*Thomas Bell’s Out of This Furnace is a historical novel – a work of fiction based on historical fact – that describes the life of three generations of an immigrant family from the late-19th century through the Depression of 1929. By reading this book, you should gain some sense of the lives of immigrant workers and their families during this period, the conditions in which they worked and how they responded to those conditions. In particular, you will see how each generation adapted in different ways to the experience of living in America.*

*Instructions*

*Your assignment is to write a four to five page essay about Out of This Furnace that discusses each of the following topics in the order in which they are presented.  This is not a typical book review, but rather a short research paper based on information gained from reading the book.  You should cover each of the following topics in some detail and in the order presented here.*

*Topics*

*1. Provide a brief introduction to the book, no more than one or two paragraphs describing in general terms what the book is about.*

*2. The experiences of George Kracha were fairly typical of the experiences of many immigrants to the U.S. in the late-19th century.  Describe Kracha’s journey to the U.S. in terms of the factors that led him to leave his homeland, the difficulties he encountered during his journey here and his experiences traveling to Pennsylvania.*

*3.  Discuss in some detail the work-life of George Kracha:  in what industries did he work?  What were the working conditions he encountered, especially in the steel industry.  In particular, how safe were those jobs? Finally, how did his work life affect him and his family?*

*4. Describe how the three generations of male workers in Out of This Furnace – George, Mike and Johnny (Dobie) – dealt with the problem of becoming “Americanized”.  Note how each confronted issues like their rights as workers, protest, unionization, education, political activity, etc.  Why do you think, for example, that George was willing to accept the harsh conditions of his work and life while his son-in-law and especially his grandson Dobie increasingly fought to challenge such conditions?*

*5. Discuss the lives of the following female characters: Elena, Franka, Mary, Zulka and Julie.  What type of work did each of them do? What kind of working conditions did each have to contend with? How difficult was it for them to maintain families?*

*6. Briefly, give your opinion of this book.  What did you learn from reading it?  Would you recommend it to others? Why 0r why not?*