. Instead, many ethnic groups proved unmeltable, and racial minorities got burned on the bottom of the pot. As a result of immigration and urbanization, the United States became a culturally pluralistic society – not so much a melting pot as a **salad bowl**. As one immigrant priest told a social worker, ‘There is no such thing as an American.’ ”*

(From *A People and A Nation, A History of the United States, Volume II : Since 1865*, Fourth Edition, NORTON, KATZMAN and co., Houghton Mifflin Company, 1994, p. 594)

STEP BACK AND CONCLUDE

What does Salvatore's journey tell us about the American Dream of equal opportunities ?