I. Classical Social Evolutionism

A. Social Evolutionism was central to most classical social

Theorists

B. Most believed

1. all societies followed a sequence of stages

2. sequence was hierarchical: superior/inferior

3. European countries ranked highest on the scale

than non-European countries

4. not Darwinian

a. change is random

b. no sequence, not progress

5. Lamarckian, and “Christian Evolution”

C. Characteristics

1. inevitable, linear, and irreversible

2. movement: simple to complex (often smaller to

larger)

3. teleological: goal or end state

4. analogous to stages of growth in an organism

a. stability

b. change

5. social progress (not just complexity, but better

D. As Science

1. supporting evidence

a. all societies

b. end state

2. criteria for progress

3. role as ideology: colonialism