The Second Great Awakening
American reform movements between 1820 and 1860 reflected both optimistic and pessimistic views of human nature and society. Assess the validity of this statement in reference to reform movements of THREE of the following areas:

- Education
- Utopian experiments
- Temperance
- Women’s Rights
- Penal Institutions

Analyze the ways in which TWO of the following influenced the development of American society:

- Puritanism during the seventeenth century
- The Great Awakening during the eighteenth century
- The Second Great Awakening during the nineteenth century
I. “Anxieties of the Condition” Factors for Reform

A. Anxiety

- Population growth:
  - 1) decline native birth rate $\rightarrow$ tensions w/in home
  - 2) Immigration: 1820s: 143,000; 1830s: 600,000; 1840s: 1.7m; 1850s: 2.6m
    - 1860: more immigrants than slaves
Economy: Market and Transportation Revolution

- Lowell Girls; labor unions; westward expansion
- Cities esp. ripe crusades: new social problems
Political change: partisan organizations → mass politics

Reformers: degraded + sinful majority had more power than godly minority → ambivalence over politics

Some rejected altogether, others worked w/in system (esp. Whigs and Republicans, much less Democrats)
Religious Crisis

- 1780s+90s: crisis in religion: 1) Enlightenment (rational/natural religion: Deism), 2) religious disestablishment

- 1790s: only 1 in 20 had any affiliation w/a church ➔ panic on 3 fronts
1. NE clergy blamed TJ Republicans + godless French Jacobins

2. Westward expansion: Am moving beyond reach churches + into areas of Catholics (French + Spanish)

3. Republic depends on virtue→ clergy see religion only foundation of morality
   - But deists focused on morality
B. How to Respond?

- How transformation played into individual’s life history + connected to (or failed to) larger cause → how responded
  1. Demon Rum: Alcoholism

- 1830: 7.1 gallons per capita
  - (1999: 2.184 gallons per capita)
  - Supply: corn → whiskey (8x price bushel corn)
  - Demand: diet, social pressures
    - Doc H
2. Middle Class Reformers

- **Prosperity** → education, income, + leisure time to devote to reform
  - Could make a paying career of it: avenue for women to influence

- **Tech**: transportation, printing → imagined community responsible for
3. Counter-Reformers

- Anti-Masons, proslavery mobs, anti-Catholicism, nativism: also responding to perceived problems
- Doc G, Doc D
II. Revivalism

- Religious revival: get people back into churches → 1795-1840 revivals sweep through America
  - Evangelism: zealous effort to spread Christianity

A. Revival in the East

- Yale College Revival: 1795 Timothy Dwight, Pres. Yale, on Paine + Enlightenment lit.: "the dregs of humanity vomited on us ... the whole mass of pollution emptied on this country."

- → Turn Yale into “little temple”: conversion through conversation → 1840: 50% membership
B. Revival in the West: Cane Ridge, KY

- 1801: Camp meeting: 50,000 participants in week of religion
- V. diff from Yale: frenzied participation, struggled in throes of damnation + exercises for salvation (falling, laughing, jerking, barking)
- Each carried seeds for further conversion: from pulpits (Yale) or circuit riders (Methodists)
- 2 most famous revivalists: Lyman Beecher + Charles Finney
  - Doc B
C. Lyman Beecher

- Born 1775 Conn. farm → Yale, studies w/Dwight → minister
- Homely, boisterous, eccentric: 3 wives, 13 children (including Harriet Beecher Stowe)
- Energy + spiritual intensity → bad father (2 of 13 suicide) but tremendous revivalist → went after souls like a hunting dog
D. Charles Finney

- Born 1792 Conn., “father of modern revivalism”
- 1794 moved central NY, rejects Yale + educates self as lawyer → reads laws of Moses → forced to confront own sinfulness → saving grace
- Devotes life to revival: wedding day leaves bride to go to revival, comes back 6 weeks later
• Fabulously successful: stage presence, hypnotic eloquence (pray until your nose bleeds)

• Introduced “new measures”: protracted meetings (weeks long), “holy band” (recent converts to further reach Finney’s itinerancy), “anxious seat” (pews in front for those close to conversion as a spectacle, esp. local notables)

• Finney moved through central + upstate New York: “Burned Over District” (Joseph Smith, founder Mormons, lived in area)

• Women pray in public ➔ scandalous
E. Clashes Among Revivalists

- New measures bone of contention: Beecher feared Finney giving revivalism bad name, esp. in sedate urban areas
- Beecher: “As the Lord liveth, I’ll meet you at the State line, and call out all the artillerymen, and fight every inch of the way to Boston, and then I’ll fight you there.”
Buried hatchet: realized similarities

1) Energy in conversion

2) Millennialism: imminent return of Christ and 1,000 years of peace

3) faith in human agency → people have ability to bring about conversion (shouldn’t just wait for it)
   - Rejection of predestination

→ Humans have agency to change society → reform
III. Voluntary Association + The “Benevolent Empire”

- 1810-20 Beecher helps form dozens evangelical societies: temperance, anti-dueling, colonization, save fallen women, encourage industry + frugality
- American Tract Society (1825): mass publication Bibles and religious tracts
• Associations added up to the Benevolent Empire (peak 1815-30): profoundly conservative (last dying gasps Feds): feared immigrants, free blacks, drunkards, pimps, urban poor + pre-industrial workers (Sam Patch)

• Central goal of conservative phase: teach values to democratic masses

• Doc E
IV. Theological Perfectionism and Radical Reform

- Late 1820s: conservatism shattered
- Finney most powerful proponent: must cast off all compromise w/sin
  - Split older reform movements:
    - 1) Temperance usually meant less drink → total abstinence
    - 2) Utopian communities: “come-outerism” (Shakers, Oneidas)
      - Doc F
    - 3) Peace movement: avoid war → non-coercion: all gov’t based on coercion → politics/voting a sin
V. Social Control?

- To what extent were reformers the middle class seeking social control?
- Attempt to create modern middle class values: delayed gratification, subordinate emotion, look to future
- Transform working class into their own image
But of course they were after social control: ALL reformers/radicals want to control and transform society

- E.g. Civil Rights Movement, anti-war protestors, Religious Right