

BACKGROUND - I

Unit Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Effects of Industrial Revolution
- 1.3 Victorian Dilemma
- 1.4 Survey of the Literature of the Period
- 1.5 Conclusion
- 1.6 Check Your Progress
- 1.7 Bibliography

1.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Unit are to introduce the learners with following important aspects 19th century literature:

- Industrial Revolution and its Effects
- Society and its impact on literature
- Impact of Victorian dilemma and its impact on literature
- Types of literary genres of the period

1.1 INTRODUCTION

19th century English literature has its unique characteristic features due to the peculiar socio-cultural conditions of the time. This century is known as the time of industrial revolution that seriously affected entire European world leading to the widespread colonization. This specific aspect not only affected the political and geographical aspects of the world but it more closely affected the personal, familial, social, religious, literary and cultural lives of all the concerned. So it would be worthwhile to attempt to understand all those aspects that changed the life and literature of the time.

1.2 EFFECTS OF INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

1.2.1 Middle Class Complacency and the Rise of the Working Class:

The Victorian Age (1832 -1901), one of the remarkable periods in British history was the period of the reign of Queen Victoria. It was an era of material affluence, political consciousness, democratic reforms, industrial and mechanical progress, scientific advancement, social unrest, educational expansion, empire building and religious uncertainty.

Whatever may be the strengths and defects of the Victorian way of life, it cannot be denied that it was in many ways a glorious age in the history of English literature, and the advancement made in the field of poetry, prose and fiction was quite commendable.

The Victorian Age was essentially a period of peace and prosperity in England as the age witnessed the end of colonial wars like the Crimean War and the any revolutionary upsurge which impacted all aspects of their industrial, commercial and social life. It was an era when the 'war drum throbbed no longer' and the people felt safe and secured in their island home.

The industrial revolution during the age transformed the agrarian economy of England into an industrial economy. The revolution gave birth to three social classes viz. upper class, middle class, and lower class. The upper class comprised landowners who did not perform manual labour hence hired lower class workers to work for them. The middle class also referred as bourgeoisie, consisted of those who had skilled jobs. While the lower class comprised labourers living in appalling condition. The growth in industries brought about growth in trade and commerce. Mills and factories were established at important centres and the entire England hummed with the rattle of looms and booms of weaving machines. The expansion of middle class due to industrial development, rapid growth of cities and the economy categorically led to the rise in the Middle Class Complacency. The affluence naturally was accompanied by snobbery and self-satisfaction. Middle class families had their own well-furnished homes with ready supply of water, own car, wore fancy clothing and since education was open for them, sent their children to colleges, were saving for retirement and had enough saving to afford luxuries like dining out and going for vacations. They took pride in their hard work and were determined to 'get ahead'. Very few had sympathy for the poor class. They exerted some political power however it was minimal compared to the upper class. No wonder, the Age witnessed two dominant and yet conflicting tendencies – the spirit of complacency and growing unrest among the poor.

England being the fast pacing industrial economy, the poor class thronged towards industrial towns which resulted in creating contrasting social atmosphere – prosperity as well as poverty, technological progress as well as manual labour and virtue as well as depravity. The intense activities in commerce, industry and finance, simultaneously gave birth to appalling social conditions. It gave rise to filthy slums, exploitation of cheap labour - often of women and children, poor wages to factory workers, etc. The industrial advancement while creating the privileged class of capitalists and mill owners, rolling in wealth and riches, also brought in its wake the semi-starved and ill-clad class of thoroughly dissatisfied labourers and factory workers who were forced to live and work in the factories of the new towns. The working conditions in factories were deplorable. With no safety regulations and no laws limiting either the number of hours people could be required to work or the age of factory workers, some factory

owners were willing to sacrifice the well-being of their employees for greater profit. Children as young as five worked in factories and mines.

1.2.2 Impact of Social Life on Literature:

Victorian literature not only presented the rapid progress in commerce, democracy and science but remarkably revealed its impact on the society as well. Barrett Browning's "The Cry of the Children" (1843) is an example of poems written specifically to address the problems of industrialisation. The age essentially being the age of novel and prose, the evils of the industrial revolution were vividly painted by writers like Disraeli, Dickens and Mrs. Gaskell. The social novel was most diligently cultivated by Benjamin Disraeli. For example, his novel *Sybil* (1845) while revealing the conflict between Capitalists and Labour, presents a terrible picture of the contemporary working class. While Mrs. Elizabeth Gaskell in her novels, *Mary Barton* (1854) and *North and South* (1854), gives a realistic view of the hardships caused by the industrial revolution as seen from the workers' point of view. Dickens is seen as a great reformer through his novels written from humanitarian approach. Thackeray and Carlyle, another prominent representative of the Victorian era, essentially satirize the Victorian society and denounce snobbery, shams and insincerity. George Eliot is critical about the rigid class distinctions in her novels. Charles Kingsley too gives a vivid picture of the wretched life of the labouring class and shows his interest in the oppressed labouring class.

1.3 THE VICTORIAN DILEMMA

1.3.1. Age of Science, Faith, and Doubt: Victorian age was primarily an age of social interests, practical ideals, and the progress of democracy keeping pace with development of science. As science was progressing day by day the Victorian age witnessed an unprecedented intellectual growth and scientific advancement. It was a period of intellectual ferment and scientific thinking. Science, once a sealed book saved for an elect few, was democratized and more and more scientific enthusiasts dedicated themselves to the popularization of scientific works like Darwin's *Origin of Species*. The man of science was regarded no more as academic recluse but as a social figure exercising a deep and profound influence on the social and educational life of the age. Science underwent dramatic change during the age as all branches of science (e.g. botany, geology, astronomy, zoology, medicine, etc.) saw major developments and expansion. The scientific discoveries tremendously impacted the lifestyle, beliefs, and attitudes of people. The biologist Charles Darwin and Physicist Thomas Huxley appeared as revolutionaries on the Victorian scene. Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859), a landmark in the history of human thought, brought about a revolution in the fabric and framework of contemporary philosophy.

Much of the middle class began to doubt the reliability of the book of *Genesis* according to which the universe was created by the divine power. Moreover, William Paley's book *Natural Theology: Or Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity Collected from the Appearances of Nature* written in 1802 that emphasised the idea of God as a creator of the universe and all existing species was outrightly challenged by Darwin's

The Origin of the Species. His Evolution theory revolutionised the thought of the age as it challenged the literal truth of the Bible and the nature of Christian belief. However, many who believed that the nature and man are created by God saw it as an attack on religion and hence continued believing in religious teachings.

A substantial number of public figures like many educated people, intellectuals and writers openly challenged the religious beliefs as they found it difficult to accept the literal truth of Bible and hence rejected the teachings of Christianity altogether. The tremendous impact of Darwin and his followers – T.H. Huxley, Herbert Spenser, A.R. Wallace, John Stuart Mill and Tyndall shook the religious faith. So amazing were the achievements of science that people began to think that science will not only supply their physical needs but will also answer those fundamental questions to which religion had given unconvincing replies. The Bible, so long regarded as infallible, came in for criticism. What to many was an icon of faith became to some a mere fiction.

Yet, in this age of doubt, wherein the intellectuals battled the Church and struggled to absorb scientific discoveries, religion had its sway and could not be completely crushed. The religion of the middle class known as Evangelicalism was not only the religion of mind and spirit but also of manners and taste, which was extraneous. The age, hence, was at once the age of the triumph of science and religion. In spite of the advance of science and various discoveries, the tenor of life was still governed by religious and moral consciousness as the Victorians were moralists at heart and religion was the anchor of their lives. Undoubtedly, there was a marked conflict between religion and science between moralists and scientists, each outdoing the other.

1.3.2. Impact of the Victorian Dilemma on Literature: The revolution in thinking left a deep impact on the literature of the time as literature reflects the spirit of the age. The reflections of dilemma can be found in the skeptical reactions from prominent poets like Arnold, Clough, James Thomson, Fitzgerald, etc. They mourn over the decay of faith in their works with a poignant note of pessimism. Some of Arnold's remarkable poems – *The Scholar Gypsy* (1853), *Thyrsis* (1867), *Rugby Chapel* (1867), *Dover Beach* (1867) are deeply elegiac as they wail over decay of faith. A. H. Clough's philosophical poem 'Dipsychus' reveals a deep-seated unrest and despondency due to dilemma between faith and doubt. James Thomson's 'The City of Dreadful Night' (1870-73) contains similar essence of melancholy when he says – "Life is a hell and Progress is an illusion". Tennyson's poetry is also considerably influenced by the advancement of science in the age and the undertones of scientific research can be heard in his "In Memoriam" (1850). The fiction of Charlotte Bronte, Dickens, Kingsley, Reade, George Eliot is also found to be influenced by scientific spirit. The marked development of realism in literature was due to the analytical and critical habit of mind fostered by science. The scientific temper also coloured the historical literature of Carlyle, Buckle and Macaulay who followed the method of discovering, ascertaining facts of history. Thus the Victorian literature was marked

throughout by the prominence of the spirit inquiry and criticism, by skepticism and religious uncertainty, and by spiritual struggle and unrest; and these are among the most persistent and characteristic notes of its literature.

However, some writers like Browning, and Newman remained unaffected by the scientific temper. Newman and his Oxford Movement sought to revive the faith, rituals and dogmas of Roman Catholic religion. While the Pre Raphaelites challenged Victorian materialism and pragmatism and withdrew themselves into the world of art and advocated the creed of art for art's sake.

1.4 SURVEY OF THE LITEARTURE OF THE PERIOD

1.4.1. Survey of Victorian Literature: The Victorian age was one of the most remarkable periods in the history of English literature. It witnessed the flowering of poetry in the hands of a host of poets, great and small. It marked the growth of the English novel and laid the foundation of English prose. The literature of the age had salient features of its own.

The literary figures were endowed with originality in outlook, character and style. For example, one could find energy in Macaulay while Tennyson loved to praise independence. Dickens was known for his unique originality while Bronte sisters had pride and endurance. Tennyson loved to follow a haphazard path in his stories.

The age was essentially the age of prose and novel. Though the age produced many poets it is “... emphatically and age of prose and poetry” says W.J Long. The novels took the place of drama and became as popular as the drama was popular during the Elizabethan age. The age also witnessed great number of novels with perfection.

The Literature was marked with a moral note both in prose and poetry. Tennyson, Browning, Carlyle, Ruskin, Thackeray, George Eliot, Dickens were primarily interested in giving message and write to uplift and instruct their countrymen.

The literary artists were inspired by a social zeal to represent the problem of their age. No wonder the literature of the age known as the literature of realism rather than romance. Literature became an instrument of social reform and hence was purposeful and didactic.

A few literary artists revolted against the materialistic tendencies of the age and sought refuge in the Middle ages. For example, Rossetti delved in the folklore of the Middle ages. Morris engaged himself in its legends and sagas.

The literature of the age though was insisted on rationality and reason, cannot cut itself off from Romanticism. It's traces can be found in the works of Tennyson, Thackeray, Browning and Arnold.

The note of pessimism, doubt and despair can be found in the poetry of Arnold, and Arthur H. Clough. Similarly, a note of idealism and optimism also is struck by the poets like Browning and prose writers like Ruskin. While faith in humanity can be seen in the essayists like Macaulay, Carlyle, Ruskin and the novelists like Dickens, Thackeray and George Eliot.

The literature of the age was also found under the impact of science. The scientific spirit is found in the works of Clough, James Thomson, Arnold and Fitzgerald.

The note of patriotism runs through the Victorian literature. Tennyson, Dickens and Disraeli were inspired by a national pride.

1.4.2. Victorian Novel: Victorian age is essentially the age of the novel since the novel made a phenomenal progress during the age. This was partly because the middle class rose in power and importance, partly because of the steady increase of the reading public with growth of lending libraries and the development of publishing and partly because the novel presented a picture of life of the middle-class society which the people wanted to read about. The novel of the age used as a popular medium for expressing its rapid progress in commerce, democracy and science. The material and scientific progress had its influence upon the Victorian life and it was inevitable that it should be expressed through its prose, poetry and fiction. Influenced by Darwin's theory of evolution, the novel of the age became the vehicle of ideas as well as a means of amusement. The writers though belonged to different perspectives, used literature in general and novel in particular for noting criticism of life. The novel reflected all the factors influencing and shaping the complex modern world. It became more realistic and analytical with the spread of science; more humanitarian with the spread of democratic approach; and more inquiring and interrogative with the religious and moral unrest.

The early Victorian novel as cultivated by Disraeli, Trollope, Dickens, Thackeray, Kingsley, Mrs. Gaskell and Charles Reade was essentially a transcript from life and the novelists concentrated on the social, political, economic aspects of Victorian society. Realism, sometimes blatant and sometimes in the subdued key, became a characteristic feature of early Victorian novel. The novelists came to close grips with the problems faced by Victorian society and sought to find a solution to the rampant evils of the age. The novel, like other forms of literature, became purposive in character, and ceased to be a source of pure entertainment. The Victorian reader found in fiction what he looked for, and the early Victorian novelists provided him a historical perspective of the age in all its varied aspects. Thus, the early Victorian novelists were in accord with their public, and gratified the public taste by portraying their own life. They identified with the age and were its spokesmen. No wonder there is a satiric tinge in the novels of Disraeli, Thackeray and Dickens as well.

1.4.3. Victorian Poetry: Victorian poetry was differed from the poetry of the previous era. Yet the salient features of both the poetries were similar.

From the rich imagery and rhythmic quality of Alfred Lord Tennyson to Christina Rossetti's lyrical purity and powerful exploration of loss and faith, the Victorian period heralded a new wave of poetry that was influenced by its Romantic predecessors yet distinctly different. The poets experimented with innovative forms and types of prosody that enabled new kind of poetic voices. We find a note of feminism in Elizabeth Browning while Mathew Arnold was a precursor of the modernist revolution. Gerald Hopkins's poetry with its unusual style influenced a lot of the 1940s poets. The Victorian poetry can be divided into early Victorian poets and the Pre Raphaelites. The early Victorian poets are Alfred Lord Tennyson, Robert Browning, Elizabeth Browning, Mathew Arnold, Gerald Hopkins. The Pre Raphaelites are D.G. Rossetti, Holman Hunt, J.E. Millais, William Morris and A.C. Swinburne.

The poetry of the age was quite realistic in nature and was contrary to the romantic poetry which was idealistic. Nature that was valorized by the Romantics lost its idealized position and became just a source of leisure and inspiration for the poets.

Unlike Romantic poetry which was imbued in rural and rustic life, the theme of Victorian poetry was city life. Hence it focused on masses for masses. Moreover, the poets took interest in Medieval literature and loved mythical and chivalrous anecdotes of Medieval knights, courtly love, etc.

Since the Victorian poetry was realistic, it was associated with real life situations rather than the ideal world. The themes included the impact of industrial revolution and advancements on the masses who were poor, unemployed, corrupt, and living in slums. The Poetry thus was pessimistic as it focused on the pains and miserable life of the commoners.

The advancement in science and inventions was welcomed by the Victorian poets. It made them believe that a man can find all solutions to his problems and sufferings. They made their readers believe that they should use science for their betterment.

Victorian poets took the responsibility of social reform and gave voice to the commoners by living with them.

Patriotism was the significant feature of the age. The Victorian took pride in their nation and national glories. A sense of national pride is well sounded in Tennyson's poetry.

"Throughout this era poetry addressed issues such as patriotism, religious faith, science, sexuality, and social reform, that often aroused polemical debate.

Robert Browning broke the mould of Victorian conventional poetic style by employing dramatic method in the presentation. He is one of the greatest love poets in English poetry. His love poetry is intensely realistic in character. He intellectualized the passion of love. His remarkable works are *The last ride together*, *Parting at Morning*, etc. His *My Last Duchess* is the best example of dramatic monologue. It deals with the Victorian

social issues about the condition of woman. The poem explores the class consciousness and the Victorian morality code where a woman is strictly adhered to certain social norms.

Tennyson being the most prominent literary figure of the age, faithfully reflected various aspects of Victorian life in his poetry. During the long span of his career as a poet he essayed every kind of poetry – the song, the idyll, the dramatic monologue, the dialect poem, the ballad, the war ode, etc. The extraordinary diversity of his work is itself typical of the strongly marked eclecticism of his age. He wrote on classical, romantic, and modern subjects; on English history and Celtic legend; on the deepest problems of philosophy and religion. The finest jewel of his poetic art is *Ulysses* and *Locksley Hall*. His first long poem *The Princess a Medley* comments on women's education and their claim for equality. His famous elegy *In Memoriam* mourns the death of his close friend Arthur Hallam.

Matthew Arnold is a significant writer of the Victorian age. He was at once a poet, and prose writer. His poetry is reflective and intellectual while his prose writing awakened the middle class from materialism and complacency. Arnold's remarkable work includes *The Strayed Reveller* and other Poems, *Empedocles on Etna* and other poems, *Poems*, *Quiet Work*, *The Forsaken Merman*, *To Marguerite*, *The Scholar Gypsy*, and *Dover Beach*. His poetry is characterized by doubt and melancholy. Being a humanist, he expressed his disappointment about the collapse of traditional faith in English society.

1.4.4. The Victorian Prose: The early Victorian prose is in keeping with the energetic temperament of the time. An expansive energy seems to be characteristic of the whole period, displaying itself as freely in literature as in the development of science, geographical exploration and the rapidity of economic change. The Victorian prose carried the spirit of realism like that of Victorian poetry and novel. Unlike the highly imaginative prose in the Romantic age, the Victorian prose confronted contemporary problems like religion, science, politics, arts, etc. posed by modern, materialistic urban life with intellectual fervour. This highly creative nonfiction which was popular during the age was originated by a literary historian – John Holloway who named the genre as “sage writing”. The wide popularity of the writing was due to the increase in nineteenth century periodicals and newspapers like *Edinburgh Reviews*, the *Quarterly Reviews*, *Fraser's Magazine*, etc. The major contributors of this genre were Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, and Matthew Arnold who with their philosophical, observant and enlightened thoughts enriched Victorian non-fictional prose. There were some minor essayists too, like Walter Pater, John Stuart Mill and Thomas Macaulay.

Thomas Carlyle was a Scottish essayist, historian and philosopher. He is found to be critical of intellectual and spiritual mediocrity, self-contentment with material prosperity, moral stupor, surrender to scientific skepticism, and analytical reasoning of the time. His one of the significant contributions to prose literature is his book – *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and The Heroic in History* (1841) wherein he discusses the hero as

divinity (Odin), Prophet (Mahomet), poet (Dante and Shakespeare), priests (Luther and Knox), Men of letter (Johnson, Rousseau and Burns) and King (Cromwell and Napoleon). His other prominent historical books are *French Revolution* (1837), *Past and Present* (1843), *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* (1845), *Frederick II of Prussia* (1858-65), etc. While sympathizing with the poor and industrial class in England he also dealt with the spiritual degradation of the nineteenth century middle class, materialistic tendency of the age, etc.

John Ruskin believed that the great art is moral and the working men of industrial England were spiritually impoverished. His writing on the aesthetics of painting showed similarity with the Pre Raphaelites as both had a conviction that medieval writers were more free in their thoughts and expressions than the Victorians. However, like the Pre Raphaelites, he did not believe in the principle of 'art for art's sake' but in 'art towards the spiritual health of man'. His major works *Modern Painters* (1843-60), *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1840), *The Stone of Venice* (1851-53) introduce Ruskin as an art critic well familiar with Victorian paintings. While his other works – *Sesame and Lilies* (1865), *Ethics of the Dust* (1866), *The Crown of Wild Olive* (1866), *The Political Economy of Art* (1857), *The Two Paths* (1859) and *Unto the Last* (1862) deal with the problems related to industrial society and his criticism on them. Ruskin's later work shows his change of focus from art to the consequences of industrialism. Charles Dickens' *Hard Times* is said to be inspired by Ruskin's writing.

Matthew Arnold was a man of liberal ideas, reformist tendencies and moral earnestness. Undoubtedly, his writing reveals him as a literary critic and social philosopher. Owing to his early training in the classics of ancient Greece and Rome and the study of Bible, his poems are a graceful fusion of classicism and Romanticism. Arnold's major non-fiction works are *Essays in Criticism* – First and Second Series (1865 and 1888), *On Translating Homer* (1861), *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) *The Study of Poetry* (1880). In *Essays in Criticism*, he shows how authors as different as Marcus Aurelius, Leo Tolstoy, Homer and Wordsworth provide the virtues he sought in his society. His *On Translating Homer* shows his passion for the literary heritage of the classical past. While in his *Culture and Anarchy* he introduces himself as a critic of society wherein he criticises middle class as ignorant, narrow-minded and intellectually dull.

Some minor essayists of the age were Walter Pater, John Stuart Mill and Thomas Macaulay. Walter Pater, a scholar, critic, an essayist and idealistic worshipper of beauty was associated with the Pre-Raphaelite movement. His potential influence on the cult of art later led to the Aesthetic Movement towards the end of the century. His major work *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873) is a brilliant collection of essays on Italian painters and writers from the fourteenth to sixteenth century wherein he advocates a fusion of psychic, moral and sensuous ecstasy. His other works are *Imaginary Portraits* (1887), *Appreciation with an Essay in Style* (1889), *Plato and Platonism* (1893), *The Child in the House* (1894), and *Greek Studies and Miscellaneous Studies* (1895). John Stuart Mill was

an English philosopher, political economist, Member of Parliament and civil servant. One of the most influential thinkers in the history of classical liberalism, he contributed widely to social theory, political theory, and political economy. Mill's essay *Utilitarianism* (1861) emphasizes the value of utilitarianism as a moral theory. Mill can be considered the earliest proponent of gender equality. His book *The Subjection of Women* (1869) attacks the concepts that have subjected women. Thomas Macaulay was a historian and political leader. His *Minutes on Indian Education* is a discourse on educational institutions and development and expressed his belief on 'downward filtration of education' that will educate the elite who in turn educate the masses.

1.5 CONCLUSION

The above discussion shows that the literature written during the 19th century is closely affected by various socio-political and cultural forces of the time. These effects can be seen in the beliefs and faiths of common people in religion, social conventions and moral values. All of these doubts are reflected in the literature of the time.

1.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Discuss the effects of industrial revolution on English literature of the 19th century.
2. What is Victorian Dilemma? Discuss its impacts on English literature.
3. Write short notes on the following:
 - A) Victorian Novel
 - B) Victorian poetry
 - C) Victorian Prose

1.7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Afreen Sultana (BRAC uni, Dhaka) "Industrial Rev. in literary Imagination (Responses from three phases' the romantic, Victorian and late Victorian period.
2. Peter Temin- Two views of the British Industrial Revolution Influence of Industrial Rev. on Victorian Age & upper class. Devasi M. chandravadya Assist Prof. Shri. Arablush Sc. Lalpur Jamnagar Guajrat.
3. Stein Richard (1987) Victorian years NY OUP.
4. Horn, Jeff; Rosenband, Leonard; Smith, Merritt (2010). *Reconceptualizing the Industrial Revolution*. Cambridge MA, London: MIT Press.
5. E. Anthony Wrigley, "Reconsidering the Industrial Revolution: England and Wales." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 49.01 (2018): 9–42.
6. Felluga, Dino Franco, et al. *The Encyclopedia of Victorian Literature* (2015).
7. Flint, Kate, Ed. *The Cambridge History of Victorian Literature* (2014).

8. Horseman, Alan. *The Victorian Novel* (Oxford History of English Literature, 1991)
9. Hroncek, Susan. *Strange Compositions: Chemistry and its Occult History in Victorian Speculative Fiction* (2016)
10. O'Gorman, Francis, Ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian culture* (2010)
11. Roberts, Adam Charles, ed. *Victorian culture and society: the essential glossary* (2003).
12. Somervell, D. C. *English thought in the nineteenth century* (1929).



munotes.in

BACKGROUND - II

Unit Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Utilitarianism
- 2.3 Darwinism
- 2.4 Victorian Concept of Morality
- 2.5 Aestheticism
- 2.6 Pre-Raphaelite Movement
- 2.7 The Oxford Movement
- 2.8 Bildungsroman and the Victorian Novel
- 2.9 Conclusion
- 2.10 Check Your Progress
- 2.11 Bibliography

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Unit are to introduce the learners with following important aspects of 19th century literature:

- Utilitarianism
- Darwinism
- Victorian morality
- Aestheticism
- Pre-Raphaelite movement
- The Oxford movement and
- Bildungsroman novels

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Victorian literature in England is very rich in character as there were varieties of different trends practiced by the literary artists. Besides, the literature and social thoughts were getting seriously affected by the principle of “survival of the fittest” propounded by Charles Darwin. The society was given to the idea of morality and moral values. Such kinds of trends gave birth to the movements like

2.2 UTILITARIANISM

The Victorian age along with a chain of thinkers like Newman, Arnold, Ruskin, witnessed the force of utilitarian thinkers like John Stuart Mill and agnostic scientists like Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, etc. Although utilitarianism – “the greatest-happiness principle” was propounded by an English philosopher, jurist and social reformer, Jeremy Bentham, the philosophy was brought into operation during the age by John Stuart Mill. While Bentham holds that one’s actions must aim at producing the greatest aggregate happiness among all beings within reason, Mills looks at utility from a moral point of view and states that given a choice between two actions, one ought to choose the action that contributes most to the total happiness experienced by the people in the world. That is if the people generally experience more happiness following ‘Action A’ than ‘Action B’, the utilitarian should conclude that *Action A* produces more utility than *Action B* and so is to be preferred. Mill asserts that upon reflection, even when we value virtues for selfish reasons we are in fact cherishing them as a part of our happiness. As a strong supporter of the philosophy of utilitarianism, Mill describes it as the principle that holds that “actions are right in the proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness”. For him happiness was an intended pleasure and absence of pain; while unhappiness was pain and privation of pleasure. Both the state and the industry of the age came under the heavy influence of this mechanical approach to matters of the human soul.

Utilitarianism is a consequentialist ethical theory that holds the belief that actions – legal, political, administrative, etc. are justified in so far as they produce a desirable outcome. Hence the celebrated goal of utilitarianism is to achieve “the greatest good for the greatest number as the end result of human action”. In utilitarianism, Mills states that happiness is the sole end of human action. In other words, ‘free will’ leads everyone towards making actions inclined on their own happiness and if they are reasoned properly, they can improve the happiness of others as well. In such a case one can claim that the greatest utility is achieved. Mill claims that utilitarianism is a default lifestyle people use subconsciously when they have to take a decision.

2.3 DARWINISM

Darwinism is a theory of the evolution mechanism propounded by Charles Darwin. It reveals Darwin’s thesis that evolution is driven chiefly by natural selection. In 1859 Darwin, the father of evolutionary biology, published his seminal work *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. Darwin’s Evolution theory or the theory of ‘transmutation’ was a live topic in the Victorian intellectual culture. It soon got blended with theories of development, change and competition. Though Darwin was not the first

to introduce the idea of evolution, as it had been around long before his birth, he was the first to carry out extensive research to back up the theory.

Naturally the mantle of 'Darwinism' was co-opted by social theorists, psychologists and biologists. Darwin's most acknowledged contribution is his theories of 'natural selection' and 'common descent'. His theory of natural selection states the process by which particular traits become more or less common within a population. As Darwin put it: "any being, if it varies however slightly in any manner profitable to itself, under the complex and sometimes varying conditions of life, will have a better chance of surviving, and thus be naturally selected." Darwin further states that the individual who has a better chance of surviving, tends to propagate its new and modified form. His theory of 'Common Descent' argues for the shared ancestry of different individuals, varieties, subspecies, species, and genera. Darwin offered many ideas to biological theory. He coined the concept of sexual selection, developed a superannuated account of heredity that describes how parents' characteristics are transmitted to offspring. He published discoveries on subjects as diverse as the formation of coral reefs, the movement of plants and the action of earthworms. These and more of Darwin's endeavours can be characterized as "Darwinism".

The impact of Darwin's Evolution Theory was so remarkable that many Victorians saw it befitting to their own social experience as it was deeply impacted by industrialization, urbanization and technological innovations. Darwin's idea of a 'struggle for existence' that was central to Darwin's theory, perfectly described Britain's competitive capitalist economy wherein some section of society was enormously wealthy while the other one was living a miserable life. The theory of Evolution confirmed the idea that species compete and struggle and only the fittest and best survive. In fact, the term, "survival of the fittest" was coined by the Philosopher, Herbert Spencer to describe Evolution was later added by Darwin in his book.

Though some Victorians were convinced that competition was the key to development, Darwin was of the conviction that cooperation is important for development and it is the key word for those creatures, including human beings, who live in group. Darwinian themes can be found in the works of Thomas Hardy, Alfred Tennyson, Samuel Beckett, George Eliot and Bernard Shaw. It still inspires writers of today.

While Darwin has long been an interest to the scholars in the sciences, it has also attracted the attention of social scientists, historians of ideas, literary and other textual critics, philosophers and cultural critics. The breadth of discipline itself is a testament of the cultural importance and intellectual reach of Darwinism.

Darwin's revolutionary idea of evolution sparked a dramatic debate in the scientific and religious communities of the time. It inspired a new wave of thought in the people as he came up with a strictly scientific explanation

for all natural phenomena which resulted in an initiation of powerful intellectual and spiritual revolution. Though the leading scientists and philosophers of the time believed in creationism and strongly opposed Darwin's theories, as they were shocked by the idea that human are basically animals. His theory compelled the Victorian question their values and ideals. Ultimately Darwin's evolution theory refuted any belief in the Christian dogma of creation as it eliminated the need for some supernatural force as a creator or designer. What was a rebellious thought, Darwinism has been unanimously accepted by all sciences.

2.4 VICTORIAN CONCEPT OF MORALITY

Victorian morality describes the moral views and social expectations of people living during Queen Victoria's regime between 1837 and 1901. Along with technical and social advancements, the Victorian age witnessed a repressive set of moral codes known as Victorian morality. This form of personal ethics was founded on the religious beliefs of the time and displayed severe austerity and repression. England is much noted for its strong unprecedented concern for morality because of the loss of religious beliefs and material progress. Hard work, morality, social respect, truthfulness, economizing, duty, personal responsibility, strong work ethics and religious conformity were strongly regarded as morals during the age. Today, the moral views are widely regarded as too austere and non-indulgent.

Family life was given utmost importance. It had to have large relatives and at least 5 to 6 children. Upper- and middle-class families usually lived in big houses and the parents made sure that children know 'their place'. They believed that a child must know ethics to become a proper adult. Children's education was considered as parents' most important duty. The family system was patriarchal that considered children and women as sub human.

Since the rich and the poor had incredibly different lifestyle, opportunities for and expectations from men and women too varied. The rich received many opportunities like education in good schools, luxurious homes, and abundant resources while, the poor had to live in miserable houses or in workhouses. Their children had to work with their parents. The middle class lived comfortably unlike the lower class. However, despite the stark difference between the wealthy and poor, the wealthy attempted to help the poor in getting free educational facilities wherein the young people learnt reading, arithmetic, writing and Biblical scriptures.

The age also witnessed the difference in lifestyle of upper-class men and women. While Victorian boys attended best schools and were groomed for various professions, the Victorian girls often taught at homes and expected to learn homely duties, singing, drawing and playing piano. The inequality between men and women is a significant part of the legacy of Victorian morality.

The Victorian morality also displayed zero tolerance towards sexual promiscuity and breaches of law. There was a common saying during the age “Men are polygamous; women are monogamous”. This statement clearly introduced the idea that here different sexual standards for men and women. Women were expected to remain pure until marriage.

The age regarded men as ambitious, independent, active, reasonable, and aggressive. On the contrary the women were looked at as passive, dependent, submissive, weak, and self-sacrificing. Hence, men were expected to pursue their career of choice while women were expected to marry, serve husband, bear children, tend to home and instruct servants.

The inequality between men and women also is manifested in the rights enjoyed by men and women. The women were regarded as the literal property of men. Unlike men, they could not vote, sue or own property. Moreover, the divorced women had to lose all their property to their husbands. The middle-class women who were earning as a paid labour in industries had restrictions on their financial, social and political rights. They had to give control of their property and earnings to their husbands. This severely restricted the class mobility of Victorian women. As a response to this, the Victorian age later gave way to many movements that gave rights to the poor and women. For example, the women’s Suffrage Movement has its roots in the Victorian times.

The Victorian era was also a time of evangelism with churches calling for higher moral principles and standards from the congregations. Both the middle-class growth and the rise of evangelism are thought to have influenced the ethical issues surrounding gender, equality, censorship and sexual repression.

Victorian Morality is a significant element in literary works throughout history. As a result, many literary Victorian personalities, in their search for a solution to the inner conflict constituted a strong ethical and moral element in their works.

2.5 AESTHETICISM

Aesthetic movement is an intellectual and art movement that emphasized aesthetic values more than socio-political themes for literature, fine art, music, other arts as well as philosophy and science. The movement which began in 1890 lasted till 1920. As the beauty was considered primary, ethics, knowledge, religiousness, social issues were naturally given subordinate status. The movement was supported by notable figures like Walter Peter and Oscar Wilde and critics like Harold Bloom. In 1891, Oscar Wilde’s preface to *The Portrait of Dorian Gray* became a kind of manifesto of aestheticism. The Aesthetic movement in Britain aimed at escaping the ugliness and materialism of the industrial Age and instead focuses on producing art that was beautiful. The movement sought to demolish Britain’s pompous, domineering, sober morality, middle class orthodox values that characterized Victorian era and embraced beauty as the chief pursuit of both art and life. The movement was unlike Pre-

Raphaelite Movement which advocated deeper thought - 'Art for Art's Sake'. According to the aesthetics an art should not have any moral purpose but should be an end in itself. In England Walter Pater rejected religious faith and believed that life should be lived as 'a work of art'. This belief was quite subversive in the Victorian Age which believed in the strict moral code. In fact, the movement began in the eighteenth century and is laid on the philosophical foundation of Immanuel Kant who advocated the autonomy of the aesthetic standards setting them apart from morality, utility and pleasure.

The Victorians who were fed up of literature filled in with moral and sentimental messages, got attracted towards aesthetic movement. The artists and writers who supported this form believed that art should be used to offer a refined sensual pleasure to the readers and the writers. Hence the aesthetics themselves developed a cult of beauty for their literature and they wanted to use that cult for their work. To make their work more attractive, they used symbols, suggestions, music, colours, diction and sensuality. Aesthetic art soon was more than just a fine art trend, it influenced everything from literature and music to fashion and interior. The artists preferred visual and sensual qualities of art and design over practical, ethical and moral considerations. The movement was not only popular in England but also in France and Italy.

From 1885 to 1915 aestheticism influenced impressionism, symbolism, realism, naturalism, and also neoclassicism. Representatives of aestheticism were Walter Pater, John Ruskin, Oscar Wilde, Aubrey Beardsley, Fredric Leighton, Thomas Mann etc. More than anyone else, the British writers were influenced by Walter Pater's essays wherein he stated that life had to be lived intensely, with an ideal of beauty. Walter Pater, a scholar, critic, an essayist and idealistic worshipper of beauty is considered to be the father of Aesthetic movement. His potential influence on the cult of art led to the Aesthetic Movement towards the end of the century. His major work *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873) is a brilliant collection of essays on Italian painters and writers from the fourteenth to sixteenth century wherein he advocates a fusion of psychic, moral and sensuous ecstasy.

J.A. Symonds and Oscar Wilde too are the significant contributors in the Aesthetic movement of the Victorian age. Oscar Wilde upheld the theory of 'Arts for Arts sake', and carried forward the aesthetic movement throwing morality out of view altogether. For Wilde, Art had no other aim save to gratify the taste of the artist. It had no bearing on social problems. It had no relation with morality. Hugh Walker in his *The Literature of the Victorian Era* states: "Ruskin's aestheticism is ethical; Wilde adopted the aestheticism but eliminated the moral".

2.6 PRE-RAPHAELITICISM

The Pre-Raphaelite Movement during the Victorian era was an idealistic reaction against the didacticism, moral fervour and pre occupation of the poets and novelists with contemporary society. During the reign of Queen

Victoria, there was a growing tendency to make literature a handmaiden of social reform and an instrument for the propaganda of moral and spiritual ideas. Literature became the vehicle of social, political and moral problems confronting the Victorian people. Ruskin, Carlyle, Dickens were engaged in attacking the social evils; even the poets were free from the taint of the age.

It was against this pre-occupation of poets, prose writers, and novelists that some radical artists formed a group in 1848 called the Pre-Raphaelite Group. The founder members of this group were D.G. Rossetti, Holman Hunt and J.E. Millais and later it joined by William Morris and A.C. Swinburne. All the members of this group were repelled by the sordidness, ugliness and materialism that had taken hold of the leading Victorian minds. Hence they sought to escape from the world of stark realities to a land of beauty, art and loveliness. The Pre-Raphaelite poets sought refuge in the romance and mysticism of the Middle Ages.

Originally it was the movement of the regeneration of painting on the models of the early Italian painters. Being dissatisfied with Raphael's loftiness of conception and perfection of technique, the young painters thought of early Italian painters who were known for simplicity and natural grace. The young painters who wanted to break away from the stereotyped traditions in painting set up by Raphael, returned to the earlier Italian painters whose work was fascinated them due to its freshness and freedom. The movement soon extended its bounds to include the revival of poetry and sculpture on the same lines. It was joined by Morris and Swinburne and became a full fledged organisation for the revival of art in its varied aspects.

In the sphere of poetry, the Pre-Raphaelite poets did remarkable work. The poetry of the Pre-Raphaelites like Rossetti, Morris, Swinburne was a revolt against the conventionality of poetry represented by Tennyson. The poets revolted against the idea of using poetry social and political thought. The Pre-Raphaelites were the votaries of art for art's sake. They had no morality to preach and no reforms to introduce. Love of beauty was their creed.

The Pre-Raphaelites were pictorial artists and their paintings as well as poems ere symphonies of colour. Rossetti who had an observant eye of a meticulous painter, was the most poetical of the Raphaelite poets. The Pre-Raphaelite poetry is rich in melody. The free flow of the swift moving lines is remarkable in Swinburne. The poetry of the Pre-Raphaelites is marked by sensuousness. Rossetti's poetry is sensuous and passionate. The Pre-Raphaelite poets were considerable influenced in their art by Keats and Tennyson. Hence it can be said that the movement was a direct and legitimate development of the Romantic revival.

2.7 THE OXFORD MOVEMENT

The Oxford movement also known as the Tractarian movement was fundamentally a religious movement and not a political movement. The

movement opposed liberalism in all its aspects, the Oxford leaders derived much from the philosophy of conservatism. Among the many aims of the Oxford Movement was to rehabilitate the dignity of the Church, to defend the Church against the interference of the State, to fight against liberalism, to restore reverence for the sacraments, rituals and dogmas of the Roman Catholic faith.

The Oxford Movement was opposed to rationalism in matters concerned with the Church. With the unprecedented growth of science in the nineteenth century, it stood against too much insistence on reason and proof in religious matters.

The Oxford Movement was allied with the Romantic movement and derived much inspiration from the Middle Ages. According to Prof. Gates, the Oxford Movement was in its essence an attempt to reconstruct the English Church in harmony with romantic (medieval) ideals. The Oxford Movement thus owed much to Coleridge and Scott who made the Victorians return to Middle Ages. The Oxford men turned towards the Middle Ages in order to escape from the drab monotony of life and the materialistic advancement.

The Oxford Movement stood against the secular authority interfering with the affairs of the Church. Their demand was to free the Church as it was more than merely a human institution.

The originator of the movement was John Keble whose sermon on the National Apostasy inaugurated the movement. However, John Newman or Cardinal Newman was the soul and spirit behind the Oxford Movement. He was the expression of the new Catholic movement.

The Oxford Movement exercised remarkable impact on the taste of its age. It inspired the poetry of the Pre-Raphaelites. It coloured the poetry of Christina Rossetti, G. M. Hopkins, Coventry Patmore, Richard Dixon and Richard Froude. In fiction the movement can be seen in the novels of Charlotte Young and the mystical fiction of J.M. Shorthouse. The movement also produced ecclesiastical journalism which grew up as a protest against the interference of the State in the Church affairs.

The Oxford Movement had a profound impact on the intellectual life of the time. Though it could not effect a change in the fundamental character of the English Church, it showed to the Englishmen the historic continuity of their national church.

2.8 BUILDUNGSROMAN AND THE VICTORIAN NOVEL

The word bildungsroman is derived from a German word 'bildung' meaning formation and 'roman' meaning novel. The German essayist Wilhelm Dilthey, in 1904, introduced the Bildungsroman, the novel of development, or coming of age novel and explained the narrative process of the genre as: A regulated development within the life of the individual is observed, each of its stages has its own intrinsic value, and is at the

same time the basis for a higher stage. In other words, bildungsroman is a genre of novel that shows a young protagonist's journey from childhood to adulthood with a focus on the trials and misfortunes that affect the character's growth.

The dissonances and conflicts of life appear as the necessary growth points through which the individual must pass on his way to maturity and harmony. According to Jerome Hamilton Buckley, a typical Bildungsroman plot portrays a child who comes into contact with others who are hostile to his imaginative growth, and as a result, he leaves the repressive atmosphere of home to make his way independently in the city. There his real education begins. In male Bildungsroman, the boy hero usually seeks autonomy and freedom from social constraints, isolating himself from his community and searching the answers of the questions of life to gain all the experience related to the world. Later the genre influenced the Europe and then across the world. It can also be referred as 'novel of education' or 'novel of formation'.

The genre indicates an individual's growth and an all round self-development in the context of social order. The aim is to develop the self and search for the significant existence in the society. In the course of time values and norms of the society are understood and assessed by the character. Bildungsroman novels are generally written in the first-person and often feature the name of the protagonist directly in the title, such as *Emma*, *Jane Eyre*, and *David Copperfield*.

The maturity process of the character is gradual, long and arduous as they struggle to meet their desires and needs while living away from the family in the rigid social order. The character gets influenced by the views and judgments of the society in which he lives. Many a times it has to deal with the conflicts of values between the society and himself, tragedies, difficulties and losses. Naturally the protagonist goes through the moral and psychological growth of the protagonist. The protagonist looks for the answers to the questions which crowd in his mind and he /she begins their journey to satisfy discontentment. This focus on personal growth and self-realization—particularly through making and learning from mistakes—remains the key feature of the Bildungsroman. The genre grew in popularity dramatically during the 20th century and spread to different cultures around the world.

Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield* is one of the foremost examples of Bildungsroman. In *David Copperfield*, Dickens maintains a romantic perspective in which human personality is highly emphasised and the character is master of his destiny, independent and able to be fulfilled personally in spite of all social interaction and determinism. The determinism of the milieu is strong but not successful; there is no real social influence or effect on the development of personality, and the outcome is the success of character formation. In *Great Expectations*, however, the character is highly individualized but reveals strong bonds with the background: the character is a subjected subject, dependent on his milieu; he is subject to social determinism and as such subject to inner and

outer change. Social determinism is strong and successful; society influences and affects the development of personality negatively, hence the failure of character formation.

The Victorian Bildungsroman involves the principle of crisis, revelation and change leading to the formation of personality. Victorian author of Bildungsroman reveals the very essence of the hero's inner life. In this respect, they become elements of a psychological, mental process of change which may determine the hero's maturation in the sense of formation of his personality. The most important stage of development and the final consolidation of the Bildungsroman as a literary tradition in English literature belong to the Victorian Age.

2.9 CONCLUSION

The Victorian period in English literature is one of the most important and productive literary periods. There were many movements and literary trends like Utilitarianism, Darwinism, Aestheticism, Pre-Raphaelitism, The Oxford Movement and others during this period that enriched Victorian life and literature.

2.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Write essays on the following concepts:

- 1) Utilitarianism
- 2) Darwinism
- 3) Victorian Concept of Morality
- 4) Aestheticism
- 5) Pre-Raphaelitism
- 6) The Oxford Movement
- 7) Bildungsroman and the Victorian Novel

2.11 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Amigoni, David. *Colonies, Cults and Evolution: Literature, Science and Culture in Nineteenth Century Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Bexell, Oloph, "The Oxford Movement as received in Sweden." *Kyrkohistorisk årsskrift. Publications of the Swedish Society of Church History* 1:106 (2006).
- Bolaki, Stella (2011), *Unsettling the Bildungsroman: Reading Contemporary Ethnic American Women's Fiction*, Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi.

- Brown, Stewart J. & Nockles, Peter B. ed. *The Oxford Movement: Europe and the Wider World 1830–1930*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Felluga, Dino Franco, et al. *The Encyclopedia of Victorian Literature* (2015).
- Flint, Kate, Ed. *The Cambridge History of Victorian Literature* (2014).
- Fortunato, Paul (2013). *Modernist Aesthetics and Consumer Culture in the Writings of Oscar Wilde*. Routledge.
- Mayr, Ernst. (1985). *The Growth of Biological Thought: Diversity, Evolution, and Inheritance*. Harvard University Press.



munotes.in

POETRY: SELECTED VERSE FROM THE VICTORIAN PERIOD - I

Unit Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 19th Century English Poetry
- 3.3 Introduction to Alfrd Lord Tennyson
- 3.4 Selected Poems of Alfrd Lord Tennyson
- 3.5 Introduction to Robert Browning
- 3.6 Selected Poems of Rober Browning
- 3.7 Conclusion
- 3.8 Check Your Progress
- 3.9 Bibliography

3.0 OBJECTIVES

This Unit is written with the following objectives:

- To introduce the learners with Alfred Lord Tennyson and Robert Browning
- To introduce them with the poetry of Alfred Lord Tennyson and Robert Browning

3.1 19TH CENTURY ENGLISH POETRY

19th Century English Poetry:

The 19th century was a time of great literary and artistic achievement in England, and poetry was a particularly popular and influential art form. During this period, English poetry was marked by a number of key characteristics and trends.

One characteristic of 19th century English poetry was a focus on nature and the natural world. Many poets, such as William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, were part of the Romantic movement, which emphasized emotion, imagination, and a connection to nature. As a result, their poetry often featured vivid and detailed descriptions of the natural

world, as well as an exploration of the emotional and spiritual dimensions of human experience.

Another characteristic of 19th century English poetry was a concern with social and moral issues. Poets such as John Keats and Lord Alfred Tennyson wrote about contemporary problems and conflicts, such as the Industrial Revolution and urbanization. They used their poetry as a way to comment on and critique society, and to explore themes of love, loss, and human experience.

In addition to the Romantic and moral concerns of 19th century English poetry, there was also a fascination with the past, especially the medieval period. Many poets, such as John Keats and Lord Alfred Tennyson, drew inspiration from classical and mythological themes, as well as from the literature and culture of the Middle Ages. This interest in the past often manifested itself in the use of archaic language and poetic forms, such as the sonnet and the ballad.

Thus, 19th century English poetry was characterized by a focus on nature and the natural world, a concern with social and moral issues, and a fascination with the past. These characteristics, along with the innovative styles and techniques of individual poets, helped to make this a rich and diverse period in English literature.

3.1.1 Salient Features of Victorian Poetry:

Victorian poetry refers to poetry written during the reign of Queen Victoria in Great Britain, which lasted from 1837 to 1901. During this time, poetry was a popular and influential art form, and many poets emerged who became well-known for their contributions to the genre.

One characteristic of Victorian poetry was a focus on moral and social issues. Many Victorian poets wrote about contemporary problems and conflicts, such as the Industrial Revolution, urbanization, and class struggle. They often used their poetry as a way to comment on and critique society, and to explore themes of love, loss, and human experience.

Another characteristic of Victorian poetry was a fascination with the past, especially the medieval period. Many Victorian poets drew inspiration from classical and mythological themes, as well as from the literature and culture of the Middle Ages. This interest in the past often manifested itself in the use of archaic language and poetic forms, such as the sonnet and the ballad.

Alfred Tennyson and Robert Browning were two of the most influential and respected Victorian poets. Tennyson, who was appointed Poet Laureate in 1850, is known for his lengthy and emotionally powerful poems, such as "The Lady of Shalott" and "In Memoriam A.H.H." He is also known for his use of mythology and classical themes in his poetry.

Robert Browning is known for his dramatic monologues, in which a speaker reveals their thoughts and feelings through their own words. His

most famous poems in this style include "My Last Duchess" and "The Pied Piper of Hamelin." Browning was also known for his experimentation with form and structure in his poetry, and for his use of unconventional language and syntax.

Poetry: Selected Verse from
The Victorian Period - I

Thus, Victorian poetry was characterized by a focus on moral and social issues, a fascination with the past, and a variety of innovative poetic styles and techniques. Alfred Tennyson and Robert Browning were two of the most important and influential Victorian poets, and their work continues to be widely studied and admired today.

3.2 INTRODUCTION TO ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

3.2.1 Alfred Lord Tennyson: Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892) was an English poet who served as the Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom from 1850 until his death. He is considered one of the most important Victorian poets and is known for his mastery of lyricism, musicality, and sensibility.

Some of Tennyson's most famous works include "The Charge of the Light Brigade," a poem that commemorates a British cavalry charge during the Crimean War; "In Memoriam A.H.H.," a long elegiac poem that reflects on the death of Tennyson's close friend Arthur Henry Hallam; and "The Lady of Shalott," a ballad that tells the story of a cursed woman who weaves a magic web. Tennyson was highly regarded by his contemporaries and was often referred to as "Alfred the Great" for his contributions to English literature. He was also made a Baron in 1884 and became known as Alfred Lord Tennyson.

3.2.2 Tennyson as a Poet: Tennyson is considered one of the greatest poets of the Victorian era and his works are known for their musicality, sensory richness, and deeply emotional themes. His poetry often reflects the Victorian preoccupation with death, loss, and faith, and many of his works explore the tensions between tradition and progress, order and chaos, and reason and intuition.

Tennyson's poetry is marked by its lyricism, with a focus on musicality and sound. He frequently used alliteration, assonance, and other poetic devices to create a memorable, rhythmic effect. Tennyson's language is often rich in sensory imagery, with a particular focus on nature and the natural world.

His work is also notable for its use of myth, legend, and history, and he frequently drew on classical and medieval themes in his poetry. Many of his poems deal with mythic or historical figures, such as Ulysses or King Arthur, and he often used these characters to explore broader themes of heroism, courage, and human struggle. Overall, Tennyson's work is characterized by its poetic excellence, emotional depth, and enduring popularity and he remains one of the most celebrated poets in the English language.

3.2.3 Themes in Tennyson's Poetry: Tennyson's poems explore a wide range of themes, but some of the most common include:

Death and Loss: Many of Tennyson's poems deal with themes of grief, mourning, and loss, often reflecting his own personal experiences of loss and the broader Victorian preoccupation with death.

Nature: Tennyson was deeply influenced by the natural world and frequently used descriptions of landscapes, weather, and other natural phenomena to evoke mood and emotion in his poetry.

Faith and Doubt: Tennyson struggled with questions of faith throughout his life and his poetry often reflects this tension, exploring themes of doubt, skepticism, and religious questioning.

Love and Relationships: Tennyson's poetry often explores the complexities of romantic love and relationships, with a focus on the emotional nuances and tensions that arise between lovers.

Myth and Legend: Tennyson frequently drew on myths, legends, and historical figures in his poetry, using these stories to explore themes of heroism, honor, and human struggle.

Progress and Change: Tennyson lived during a time of significant technological and social change, and his poetry often reflects the tensions between tradition and progress, order and chaos, and reason and intuition.

Identity and Self-Discovery: Many of Tennyson's poems explore themes of personal identity and self-discovery, with a focus on the inner emotional and psychological lives of his characters

3.3 SELECTED POEMS OF ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

3.3.1 *In Memoriam*: "In Memoriam" is a long and complex poem written by Alfred, Lord Tennyson in the mid-19th century. It is a meditation on grief and loss, inspired by the death of the poet's close friend, Arthur Henry Hallam.

One of the most striking features of "In Memoriam" is its structure and form. The poem is divided into 135 separate sections, each one focusing on a different aspect of grief and loss. The sections range in length and tone, from short and pithy to long and lyrical, and they are arranged in a loosely chronological order. This structure reflects the unfolding of the poet's own emotional journey as he grapples with the loss of his friend and tries to come to terms with his grief.

Another notable aspect of "In Memoriam" is its language and style. Tennyson uses a wide range of literary devices and techniques to convey his emotions and ideas, including metaphor, simile, allusion, and personification. He also makes extensive use of Biblical and classical references, which lend depth and resonance to his themes.

One of the central themes of "In Memoriam" is the struggle to find meaning and purpose in the face of loss and death. Throughout the poem, Tennyson grapples with the question of whether there is any significance or significance to suffering and death. He grapples with the idea of an afterlife, and the possibility of finding solace in the belief that his friend may still be alive in some way.

One of the most famous lines from "In Memoriam" is "Tis better to have loved and lost / Than never to have loved at all" (Section LXXXVI). This line encapsulates the theme of love and loss that runs throughout the poem, and suggests that the experience of love, even if it is ultimately lost, is still worth having.

Therefore, "In Memoriam" is a deeply moving and thought-provoking poem that explores the universal human experience of grief and loss with great depth and sensitivity. Its structure, language, and themes all contribute to its enduring appeal and significance as a work of literature.

3.3.1.1 Understanding 'In Memoriam': One of Tennyson's most famous works is the long poem "In Memoriam ", which was published in 1850. This poem, also known simply as "In Memoriam", is a tribute to the poet's friend Arthur Henry Hallam, who died unexpectedly at the age of 22. The poem consists of 131 cantos, or sections, and is written in a variety of poetic forms, including blank verse, rhymed stanzas, and sonnets.

In "In Memoriam", Tennyson explores themes of grief, loss, and the search for meaning in the face of death. The poem is a deeply personal and emotional work, as Tennyson writes about his own feelings of grief and his struggle to come to terms with the loss of his friend.

One of the key themes in "In Memoriam" is the idea of time and how it changes our understanding of the world and our place in it. Tennyson writes about the passage of time and how it can both heal and wounds and bring new insights and understanding. For example, in Canto 27, he writes:

"I sometimes hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel;
For words, like Nature, half reveal
And half conceal the Soul within."

Here, Tennyson suggests that the act of expressing grief through words can be both a help and a hindrance. On the one hand, it can be cathartic and help us to understand and cope with our emotions. On the other hand, words can only ever partially capture the depth and complexity of grief, and may not fully convey the intensity of our feelings.

Another important theme in "In Memoriam" is the idea of faith and the search for spiritual meaning in the face of death. Throughout the poem, Tennyson grapples with questions of faith and the existence of an afterlife, and ultimately comes to a place of acceptance and hope. For example, in Canto 90, he writes:

"Be near me when my light is low,
When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
And tingle; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of Being slow."

In these lines, Tennyson expresses his need for spiritual comfort and support during times of difficulty and uncertainty. He also suggests that, even in the darkest moments, there is always the possibility of finding hope and meaning through faith.

Hence, "In Memoriam" is a deeply moving and thought-provoking work that demonstrates Tennyson's skill as a poet and his ability to explore complex themes with sensitivity and nuance. It remains one of his most enduring and popular works and is a testament to his enduring legacy as a poet.

3.3.2 Lyric 7, "Dark House": Lyric 7, titled "Dark House," is a section of Alfred, Lord Tennyson's poem "In Memoriam." It is a meditation on grief and loss, inspired by the death of the poet's close friend, Arthur Henry Hallam.

In this particular lyric, the speaker stands outside a dark house, which may symbolize the physical manifestation of his grief and loss. The house is described as being "dark" and "empty," suggesting that the speaker feels a sense of emptiness and despair.

The speaker reflects on the fact that he has stood outside this house before, perhaps suggesting that he has revisited this place of grief and loss multiple times. He wonders if he will ever be able to enter the house, or if it will always remain a symbol of his pain and loss.

The speaker also expresses a sense of hopelessness, as he reflects on the fact that he has "never" found "rest" or "peace" in the house. This may suggest that the speaker feels that his grief and loss are insurmountable, and that he will never be able to fully heal from his friend's death.

Hence, Lyric 7 of "In Memoriam" captures the feelings of grief and loss that the speaker is experiencing, as he stands outside a dark and empty house, symbolizing his sense of emptiness and despair. It also reflects on the theme of finding meaning and purpose in the face of loss and death, as the speaker grapples with his feelings of hopelessness and the possibility of finding solace in the belief that his friend may still be alive in some way.

3.3.3 Lyric 54, titled "Oh Yet We Trust": Lyric 54, titled "Oh Yet We Trust," is a section of Alfred, Lord Tennyson's poem "In Memoriam." It is a meditation on grief and loss, inspired by the death of the poet's close friend, Arthur Henry Hallam.

In this particular lyric, the speaker reflects on the idea of "trust" and how it relates to the concept of "good." The speaker expresses a sense of hope and optimism, as he states that "some how good" will come of the suffering and loss that he has experienced.

The speaker suggests that this belief in the possibility of good is something that he and others "trust" in, even in the face of immense pain and adversity. This belief may provide some comfort and solace for the

speaker, as he grapples with the loss of his friend and tries to come to terms with his grief. Poetry: Selected Verse from The Victorian Period - I

The phrase "somehow good" may also be interpreted as a reference to a higher power or divine force that is ultimately responsible for the good that may come out of suffering. The speaker may be expressing a belief in a higher purpose or meaning that lies beyond human understanding.

Therefore, Lyric 54 of "In Memoriam" captures the feelings of hope and optimism that the speaker is experiencing, as he tries to find meaning and purpose in the face of loss and death. It also reflects on the theme of trust and the role that it plays in providing comfort and solace in times of grief.

3.3.4 Tennyson as a Representative Poet of Victorian Age: Alfred, Lord Tennyson was a poet who is considered one of the greatest and most influential poets of the Victorian age. During his lifetime, which spanned from 1809 to 1892, he was a central figure in the literary and cultural landscape of Great Britain, and his poetry was widely admired and respected.

One reason why Tennyson is considered a representative poet of the Victorian age is because of the themes and concerns that he explored in his poetry. Many of his poems, such as "The Lady of Shalott" and "In Memoriam A.H.H.," deal with moral and social issues that were particularly relevant to the Victorian era, such as the Industrial Revolution and urbanization. These poems often comment on and critique society, and explore themes of love, loss, and human experience.

Another reason why Tennyson is considered a representative poet of the Victorian age is because of his style and technique. He was known for his use of elaborate and ornate language, as well as for his innovative poetic forms and structures. His poetry often featured vivid and detailed descriptions of the natural world, as well as an exploration of the emotional and spiritual dimensions of human experience.

Therefore, Alfred, Lord Tennyson was a central figure in the literary and cultural landscape of the Victorian age, and his poetry reflects the concerns and interests of this time period. His innovative style and technique, as well as his exploration of moral and social issues, make him a representative poet of the Victorian era.

3.4 INTRODUCTION TO ROBERT BROWNING

Robert Browning was a prominent poet of the Victorian age, known for his dramatic monologues and psychological insights into the inner lives of his characters. Born in 1812, Browning grew up in a time of great social, political, and artistic change, and his poetry reflects the complexities and contradictions of the era.

One of the defining features of Browning's poetry is his use of the dramatic monologue, a form in which a character speaks to an audience or to themselves, revealing their thoughts and feelings through their words

and actions. This technique allowed Browning to explore the psychological depths of his characters and to reveal their motivations and desires in a way that was both nuanced and dramatic.

Browning's dramatic monologues often deal with themes of love, jealousy, and guilt, and his characters are often deeply flawed and conflicted. In "My Last Duchess," for example, the speaker is a wealthy nobleman who is showing a portrait of his late wife to a potential suitor for his daughter. Through the speaker's words, we learn that he is jealous, possessive, and controlling, and that he ultimately had his wife killed because she did not meet his expectations.

In addition to his use of the dramatic monologue, Browning is also known for his ability to create vivid, detailed descriptions of people, places, and events. He has a keen eye for detail and a gift for creating vivid, evocative imagery, which helps to bring his poems to life and to make them more engaging and immersive for readers.

To conclude, Robert Browning was a masterful poet who used his skills and techniques to create deeply nuanced and complex characters and to explore a wide range of themes and ideas. His work has had a lasting impact on the literary world and continues to be widely read and studied today.

3.4.1 The chief characteristic Features of the Poetry of Robert Browning: The chief characteristics and distinctive features of the poetry of Robert Browning include:

Use of the dramatic monologue: Browning is known for his use of the dramatic monologue, a form in which a character speaks to an audience or to themselves, revealing their thoughts and feelings through their words and actions. This technique allows Browning to explore the psychological depths of his characters and to reveal their motivations and desires in a nuanced and dramatic way.

Complex and flawed characters: Browning's characters are often deeply flawed and conflicted, and his poetry often deals with themes of love, jealousy, and guilt. He is interested in the inner lives of his characters and is skilled at creating vivid and detailed portrayals of their thoughts and emotions.

Vivid imagery and detailed descriptions: Browning has a keen eye for detail and is able to create vivid and evocative imagery that helps to bring his poems to life and make them more immersive for readers.

Exploration of themes and ideas: Browning's poetry often explores a wide range of themes and ideas, including love, jealousy, guilt, and the complexities of human relationships.

Use of irony and satire: Browning often employs irony and satire in his poetry, using these techniques to reveal the flaws and foibles of his characters and to comment on larger social and political issues.

3.5 DELETED POEMS OF ROBERT BROWNING

Poetry: Selected Verse from
The Victorian Period - I

3.5.1 “Porphyria's Lover”: ‘Porphyria's Lover’ is a dramatic monologue written by Robert Browning, in which the speaker, a man, describes how he killed his lover, Porphyria, and then kept her body with him for the rest of the night. The poem is a powerful and disturbing portrayal of love, jealousy, and obsession, and it offers a glimpse into the twisted psychology of the speaker.

One of the most striking aspects of "Porphyria's Lover" is the speaker's twisted logic and justification for his actions. He claims that he killed Porphyria out of love, because he couldn't bear the thought of losing her. He describes how he strangled her and then kept her body with him, sitting by the fire and watching her face as it slowly turned blue. The speaker's love for Porphyria is all-consuming and unhealthy, and his actions reveal a deep-seated jealousy and possessiveness.

Another notable aspect of the poem is the contrast between the speaker's words and actions. On the one hand, he speaks of his love for Porphyria and how much he cherishes her. On the other hand, he has just killed her, revealing a deep disconnect between his words and his actions. This contrast adds to the disturbing and unsettling nature of the poem and serves to highlight the speaker's twisted psychology.

Overall, "Porphyria's Lover" is a powerful and disturbing portrayal of love, jealousy, and obsession. It offers a glimpse into the twisted psychology of the speaker and serves as a reminder of the dangers of unhealthy and obsessive love.

3.5.2 “Fra Lippo Lippi”: ‘Fra Lippo Lippi’ is a dramatic monologue written by Robert Browning, in which the speaker, a Renaissance artist named Fra Lippo Lippi, describes his life and work as a painter. The poem is a powerful exploration of the relationship between art and society, and it offers insight into the struggles and challenges faced by artists throughout history.

One of the defining features of "Fra Lippo Lippi" is the speaker's voice, which is lively, irreverent, and full of personality. Fra Lippo Lippi is a complex and multifaceted character, and his words reveal a deep appreciation for the beauty and power of art, as well as a keen understanding of the social and political forces that shape the art world.

Another notable aspect of the poem is its exploration of the theme of conformity versus individuality. Fra Lippo Lippi is a nonconformist who rebels against the expectations and conventions of his time, and his art reflects this independent spirit. He speaks of his desire to create art that is true to his own vision and to resist the pressure to conform to the standards of his peers.

To conclude, "Fra Lippo Lippi" is a powerful and thought-provoking exploration of the relationship between art and society. It offers insight into the struggles and challenges faced by artists throughout history and

serves as a reminder of the importance of individuality and nonconformity.

3.6 CONCLUSION

The study of the selected poems of Alfred Lord Tennyson and Robert Browning shows that both of these poets are very important names in the history of Victorian poetry. Their poems share many similarities with reference to the themes, style, diction and poetic devices.

3.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Write a detailed note on 19th Century English Poetry.
2. Write a note on Victorian Poetry with a focus on its salient features.
3. Write a detailed note on Alfred Tennyson as a poet giving examples from the poems you studied.
4. What are the key themes in "In Memoriam".
5. Discuss Tennyson as a representative poet of Victorian age.
6. What are the chief characteristics and salient features of the poetry of Robert Browning?
7. Critical appreciation of the poem, 'Porphyria's Lover' by Robert Browning
8. Attempt critical appreciation of the poem 'Fra Lippo Lipi' by Robert Browning.
9. Answer the following questions briefly:
 1. Who was Alfred, Lord Tennyson?
 2. When was "In Memoriam" written?
 3. What is "In Memoriam" about?
 4. How is "In Memoriam" structured?
 5. What is the central theme of "In Memoriam"?
 6. Who was Robert Browning?
 7. What is a dramatic monologue?
 8. What is the theme of "Porphyria's Lover"?
 9. What is the speaker's justification for killing Porphyria in "Porphyria's Lover"?
10. Who is Fra Lippo Lippi?
11. What is the theme of "Fra Lippo Lippi"?
12. What is Fra Lippo Lippi's attitude towards conformity?

3.6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Poetry: Selected Verse from
The Victorian Period - I

- Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1989). *Tennyson: A Selected Edition*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, Calif: University of California Press.
- Anonymous (1873). "Alfred Tennyson". *Cartoon portraits and biographical sketches of men of the day. Illustrated by Frederick Waddy*. London: Tinsley Brothers. pp. 78–84. Retrieved 6 January 2011.
- Browning, Robert (2009). Roberts, Adam; Karlin, Daniel (eds.). *The Major Works*. *Oxford World's Classics*. Oxford University Press.
- Browning, Robert. Ed. Karlin, Daniel (2004) *Selected Poems* Penguin.
- Chesterton, G K (1903). *Robert Browning* (1951 ed.). London: Macmillan Interactive Publishing.
- H. Tennyson (1897). *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir by His Son*, New York: MacMillan
- Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics and Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).
- Leslie, Stephen (1898). "Life of Tennyson". *Studies of a Biographer*. Vol. 2. London: Duckworth and Co. pp. 196–240.



POETRY: SELECTED VERSE FROM THE VICTORIAN PERIOD - II

Unit Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Introduction to Elizabeth Barrett Browning
- 4.3 Selected Poems of Elizabeth Barrett Browning
- 4.4 Introduction to Matthew Arnold
- 4.5 Selected Poems of Matthew Arnold
- 4.6 Introduction to Thomas Hardy
- 4.7 Selected Poems of Thomas Hardy
- 4.8 Conclusion
- 4.9 Check Your Progress
- 4.10 Bibliography

4.0 OBJECTIVES

This Unit is written with the following objectives:

- To introduce the learners with Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Matthew Arnold, D.G. Rossetti and Thomas Hardy
- To introduce them with the poetry of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Matthew Arnold, D.G. Rossetti and Thomas Hardy

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Matthew Arnold and Thomas Hardy are three important poets of the Victorian age. Their poems generally speak about the impacts of industrial revolution on human life in general and literature in particular. All the selected poems of these poets are their masterpieces that represent them as the true representatives of their age.

4.2 INTRODUCTION TO ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

Elizabeth Barrett Browning was a 19th-century English poet, known for her romantic and intellectually rigorous poetry. She was a leading figure in

the Victorian era, and her work was widely popular and influential during her lifetime.

Poetry: Selected Verse from
The Victorian Period - II

One of the chief characteristics of Barrett Browning's poetry is its intense emotional depth. She often wrote about love and relationships, exploring the complexities and nuances of human emotion with great sensitivity and insight. Many of her poems are deeply personal, reflecting her own experiences and feelings, and they often convey a sense of vulnerability and openness.

Barrett Browning's poetry is also notable for its formal structure and use of language. She was a skilled craftsman, and her poetry is carefully constructed, with well-crafted rhyme schemes and meter. She also had a wide-ranging vocabulary, and she often used literary and classical allusions to enrich the meaning of her poems.

In addition to her love poetry, Barrett Browning also wrote about a variety of other subjects, including social and political issues. She was a strong advocate for social justice, and many of her poems address themes of oppression and injustice. She was particularly concerned with the rights of women and the abolition of slavery, and she used her poetry as a platform to speak out against these issues.

To conclude, Elizabeth Barrett Browning was a highly respected and influential poet, known for the emotional depth, formal structure, and social consciousness of her work.

4.3 SELECTED POEMS OF ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

4.3.1 "Sonnets from the Portuguese": "Sonnets from the Portuguese" is a collection of 44 love sonnets written by Elizabeth Barrett Browning. The collection was published in 1850, and it is widely considered one of the greatest love poems of the 19th century.

The sonnets in "Sonnets from the Portuguese" are written in the traditional 14-line sonnet form, and they are characterized by their deep emotion, poetic craftsmanship, and intellectual depth. The poems explore the themes of love, desire, and commitment, and they convey the intensity and complexity of the poet's feelings for her lover.

The collection takes its name from the fact that the sonnets were originally written in Portuguese by Elizabeth Barrett Browning's husband, Robert Browning, as a way of expressing his love for her. Elizabeth later translated the sonnets into English, and the resulting collection is a testament to the depth and intensity of their love for one another.

The sonnets in "Sonnets from the Portuguese" are often praised for their beautiful language and emotional intensity. They are rich in imagery and metaphor, and they explore the many facets of love, from its joys and pleasures to its challenges and heartbreaks.

Hence, "Sonnets from the Portuguese" is a powerful and enduring expression of love, and it remains a classic of English literature to this day.

4.3.2 "Say over again and yet once over again": "Say Over Again, and Yet Once Over Again" is a poem written by Elizabeth Barrett Browning that explores the theme of love and the enduring power of words to convey its depth and complexity.

The poem is structured as a series of short, lyrical lines that repeat the phrase "Say over again, and yet once over again." This repetition creates a sense of urgency and insistence, as if the speaker is urging her lover to keep repeating their words of love and devotion. The poem's use of repetition also highlights the enduring nature of love, suggesting that it is something that must be constantly reaffirmed and re-stated in order to remain strong.

Throughout the poem, the speaker reflects on the many ways in which love is expressed and communicated, both through words and through actions. She describes the power of words to convey the depth of feeling and emotion that lies at the heart of love, and she suggests that they are an essential part of any loving relationship.

The poem also touches on the idea of faith and trust, as the speaker expresses her belief that the love between her and her lover is strong enough to withstand any challenges or difficulties they may face. She suggests that their love is rooted in a deep and enduring connection that will never be broken, no matter what life may bring.

Hence, "Say Over Again, and Yet Once Over Again" is a beautiful and powerful poem that explores the many facets of love and the enduring power of words to convey its depth and complexity. Its use of repetition and its focus on the importance of communication and trust make it a compelling and enduring expression of love.

4.4 INTRODUCTION TO MATTHEW ARNOLD

Matthew Arnold was an English poet and critic of the Victorian era. He is known for his elegiac poems that often deal with themes of loss and melancholy, as well as for his satirical and humorous poetry.

One of the chief characteristics of Arnold's poetry is its focus on the conflict between the individual and society. Many of his poems explore the theme of the individual's search for meaning and identity in a rapidly changing and often alienating world. In his poem "Dover Beach," for example, Arnold describes the changing landscape of society and the erosion of traditional values, leading the speaker to feel a sense of despair and isolation.

Another notable feature of Arnold's poetry is its use of classical allusions and literary references. Arnold was well-educated and well-read, and he often drew on the works of classical authors such as Homer, Virgil, and

Sophocles in his poetry. He also frequently referenced other poets, such as Shakespeare and Milton, in his work.

Poetry: Selected Verse from
The Victorian Period - II

The selling features of Matthew Arnold's poetry include its elegiac tone, its exploration of the individual's place in society, and its use of classical allusions and literary references.

4.5 SELECTED POEM OF MATTHEW ARNOLD

4.5.1 "The Forsaken Merman": The poem, "The Forsaken Merman" is a poem written by Matthew Arnold. It was first published in 1849, and it tells the story of a merman who has left his underwater home to live among humans. The merman is deeply unhappy, however, and longs to return to the sea.

One of the chief characteristics of "The Forsaken Merman" is its elegiac tone. The merman's sense of loss and longing for his former life is palpable throughout the poem, and the use of language and imagery reflects this sense of melancholy. For example, the merman's memories of his life in the sea are described as "dear" and "sweet," while his current existence among humans is depicted as dull and mundane.

Another notable feature of the poem is its use of symbolism. The merman represents the individual's search for meaning and identity in a rapidly changing and often alienating world. The sea, with its vastness and depth, represents the unknown and the unexplored, while the land represents the constraints and limitations of human society. The merman's inability to return to the sea symbolizes the individual's sense of isolation and disconnection from their true self.

"The Forsaken Merman" is a poignant and thought-provoking poem that explores the theme of loss and the individual's search for meaning in a society that often fails to provide it.

4.6 INTRODUCTION TO DANTE GABRIELLE ROSETTI

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882) was an English poet, painter, and translator who was a leading figure in the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, a group of artists and writers who sought to revive the spirit of medieval art and culture. Rossetti is considered one of the greatest Victorian poets and was known for his lush, sensuous language and his preoccupation with themes of love, death, and the supernatural.

Rossetti was born in London to an Italian father and an English mother, and his work was deeply influenced by his dual heritage. He was a prolific poet and his work is characterized by its intense emotional depth, its use of vivid imagery and symbolism, and its musicality and rhythmic complexity.

Some of Rossetti's most famous poems include "The Blessed Damozel," a meditation on the nature of love and the afterlife; "Jenny," a dramatic

monologue that explores the exploitation of women in Victorian society; and "Goblin Market," a complex allegory about temptation, desire, and redemption.

In addition to his poetry, Rossetti was also an accomplished painter, and his artwork often featured the same sensuous, symbolic imagery that characterized his poetry. He was a major influence on the Symbolist and Aesthetic movements, and his work continues to be celebrated for its beauty, passion, and emotional intensity.

4.7 SELECTED POEM OF DANTE GABRIELLE ROSETTI

The ideas contained in the poem 'The Cloud Confined' written by Dante Gabrielle Rossetti

"The Cloud Confined" is a poem written by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, not Matthew Arnold. It is a sonnet that explores the theme of love and the speaker's desire to be with their beloved.

In the poem, the speaker compares their love to a cloud that is confined and unable to fully express itself. The speaker longs to break free from the constraints of society and be with their beloved, but they recognize that this is not possible due to societal expectations and obligations. Despite this, the speaker remains hopeful and believes that their love will eventually find a way to break free and be expressed.

The main idea contained in "The Cloud Confined" is the theme of love and the struggles and limitations that it can face in a society that imposes strict rules and expectations on relationships. The poem also touches on themes of desire, longing, and the power of love to transcend social barriers

4.6 INTRODUCTION TO THOMAS HARDY

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) was an English novelist and poet who is widely regarded as one of the most important writers of the late Victorian and early modernist periods. Hardy's work often deals with themes of fate, tragedy, and the conflict between traditional values and modernity.

As a novelist, Hardy is best known for works such as "Tess of the d'Urbervilles," a novel that explores the sexual double standards and social inequalities of Victorian England, and "Jude the Obscure," a dark and pessimistic novel that deals with the themes of love, marriage, and education.

As a poet, Hardy's work is often characterized by its melancholic tone and its focus on the transience and fragility of human existence. Many of his poems deal with themes of loss, nostalgia, and the passage of time, and he frequently used images of nature to evoke mood and emotion in his work.

Some of Hardy's most famous poems include "The Darkling Thrush," a meditation on the passing of the old year and the coming of the new, and "Hap," a poem that explores the theme of fate and the idea that human beings are powerless in the face of an indifferent universe.

Hardy's poetry reflects his deep love of the natural world and his concern for the plight of ordinary people, particularly those who lived in the countryside. His poetry is often characterized by its strong sense of place and its bleak, melancholic tone.

Hardy's most famous poetry collections include "Wessex Poems" (1898) and "Poems of the Past and the Present" (1901). In these collections, Hardy explores themes of love, loss, and the passage of time, and his poems often reflect his own personal experiences and emotions.

Some of Hardy's best-known poems include "The Darkling Thrush," "The Convergence of the Twain," and "The Man He Killed." These poems are notable for their vivid imagery and their powerful evocations of the natural world and the human experience.

Overall, Hardy's work is notable for its depth of insight into the human condition and its exploration of the complex social and cultural forces that shape our lives. His writing continues to be celebrated for its beauty, its emotional intensity, and its enduring relevance to contemporary concerns. Thomas Hardy is remembered as a major figure in English literature and as a poet who captured the essence of rural life and the human experience with honesty and sensitivity.

4.7 SELECTED POEMS OF THOMAS HARDY

4.7.1 "Channel Firing": "Channel Firing" is a poem written by Thomas Hardy that was published in 1914. The poem is set in a small village in England and describes the events that take place when the villagers are awakened in the middle of the night by the sound of artillery fire.

One of the key themes of the poem is the destructive nature of war and the way in which it disrupts the normal rhythms of everyday life. The villagers are rudely awakened by the noise of the firing and are left in a state of confusion and fear as they try to make sense of what is happening. The poem suggests that war is a destructive force that has the power to disrupt and destroy even the most peaceful and idyllic communities.

Another theme of the poem is the idea of human mortality and the way in which death is always present, even in times of peace. The villagers are shocked by the sudden intrusion of death into their lives and are forced to confront their own mortality as they try to come to terms with the events of the night.

"Channel Firing" is a powerful and poignant poem that captures the destructive nature of war and the way in which it can disrupt and destroy the normal rhythms of everyday life. Its strong sense of place and its vivid

imagery help to bring the events of the poem to life, making it an enduring and memorable work of literature.

4.7.2 “Dead Man Walking”: "Dead Man Walking" is a poem written by Thomas Hardy that was published in 1914. The poem is set in a small village in England and describes the final journey of a condemned man as he walks to the gallows to be hanged.

One of the key themes of the poem is the idea of injustice and the way in which the legal system can fail to deliver justice. The condemned man is described as "innocent" and "wrongly tried," suggesting that he has been wrongly accused and sentenced to death. The poem suggests that the legal system can be flawed and that innocent people can be wrongly punished.

Another theme of the poem is the idea of the finality of death and the way in which it ends all hope and possibility. The condemned man is described as being "beyond the reach of grace," suggesting that there is no hope for him and that his death is inevitable. The poem reflects on the fragility of life and the way in which death can come at any time, even to those who are young and innocent.

"Dead Man Walking" is a poignant and thought-provoking poem that explores themes of injustice, mortality, and the finality of death. Its powerful imagery and emotive language help to bring the events of the poem to life, making it a memorable and thought-provoking work of literature.

4.8 CONCLUSION

The study of the selected poems of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Matthew Arnold, D.G. Rosetti and Thomas Hardy represents these poets as the chief exponents of Victorian social, moral and cultural values. They have realistically shown the effects of industrial revolution on human life. These poems deal with one or the other aspect of this very significant historical event that changed the entire world.

4.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What kind of a poet is Matthew Arnold? Write a note on the salient features of his poetry.
2. Attempt a critical appreciation of the poem, 'The Forsaken Mermaid' by Matthew Arnold.
3. Discuss Thomas Hardy as a poet.
4. Attempt critical appreciation of the poem 'Channel Firing' by Thomas Hardy.
5. Attempt a critical appreciation of the poem 'Dead Man Walking' by Thomas Hardy

6. Summarize the ideas contained in the poem 'The Cloud Confined' by Dante Gabrielle Rossetti'.
7. Write a note on "Sonnets from the Portuguese" written by Elizabeth Barrett Browning
8. Answer the following questions briefly:
 1. Who was Elizabeth Barrett Browning?
 2. When was "Sonnets from the Portuguese" published?
 3. What are some of the themes explored in "Sonnets from the Portuguese"?
 4. How does Elizabeth Barrett Browning use language and structure in her poetry?
 5. What was Elizabeth Barrett Browning known for advocating in her poetry?
 6. What is the theme of "Sonnet 21"?
 7. How does the speaker in "Sonnet 21" express her love for her lover?
 8. What literary devices does Elizabeth Barrett Browning use in "Sonnet 21"?

4.10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Marjorie Stone, "Browning, Elizabeth Barrett (1806–1861)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition, October 2008.
- Sampson, Fiona (2021). *Two Way Mirror: The Life of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*. Profile Books, p 33
- Wörn, Alexandra M. B (2004). "'Poetry is Where God is': The Importance of Christian Faith and Theology in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's Life and Work". *Victorian Religious Discourse*.
- Elizabeth Barrett Browning (15 August 1866). *Sonnets from the Portuguese: A Celebration of Love*. St. Martin's Press.
- W. F. Connell, *The Educational Thought and Influence of Matthew Arnold* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd, 1950)
- Laurence W. Mazzeno, *Matthew Arnold: The Critical Legacy* (Woodbridge: Camden House, 1999)
- Matthew Arnold, *Selected Poetry of Matthew Arnold*, Representative Poetry Online, UToronto.ca, Web, June 23, 2011.

- Dunn, *Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his circle*, ed. Mander, (1984)
- "Dante Gabriel Rossetti". *Poetry Foundation*.
- Tomalin, Claire (2007), *Thomas Hardy: the Time-torn Man*, Penguin,
- Wilson, Keith (2009). *A Companion to Thomas Hardy*. John Wiley & Sons.



munotes.in

CHARLES DICKENS' *DAVID COPPERFIELD*: PART I

Unit Structure

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Victorian Novels as a Social Force in the Nineteenth Century
- 5.2 Charles Dickens as a Humanitarian Novelist
- 5.3 David Copperfield: A Brief Review
- 5.4 Conclusion
- 5.5 Important Questions
- 5.6 References

5.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To explore contribution of Victorian Novels to the social issues of the time
2. To understand Charles Dickens as a representative Victorian Novelist
3. To analyse *David Copperfield* as a Victorian Novel

5.1 VICTORIAN NOVELS AS A SOCIAL FORCE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Victorian age is essentially the age of the novel since the novel made a phenomenal progress during the age. This was partly because the middle class rose in power and importance, partly because of the steady increase of the reading public with growth of lending libraries and the development of publishing and partly because the novel presented a picture of life of the middle-class society which the people wanted to read about. The novel of the age used as a popular medium for expressing its rapid progress in commerce, democracy and science. The material and scientific progress had its influence upon the Victorian life and it was inevitable that it should be expressed through its prose, poetry and fiction. Influenced by Darwin's theory of evolution, the novel of the age became the vehicle of ideas as well as a means of amusement. The writers though belonged to different perspectives, used literature in general and novel in particular for noting criticism of life. The novel reflected all the factors influencing and shaping the complex modern world. It became more realistic and analytical with the spread of science; more humanitarian with the spread of democratic approach; and more inquiring and interrogative with the religious and moral unrest.

The early Victorian novel as cultivated by Disraeli, Trollope, Dickens, Thackeray, Kingsley, Mrs. Gaskell and Charles Reade was essentially a transcript from life and the novelists concentrated on the social, political, economic aspects of Victorian society. Realism, sometimes blatant and sometimes in the subdued key, became a characteristic feature of early Victorian novel. The novelists came to close grips with the problems faced by Victorian society and sought to find a solution to the rampant evils of the age. The novel, like other forms of literature, became purposive in character, and ceased to be a source of pure entertainment. The Victorian reader found in fiction what he looked for, and the early Victorian novelists provided him a historical perspective of the age in all its varied aspects. Thus, the early Victorian novelists were in accord with their public, and gratified the public taste by portraying their own life. They identified with the age and were its spokesmen. No wonder there is a satiric tinge in the novels of Disraeli, Thackeray and Dicken as well.

The Victorian Age, though witnessed intense activities in commerce, industry and finance and simultaneously gave birth to appalling social conditions. It gave rise to filthy slums, exploitation of cheap labour - often of women and children, poor wages to factory workers, etc. These evils of the industrial revolution were vividly painted by writers like Disraeli, Dickens and Mrs. Gaskell. The social novel was most diligently cultivated by Benjamin Disraeli. For example, his novel *Sybil* while revealing the conflict between Capitalists and Labour, presents a terrible picture of the contemporary working class. While Mrs. Elizabeth Gaskell in her novels, *Mary Barton* and *North and South*, gives a realistic view of the hardships caused by the industrial revolution as seen from the workers' point of view. Dickens is seen as a great reformer through his novels written from humanitarian approach. Thackeray and Carlyle, another prominent representatives of the Victorian era, essentially satirise the Victorian society and denounce snobbery, shams and insincerity. George Eliot, is critical about the rigid class distinctions in her novels. Charles Kingsley too gives a vivid picture of the wretched life of the labouring class and shows his interest in the oppressed labouring class.

5.2 CHARLES DICKENS AS A HUMANITARIAN NOVELIST

Charles Dickens (1812 – 1870) was born in a poor family. He completed his early schooling in Chatham where he became fond of books. Due to his father's imprisonment and the financial difficulties, Dickens had to leave school at the age of eleven and work in blacking factory for a few pennies. However, soon he left this job when he received a legacy from one of his relatives. Dickens joined Willington House Academy at fifteen which was a worthless and brutal school and its headmaster too was a tyrant. The experience he gained at this place later inspired him to write *Nicholas Nickleby*. He left the school with disgust and worked as a clerk in a lawyer's office. Simultaneously, he learned short hand writing and became a parliamentary reporter. During this time, he observed the inns and stables which he effectively used in portraying London life. Dickens

undertook foreign travels and during his visit to America he strongly condemned slavery system. On returning from America, he penned *David Copperfield*, *Dombey and Sons* and *Great Expectations*. The success he achieved as one of the prominent novelists of the nineteenth century and the perspective he formed is due to the life he led, the people he met, places he visited, and experience he gained through his life. Dickens penned them effectively and sensitively in his novels.

Dickens is a novelist of the Victorian London – the London of 1820's and 1830's. He presented the Victorian London in all its colours; with its squares, shops, offices, schools, law courts, murky slums, prisons, etc. He knew his people best and gave them what they wanted. As a very part of the society, he never wrote down to his public. Dickens sought to derive inspiration from real London life as he witnessed it. Being a realist in his art, he preoccupied himself with reality rather than that of romances. He chose to describe and portray in his novels the life he knew and the life that he had watched and observed as a reporter. The experience he gathered from his visits to circuses, gardens, prisons, boarding houses, gin-shops, etc. form the warp and woof of his novels. He railed against the social, political, economic and educational drawbacks of his times in his writings. As a champion of the weak, the outcast and the oppressed, Dickens satirised boarding schools, tyrannies of school masters, etc. in *Nicholas Nickleby*, the courts of law, law's delay and the corrupt system of election in *Bleak House*, the new manufacturing system in *Hard Times*, the slums and work houses in *Oliver Twist*, the pettifogging lawyers in *Great Expectations*, and so on. Doing this, he attempted to arouse public conscience to these evils. Humour, another remarkable feature of Dickens's novel has a satirical tinge as he employed it to expose hypocrisy, vanity, greed, insolence of Victorian society.

Dickens was primarily interested in presenting the sorrows, sufferings and privations suffered by his child characters belonging to weaker class. For example, the hardships borne by David Copperfield under the tyrannical domination of Mr. Murdstone and Miss Murdstone are brought out in a touching manner. Similarly, *Oliver Twist* wins sympathy for the cruel treatment meted out to him by parish administrators and mentors of workhouses. The wandering of little Nel with her grand-father are pathetic in *Old Curiosity Shop*.

Dickens' prominent novels along with their themes can be listed here: *Pickwick Papers* (1836) – injustices of the legal system, *Oliver Twist* (1837) – protest against the abuse of power, *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838) – oppressive education institutions, *Barnaby Rudge* (1841) – Gordon Riots, *Bleak House* (1852) – abuses of the old court of Chancery, *Hard Times* (1854) – evils of industrialism, *Little Dorrit* (1855) rigours of prison life, *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) culmination of French Revolution, *Great Expectations* (1860) – life beyond wealth and station, etc.

5.3 DAVID COPPERFIELD: A BRIEF REVIEW

David Copperfield is Charles Dickens' veiled autobiography. The story, published as a serial between 1849 and 1850 and as a book in 1850, also serves as Dickens' critique of the bleak conditions of many children in Victorian England, including its notorious boarding schools. "The pen which wrote *David Copperfield* was often dipped in his own blood," says Hugh Walker. Dickens too has stated that *David Copperfield* is his most loved novel. *David Copperfield* is written from the point of view of its titular character, looking back on the ups and downs of his chequered life. Dickens has used many incidents of his childhood and early life to create a considerable fictional achievement. Some of the characters in the novel are memorable figures – Betsy Trotwood, Dickens' eccentric aunt, Uriah Heep, the villain feigning humility, and Murdstone, the cruel father and Agnes, the gentle hearted lady. The novel provides a scathing criticism on the system of teaching in schools run by masters like Creakle and his companions. The novel is a tale of ups and downs, joys and sorrows; however, the prevailing tone is one of cheerfulness and confidence in the essential goodness of life.

David Copperfield is deeply attached to his mother, who was widowed six months before his birth. His early childhood is a very happy. Once, he goes with his nurse Peggotty, for a holiday to Yarmouth. They stay with her brother Mr. Peggotty and other relatives in a boat-house. On his return, David finds that his mother has remarried the frightful Mr. Murdstone who ill-treats him. Soon Mr. Murdstone's sister moves into their house. Copperfield is sent away to boarding school after he bites Murdstone when he beats him. He is sent away to Salem House, a school run by a cruel man named Creakle. At the boarding school, he becomes friends with James Steerforth and Tommy Traddles. However, Copperfield doesn't complete his education because his mother dies. He returns home but he is sent to work at a factory for a few shillings a week at Murdstone and Grinby's warehouse in London. He lodges with Mr. Micawber and his family and becomes attached to them. But David loses them as well since the family leaves London due to financial problems. At the factory, Copperfield experiences the hardships of the industrial-urban poor. Ultimately, he escapes and walks to Dover to find his great-aunt, Miss Betsy Trotwood, who adopts him. Miss Betsy is very kind to him and sends him to an excellent school in Canterbury, where he boards with Mr. Wickfield and his daughter Agnes. Mr. Wickfield has a weakness for drink and his cunning clerk, Uriah Heep, takes advantage of this. After leaving school, David joins the firm of Spenlow and Jorkins in London. He meets Mr. Spenlow's daughter, Dora and falls madly in love with her, but Mr. Spenlow refuses to consider him as a son-in-law. Meanwhile, Miss Trotwood loses her money and comes to live in London. David works extremely hard and becomes a successful reporter and writer. After Mr. Spenlow's death, David and Dora marry. Dora is pretty but silly and immature, and wishes to be regarded as a 'child wife'. She loses a child, falls ill, slowly weakens and dies. To come over his grief, David goes abroad and is away for three years. During this time, he realizes that he

loves Agnes, but is under a whim that she regards him as a brother. He returns to England and when realizes that Agnes has always loved him, marries her and becomes successful in writing fiction. Miss Trotwood's fortune is restored, and Uriah Heep is imprisoned for fraud. Mr. Peggotty's family, as well as Mr. Micawber's family emigrate to Australia and live happily there.

Charles Dickens' David
Copperfield: Part I

5.4 CONCLUSION

Being moralist and idealist at heart, Dickens bluntly presented a sinful and sordid life which he condemned in his novels. He aimed at exposing the evils of the society and invariably espoused the cause of virtue. As corruption and evils were rampant in the Victorian society Dickens undertook a task to eradicate them with his pen. His autobiographical novel *David Copperfield* traces the life of David, the protagonist, from a happy early childhood through a miserable span of cruel surrogate parents, harsh working conditions, and crushing poverty to an ultimately wiser, contented existence as a happily married adult. Along the way, he meets a memorable cast of characters, some hateful and selfish and others kind and loving.

5.5 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the salient features of the Victorian Novel.
2. Expound the contribution of novelists to the Victorian age.
3. Elaborate Charles Dickens as a novelist with humanitarian approach.
4. Discuss Dickens' portrayal of children in his novels.
5. Write a note on the plot of David Copperfield.

5.6 REFERENCES

- Bodeen, Donald V. *A Critical Study of Charles Dickens: Humor, House, Humphry*. OUP. 1993.
- Dickens, Charles. *David Copperfield*. 1850. England: Penguin English Library. 2012.
- Rickett, Arthur. *History of English Literature*. London: Oxford University Press. 1990.
- <https://www.charlesdickensinfo.com/novels/complete-works/>



CHARLES DICKENS' *DAVID COPPERFIELD*: PART II

Unit Structure

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Analysis: *David Copperfield*
- 6.2 Characters
- 6.3 Themes
- 6.4 Conclusion
- 6.5 Check Your Progress
- 6.6 References

6.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To analyse the novel as a social commentary.
2. To understand characters in the novel.
3. To study various themes of the novel

6.1 ANALYSIS: *DAVID COPPERFIELD*

The structure of *David Copperfield* almost perfectly fits the usual format of a bildungsroman novel as the novel portrays little David's journey to a successful writer. The episodic, plot-heavy nature of *David Copperfield* stems from the fact that it was originally published as a serial, in pieces over time. Dickens inserted several mini-climaxes and resolutions and deliberately built suspense toward the end of each section in order to compel his readers to buy and read the next installment. The segmentation of David's life into separate parts and the heavy-handed foreshadowing add to the novel's suspense. In the preface of the novel Dickens states that the completion of the novel is, for him, both a regret and a pleasure. He rejoices in the completion of the novel because the novel was a long time in coming, and he is satisfied that it is finished after two years of hard work. He mourns its completion, however, because it marks the end of his association with a cast of characters to whom he has become intensely attached. Dickens remarks that *David Copperfield* is his favourite of all his novels and that, of all the characters he has invented over the years, David Copperfield is dearest to him.

An older David Copperfield narrates the story of his life. He begins by saying that only the writing that follows can tell who the hero of his story is. He gives an account of his birth, which occurred at the stroke of midnight on a Friday night. An old woman in the neighbourhood has told him that the time of his birth indicates he will be unlucky and will be able to see ghosts and spirits. David's aunt, Miss Betsey Trotwood, appears surprisingly on the day of David's birth and amazingly disappears too after knowing that the born child is a boy and not a girl. She appears later in the novel much to the comfort of young David.

David vividly remembers his mother, Clara and his nurse, Peggotty, his house and its surrounding. For both David and his mother, Peggotty is a mother figure. However, the joyous moments of this little family are over the moment David's beautiful mother introduces Mr. Murdstone, a large man with black whiskers and a deep voice to Peggotty and David. In spite of David and Peggotty's dislike for Mr. Murdstone, Clara marries Mr. Murdstone. Then onwards David has to deal with a life of almost as an orphan that is utterly miserable and humiliating. His mother's marriage to Mr. Murdstone who seems to be an enormous and threatening dog to David proves a disaster for both David and his mother. Mr Murdstone continuously reprimands his mother for not disciplining her son. He threatens to beat David for not behaving properly. Soon Miss Jane Murdstone, Mr. Murdstone's dark and masculine, cruel sister arrives to stay with them and in no time takes over the household management, and when David's mother protests her interference or shows concern about anything done to David, Mr. Murdstone threatens her into submission and later both he and Miss Murdstone ask her to be firm with David and also demoralise her by calling her naïve, inexperienced girl that needs their training. To David's misfortune, Clara fails to protect him. However, David has unwavering faith in her. Her helplessness and fear allow Mr. Murdstone and his sister to inflict cruelty on herself and David. She receives the readers' sympathies. Ultimately David is sent to Salem boarding school at London as a punishment when he bites Mr. Murdstone's hand in self- defense. Consequently, young David gets estranged from his mother and Peggotty. The journey to London is definitely not a joyous one for David as he is cheated by the waiter and teased by the coachman and other passengers which keeps him hungry till he reaches London. He reaches the school when the school has holidays. There too Mr. Murdstone's threat follows David as he has to wear a sign that identifies him as 'one who bites' as his punishment for having bitten Mr. Murdstone. In the school too David is terrorised by Mr. Creakle, the master. However, he finds solace in his friendship with fat Tommy Traddles and a wealthy, intelligent, confident, good-looking James Steerforth. David's friendship with Tommy and Steerforth and his attachment to Peggotty reveals the way social hierarchies were strongly observed by the Victorian society. Hence till the end of the book, Peggotty remains a servant for David ; while David is largely influenced by the wealth and power of James Steerforth though he is scoundrel. However, Tommy who cares for David always remains secondary for him. Here Dickens criticises Victorian society's preference for the class status

instead of the merit of a person. Treatments meted out to Peggotty and Steerforth show Dickens' disagreement to the imperfections in English class system. Eventually Clara surrenders to the Murdstones and finally dies leaving young David at the hands of the heartless Murdstones.

Later David is sent to work at Mr. Murdstone's wine-bottling business where Dickens shows the exploitation of child labourers and miserable condition of the working class. David moves in with Mr. Micawber, who himself is in dire financial problems. When Mr. Micawber leaves London to escape his creditors, David decides to search for his father's sister, Miss Betsey Trotwood—his only living relative who receives him affectionately and sends him to a school run by Doctor Strong. While attending the school David moves in with Mr. Wickfield and his daughter, Agnes whom he later marries. Among Wickfield's boarders is Uriah Heep, a cunning young man who mismanages Wickfield's accounts. After graduation, Miss Betsey persuades David to pursue a career as a proctor, a kind of lawyer. David apprentices himself at the London firm of Spenlow and Jorkins. David falls in love with Mr. Spenlow's daughter, Dora, and marries her after Mr. Spenlow's death. However, Dora proves a terrible housewife. David loves her anyway and is generally happy. Miss Betsey visits London to inform David that her financial security has been ruined because Mr. Wickfield has joined into a partnership with Uriah Heep. David helps Agnes and Miss Betsey to recover their losses by exposing Uriah Heep's fraud and also helps Mr. Peggotty to get back his estranged niece, Little Em'ly. Mr. Peggotty decide to move to Australia, as do the Micawbers. Meanwhile, Dora falls ill and dies. David leaves the country to travel abroad. His love for Agnes grows. When David returns, he and Agnes, who has long harboured a secret love for him, get married and have several children. David pursues his writing career with increasing commercial success.

Hence the novel begins with Dickens' foreshadowing and cultivates an atmosphere of mystery in order to make his story dramatic and capture our interest from the start. The surreal circumstances under which David is born, including the appearance of Miss Betsey, mark the first example of mystery in the novel. Although Miss Betsey is absent for much of the story, she returns when David is in dire need. The darkness and abruptness established around Miss Betsey in the opening chapter characterize her throughout the novel. Throughout *David Copperfield*, Dickens uses such foreshadowing not only to create suspense about future events but also to establish an ominous tone.

Dickens portrays David as a gentle, naïve child in order to limit the novel's perspective and set up the dramatic irony of many of the story's episodes. We see many signs of David's youth. For instance, his memory of Mr. Murdstone as doglike, his memory of his mother's hair and form, and so on. David's innocence pervades in his narrative voice. The child David later rewrites the events in his life that baffled him as a child. As a result, we see the characters and the story as the young David did at the time.

In the guise of young David's account of life journey, the novel reveals Dickens' scathing criticism on the class-conscious Victorian society and Dickens' disagreement to the imperfections in institutions like schools, law, work places, etc.

Charles Dickens' David
Copperfield: Part II

6.2 CHARACTERS

David Copperfield was written as a serial novel, obviously it largely focuses on plot. However, the characters too are remarkably designed by Dickens. They develop chiefly through their actions and are depicted straightforwardly as good and evil characters. Mr. Murdstone, for example, sports a large black beard and evil-looking face that make him appear like a beast; while David's mother is all goodness and beauty. The novel has many such characters.

David Copperfield the titular character narrates his story as an adult, he conveys the impressions from a point of view of young David. Since it is a bildungsroman novel, we see David's perspective towards the world as he comes of age. His impressions of his young mother and Peggotty, the Murdstonesiblings, his school friends, Mr. Creakle, his teacher, Uriah, His wife Dora and Agnes whom he finally marries, and the people he connects with during his schooling and his legal practice leave a lasting impression on him. We see his life journey through a child's eye as well as that of a wise gentleman.

Miss Betsey Trotwood, his strong, independent aunt, plays a significant part in David's life. After her failed marriage, she has taken her maiden name and is settled at Dover. She is disappointed with David's mother for many reasons and one of which is David's birth. However, she protects David from his shrewd step-father, Mr. Murdstone, adopts him, arranges for his education and advises him to be a lawyer. She is a quirky and humorous character in the novel with characteristic eccentricities. She is the one who advises David to be honest and kind. She is happy when David marries Agnes. She also helps the Micawbers settle in Australia.

Mrs. Clara Copperfield is David's mother, a gentle and beautiful lady who is widowed six months before he is born. She marries a wrong man, Mr. Murdstone due to whose dominance not only her but David's life becomes miserable. She dies when David is hardly eight.

Mr. Micawber is one of the comic characters in the novel. He is a stout, middle-aged and full of life. He makes eloquent speeches in a high-flown style. David lodges with him when he is employed with Murdstone and Grinby's in London. He tries hard to make David's stay with him comfortable. Mr. Micawber has a big family to support and is always in debt. In spite of his financial difficulties, Mr. Micawber is always optimistic and is always ready to extend a helping hand to the needy. He moves to Australia to overcome financial problems where he works as a successful Magistrate. He helps Miss Trotwood recover her money by exposing Uriah Heep's cunningness.

Mr. Dick can be taken as a contrast to the Mr. Murdstone. He is optimistic and has faith in David. He is kind, gentle, and generous toward David which is a far cry from the unforgiving Mr. Murdstone and the brutal Mr. Creakle.

Agnes is David's true love and second wife, the daughter of Mr. Wickfield. The calm and gentle Agnes admires both her father and David. She suffers patiently through David's other romances, and always comforts him with kind words or advice when he needs support.

James Steerforth is an egotistical, wealthy young man whose sense of self-importance overwhelms all his opinions. Youthful and innocent David fails to understand his selfishness, duplicity and real motives. The friendship between Steerforth and David throws light on class distinctions in Victorian Society.

Uriah Heep is a foil to David. Though Both David and Uriah are raised in miserable environment, David is innocent and compassionate while Uriah is cunning, corrupt, bitter and vengeful. For David his movements are like snake. Uriah's red hair and red eyes make him more demonic. Uriah and David not only have opposing characteristics but also operate at cross-purposes. Uriah tries to control others and becomes power hungry in the course of the novel. Hence, towards the end of the novel, though he is arrested and sent to jail, he tries to exert control over others. He stands out in the novel as a villain.

6.3 THEMES

6.3.1. Exploitation of the Weak

David Copperfield categorically portrays the exploitation of the weak and helpless section of the Victorian society that comprises children, orphans, women, poor and mentally challenged people. The shrewd society is least compassionate towards the poor. Dickens shows the plights of the child labour and imprisoned debtors and the suffering of their families. The inhumanity of the people in power goes to such an extent that they punish the innocent and morally good people. For example, David becomes an easy target for Mr. Murdstone as he is a child and dependent on Mr. Murdstone. He is too young to rebel against his exploiter. Similarly, the children at the Salem House have to tolerate Mr. Creakle due to his authoritative position. Dickens reveals the suffering of the orphan children at the hands of their supposed protectors and helplessness of the weak as they have to tolerate the domination of the powerful in the society.

6.3.2. Wealth and Class

Dickens criticises the Victorian society's appreciation for wealth and class rather than that of a person's values. He also attacks the opinion that believes that poverty is a symbol of moral degeneracy and the poor people suffer because of the inherent deficiencies. Hence, Steerforth, a young, selfish, and wealthy boy dominates the weak and unfortunately the weak too

appreciate his status in the society. On the contrary, the poor people like Peggotty and Ham are generous, honest and sympathetic. By portraying such characters Dickens comments on the injustices meted out to the weaker section of the society. However, not all rich are exploiters. The wealthy Dr. Strong and Agnes are morally upstanding people.

6.4 CONCLUSION

David Copperfield, the autobiographical narrative gave the advantages of allowing the story to be realistic. Since it is written in episodic manner it keeps the reader's interest alive. Dicken's canvas is a larger one that encompasses the middle class of his time, particularly industrialized London. Dickens was deeply concerned with the social issues of his time. As a Victorian novelist he vividly depicts the social life which was unjust, superfluous and grotesque. Dicken has successfully captured the spirit of the nineteenth century people, places and educational institutes, and shrewd industrial world, problems of labourers and child labour, orphans, women, poverty stricken weaker class, moral degradation of the rich class, and so on. The novel is his critical commentary on the social injustice he himself experienced so far.

6.5 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Elucidate the theme of exploitation in *David Copperfield*.
2. Discuss the role of major and minor characters in shaping David's Destiny.
3. Sketch the character of David Copperfield.
4. State the narrative technique used in *David Copperfield*.
5. Discuss *David Copperfield* as a social commentary on Victorian Age.

6.6 REFERENCES

- Dickens, Charles. *David Copperfield*. (1850) England: Penguin English Library. 2012.
- Milligan, Ian. *The Novel in English. An Introduction*. London: Oxford University Press. 1997.
- Watt, Ian. *The Rise of the Novel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1991.
- Wilson, Angus. *The World of Charles Dickens*. London: Oxford University Press. 1993.



ESSAYS: I - JOHN NEWMAN

Unit Structure

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Oxford Movement
- 7.3 Critical Analysis of 'The Idea of a University'
- 7.4 Conclusion
- 7.5 Check Your Progress
- 7.6 Bibliography

7.0 OBJECTIVES

This essay has been selected by scholars as being culturally important, and is part of the knowledge base of civilization as we know it. John Henry Newman rightly insists in his classic work on the subject that narrow specializations produce narrow minds. Newman suggests a university's 'soul' lies in the mark it leaves on students.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

St. John Henry Newman, (born February 21, 1801, London, England—died August 11, 1890, Birmingham, Warwick; beatified September 19, 2010; canonized October 13, 2019; feast day October 9), influential churchman and man of letters of the 19th century, who led the Oxford movement in the Church of England and later became a cardinal deacon in the Roman Catholic Church. His eloquent books, notably *Parochial and Plain Sermons* (1834–42), *Lectures on the Prophetic Office of the Church* (1837), and *University Sermons* (1843), revived emphasis on the dogmatic authority of the church and urged reforms of the Church of England after the pattern of the original “catholic,” or universal, church of the first five centuries CE. By 1845 he came to view the Roman Catholic Church as the true modern development from the original body. In 1822, he received an Oriel College fellowship, which was then the highest distinction of Oxford scholarship, and was appointed a tutor at Oriel. Two years later, he became vicar of St. Mary's, the Anglican church of the University of Oxford, and exerted influence on the religious thought through his sermons. When Newman resigned his tutorship in 1832, he made a tour of the Mediterranean region and wrote the hymn “Lead Kindly Light.” He was also one of the chief contributors to “Tracts for the Times” (1833–1841), writing 29 papers including “Tract 90”, which terminated the series. The final tract was met with opposition because of

its claim that the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England are aimed primarily at the abuses of Roman Catholicism. Newman retired from Oxford in 1842 to the village of Littlemore. He spent three years in seclusion and resigned his post as vicar of St. Mary's on October 9, 1845. During this time, he wrote a retraction of his criticisms of the Roman Catholic Church and after writing his "Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine," he became a Roman Catholic. The following year, he went to Rome and was ordained a priest and entered the Congregation of the Oratory. The remainder of Newman's life was spent in the house of the Oratory that he established near Birmingham. He also served as rector of a Roman Catholic university that the bishops of Ireland were trying to establish in Dublin from 1854-1858. While there, he delivered a series of lectures that were later published as "The Idea of a University Defined" (1873), which says the function of a university is the training of the mind instead of the giving of practical information. In 1864, Newman published "Apologia pro Vita Sua (Apology for His Life)" in response to the charge that Roman Catholicism was indifferent to the truth. It is an account of his spiritual development and regarded as both a religious autobiography and English prose. Newman also wrote "An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent" (1870), and the novels "Loss and Gain" (1848), "Callista" (1856) and "The Dream of Gerontius" (1865). Newman was elected an honorary fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, in 1877 and was made cardinal by Pope Leo XIII in 1879. He died on August 11, 1890.

7.2 OXFORD MOVEMENT

Oxford movement, was a 19th-century movement centered at the University of Oxford that sought a renewal of "catholic," or Roman Catholic, thought and practice within the Church of England in opposition to the Protestant tendencies of the church. The argument was that the Anglican church was by history and identity a truly "catholic" church. An immediate cause of the movement was the change that took place in the relationship between the state and the Church of England from 1828 to 1832. Laws that required members of municipal corporations and government-office holders to receive the Lord's Supper in the Church of England were repealed, and a law was passed that removed most of the restrictions formerly imposed on Roman Catholics. For a short time it seemed possible that the Church of England might be disestablished and lose its endowments. Consequently, many loyal Anglicans wished to assert that the Church of England was not dependent on the state and that it gained its authority from the fact that it taught Christian truth and its bishops were in the apostolic succession (i.e., able to trace their authority and office back in an unbroken line to the Apostles). The movement rapidly became involved in theological, pastoral, and devotional problems.

Leaders of the movement were John Henry Newman (1801–90), a clergyman and subsequently a convert to Roman Catholicism and a cardinal; Richard Hurrell Froude (1803–36), a clergyman; John Keble (1792–1866), a clergyman and poet; and Edward Pusey (1800–82), a clergyman and professor at Oxford.

The ideas of the movement were published in 90 Tracts for the Times (1833–41), 24 of which were written by Newman, who edited the entire series. Those who supported the Tracts were known as Tractarians who asserted the doctrinal authority of the catholic church to be absolute, and by “catholic” they understood that which was faithful to the teaching of the early and undivided church. They believed the Church of England to be such a catholic church. Some of the movement’s followers gradually moved closer to the beliefs of the Roman Catholic church, and controversies over the Tractarians’ ideas developed. In 1845 Newman joined the Roman Catholic church, and, subsequently, several others also joined. Keble and Pusey remained active leaders of the movement, which gradually spread its influence throughout the Church of England. Some of the results were increased use of ceremony and ritual in church worship, the establishment of Anglican monastic communities for men and for women, and better-educated clergy who were more concerned with pastoral care of their church members.

7.3 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF ‘THE IDEA OF A UNIVERSITY’

The nature of higher education, and defined four 'objectives essential to any properly balanced system'. The first objective, a utilitarian one, was 'instruction in skills'; but universities must also promote the 'general powers of the mind', to produce 'not mere specialists but rather cultivated men and women'. Thirdly, while the balance between teaching and research might vary, teaching should not be separated from the advancement of learning and the search for truth, since 'the process of education is itself most vital when it partakes of the nature of discovery'. Last comes 'the transmission of a common culture and common standards of citizenship'. This remains a political preoccupation today, as 'social cohesion'. This ideal can be traced to John Henry Newman, who gave the title 'The Idea of a University Defined and Illustrated' to a series of lectures originally given at Dublin in the 1850s. Newman thought that knowledge should be pursued 'for its own sake'. But by this he did not mean pure research. For him the search for truth was part of an educational ideal which shaped the personality of the cultivated man, and was inseparable from moral and religious education. This ideal required a pastoral relationship between teacher and student, and it derived from Newman's early experience as a college tutor at Oxford.

Newman thought that the personal gifts needed for research and teaching were quite different, and that research was best conducted outside universities. He also described the university as a place of 'universal knowledge', in which specialized training, though valid in itself, was subordinate to the pursuit of a broader liberal education. These ideals, later developed by other Victorian apostles of culture like Matthew Arnold, became the basis of a characteristic British belief that education should aim at producing generalists rather than narrow specialists, and those non-vocational subjects - in arts or pure science - could train the mind in ways applicable to a wide range of jobs.

The phrase 'idea of the university' was not invented by Newman, but goes back to a seminal period in modern university history, the reforms of Wilhelm von Humboldt in Prussia. Starting with the University of Berlin, founded in 1810, the 'Humboldtian' university became a model for the rest of Europe. The Humboldtian university can be seen as the characteristic form of the university idea until the growth of mass higher education in the late twentieth century, including nationalism, secularization, the growth of the modern state, and the shift of social power from aristocracies to the middle classes, on the basis of merit, intellectual expertise, and professionalism. The central Humboldtian principle was the 'union of teaching and research' in the work of the individual scholar or scientist.

As this essay defines the functions of the university are to advance knowledge by original and critical investigation, not just to transmit the legacy of the past or to teach skills. Teaching should be based on the disinterested search for truth, and students should participate, at however humble a level, in this search. Hence the classic view that the university was a 'community of scholars and students' engaged on a common task. The union of teaching and research reflected the restricted social mission of a university, it was based on the assumption that the subjects taught in universities had a corpus of theory and knowledge which needed to be kept up to date by current research. This model suited training for the 'learned' professions - law, medicine, and the church -to which 'liberal' education gave a distinctive ethos of service and social responsibility, and it has steadily expanded as new occupations have become professionalized.

As universities face an increasing pressure to become more "market driven", the recently beatified John Henry Newman would have had something to say about the possible impact on higher education. The clergyman, Oxford academic and famed convert to Catholicism gave a series of lectures in 1852 reflecting on the university's purpose that were published as *The Idea of a University* in the same year. Newman certainly offers some useful ways to think about what we want out of our university system today. For Newman, the ideal university is a community of thinkers, engaging in intellectual pursuits not for any external purpose, but as an end in itself. Envisaging a broad, liberal education, which teaches students "to think and to reason and to compare and to discriminate and to analyze", Newman held that narrow minds were born of narrow specialization and stipulated that students should be given a solid grounding in all areas of study. A restricted, vocational education was out of the question for him. Somewhat surprisingly, he also espoused the view that universities should be entirely free of religious interference, putting forward a secular, pluralist and inclusive ideal.

In its championing of a truly well-rounded education, this is a sympathetic vision, but there are some fundamental problems with Newman's ideas. Despite his vision of a secular university, for Newman "religious truth is not only a portion, but a condition of general knowledge. To blot it out is nothing short ... of unravelling the web of university teaching".

Knowledge alone cannot improve the individual – God, who sustains all truth, is a requirement, and this is an idea that alienates many readers.

Showing his preoccupation with man's fallen nature, Newman wrote: "Quarry the granite rock with razors, or moor the vessel with a thread of silk; then may you hope with such keen and delicate instruments as human knowledge and human reason to contend against those giants, the passion and the pride of man." This is an unattractively pessimistic view of humankind's capacity for self-improvement. Perhaps the ultimate problem with *The Idea* is its sheer anti-utilitarianism. Writing at a time when only an elite benefited from a university education, Newman could not have conceived of a situation where over 2 million people are enrolled at British universities and places are heavily oversubscribed. Newman says little about the level of practical, employable skills that should be imparted as part of a course of higher education, revealing his limitations as the ultimate ivory tower-dweller. He offers us little help on how the balance can be struck between pursuing knowledge for its own sake and giving students the saleable skills, they surely deserve. He has even less to offer on the pressing matter of how the whole enterprise may be paid for. Newman's approach is indeed dated, yet his articulation of the power of a university education to develop the individual in ways that far exceed the narrow limits of academic ability remains striking. Above all, Newman was arguing that the primary role of the university was to give students a "perfection of the intellect ... the clear, calm, accurate vision and comprehension of all things" that allows the individual to make good judgements. He wrote of this: "It is almost prophetic from its knowledge of history; it is almost heart-searching from its knowledge of human nature; it has almost supernatural charity from its freedom from littleness and prejudice; it has almost the repose of faith, because nothing can startle it; it has almost the beauty and harmony of heavenly contemplation". Philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre has seen this as the ability "to think about the ends of a variety of human activities" – a skill that he feels may have prevented the economic crisis, "brought about by some of the most distinguished graduates of some of the most distinguished universities". Indeed, perhaps universities are already failing to produce the intellectual state Newman saw as crucial and, in any case, the capacity for good judgement is not limited to university graduates.

Whatever the feasibility of Newman's concept, it gives rise to a possible definition of the soul of the university – nothing geographically or temporally fixed, but the mark left on the alumnus's mind, which stays with them all their lives. In reminding us that the university has a greater role than just doling out qualifications – that of shaping the whole individual – Newman's thought may usefully guide us as crucial decisions are made about the future of our universities. Saint John Henry Newman's book *The Idea of a University* is very famous for asking what education really is. It's also famous because it doesn't just ask but also answers. And the answer might surprise you. He says in his sixth discourse (or lecture), titled "Knowledge Viewed in Relation to Learning," that the "end of education" (and by that he means the goal) is "philosophy." That might seem a bit abstract or unreal. After all, when you think of philosophy you

probably think of men with long beards sitting on top of mountains in a yoga position or perhaps rather geeky people at college pushing their glasses up as they look at long patterns of logical symbols on a chalkboard. For Newman, long beards, yoga, and even formal mathematical logic are not absolutely necessary; the mountain is. Newman's understanding of philosophy is "Thought or Reason exercised upon Knowledge." Education is the process by which a mind is formed not just to learn facts and ideas but to be able to think about how they are connected. And when he gives an image for that process, he seems to be pointing toward a mountain. "I say then, if we would improve the intellect, first of all, we must ascend; we cannot gain real knowledge on a level..." Whenever we are educated in any subject, whether big or small, there is a huge mountain of facts that must be scaled by means of learning the principles and basic methods of how to organize them in our minds. If we don't, we can learn all the facts we want to, but we'll still be lost just as we are when we visit a new place without a map to help us understand where we're going (even if the GPS can get us to specific places).

Who has not felt the irritation of mind and impatience created by a deep, rich country, visited for the first time, with winding lanes, and high hedges, and green steeps, and tangled woods, and everything smiling indeed, but in a maze? The same feeling comes upon us in a strange city, when we have no map of the streets. Hence you hear of practiced travelers, when they first come into a place, mounting some high hill or church tower, by way of reconnoitering its neighborhood. In like manner you must be above your knowledge, not under it, or it will oppress you; and the more you have of it, the greater will be the load. You will have to sit upon the mountain, Newman says, or the mountain will be sitting on you. Of course, there will always be a certain sort of person who thinks it impressive to walk around with a mountain on his head. Many writers of books and textbooks, Newman says, glory in showing off the load they are carrying around on their shoulders. He writes of "authors who are as pointless as they are inexhaustible in their literary resources." These brainy writers "measure knowledge by bulk, as it lies in the rude block, without symmetry, without design." These figures, who like to brag about the number of their footnotes, are often unconvincing because they seem to be "possessed by their knowledge, not possessed of it; nay, in matter of fact they are often carried by it, without any volition of their own." While they may be impressive to themselves in their non-stop tossing off boulders and pebbles bearing facts, figures, authors' names, and formulas, their readers often think quite reasonably that their fact-tossing writings are those of a "madman" in whom reason doesn't play a big role. Sadly, it is not just writers but teachers who sometimes don't understand what they are doing. Writing in the 1850s, he observes that for twenty years too many so-called educators had not only decided to "load the memory of the student with a mass of undigested knowledge, but to force upon him so much that he has rejected all." "It is the education which gives a man a clear conscious view of his own opinions and judgments, a truth in developing them, an eloquence in expressing them and a force in urging them." defining a liberal education: "This process of training, by which

the intellect, instead of being formed or sacrificed to some particular or accidental purpose, some specific trade or profession, or study or science, is disciplined for its own sake, for the perception of its own proper object, and for its own highest culture, is called Liberal Education. [...] to help forward all students towards it according to their various capacities, this I conceive to be the business of a university” (p 152).

The benefits of a liberal education according to Newman is: “the man who has learned to think and to reason and to compare and to discriminate and to analyze, who has refined his taste, and formed his judgement, and sharpened his mental vision, will not at once be a lawyer, [...] a man of business, or a soldier, or an engineer but he will be placed in that state of intellect in which he can take up any of these sciences or callings [...] with an ease, a grace, a versatility, and a success, to which another is a stranger” (pp 165–6). He insists on the residential student life, “When a multitude of young men, keen, open-hearted, sympathetic, and observant, as young men are, come together and freely mix with each other, they are sure to learn one from another, even if there be no one to teach them; the conversation of all is a series of lectures to each, and they gain for themselves new ideas and views, fresh matter of thought, and distinct principles for judging and acting, day by day.” [Life at university] “is seeing the world on a small field with little trouble; for the pupils or students come from very different places, and with widely different notions, and there is much to generalize, much to adjust, much to eliminate” (pp 146–7). The purpose of education: “to fit men for this world while it trained them for another”...a University training is the great ordinary means to a great but ordinary end; it aims at raising the intellectual tone of society, at cultivating the public mind, at purifying the national taste, at supplying true principles to popular enthusiasm and fixed aims to popular aspiration, at giving enlargement and sobriety to the ideas of the age, at facilitating the exercise of political power, and refining the intercourse of private life. It is the education which gives a man a clear conscious view of his own opinions and judgements, a truth in developing them, an eloquence in expressing them, and a force in urging them. It teaches him to see things as they are, to go right to the point, to disentangle a skein of thought, to detect what is sophistical, and to discard what is irrelevant. It prepares him to fill any post with credit, and to master any subject with facility. It shows him how to accommodate himself to others, how to throw himself into their state of mind, how to bring before them his own, how to influence them, how to come to an understanding with them, how to bear with them. He is at home in any society, he has common ground with every class; he knows when to speak and when to be silent; he is able to converse, he is able to listen; he can ask a question pertinently, and gain a lesson seasonably, when he has nothing to impart himself” (pp 177–8).

As far as on education in freedom is concerned, “If then a university is a direct preparation for this world, let it be what it professes. It is not a Convent; it is not a Seminary; it is a place to fit men of the world for the world. We cannot possibly keep them from plunging into the world, with all its ways and principles and maxims, when their time comes; but we can

prepare them against what is inevitable; and it is not the way to learn to swim in troubled waters, never to have gone into them. [...] Today a pupil, tomorrow a member of the great world: today confined to the Lives of the Saints, tomorrow thrown upon Babel” (pp 232–3). He writes further on gaining a true view of things, “one main portion of intellectual education, of the labours of both school and university, is to remove the original dimness of the mind’s eye; to strengthen and perfect its vision; to enable it to look out into the world right forward, steadily and truly; to give the mind clearness, accuracy, precision; to enable it to use words aright, to understand what it says, to conceive justly what it thinks about, to abstract, compare, analyse, divide, define, and reason, correctly” (p 332). Therefore the exalted nature of education should be, “Education is a higher word; it implies an action upon our mental nature, and the formation of a character; it is something individual and permanent” (p 114)... “a crucial distinction: “knowledge is one thing, virtue is another” (p 120).

The Idea of a University by John Henry Newman is a collection of two books, derived from a variety of source materials, that are famous for their interrogation of three primary themes pertaining to university life: a) the nature of knowledge; b) the role of religious belief in higher education; and c) a defense of liberal education for university students (Tierney, 2016). The date of publication for The Idea is frequently listed as 1852, the year in which Newman first presented five lectures to a Dublin audience from 10 May to 7 June (McMannus, 1994).

Those lectures, along with five others that were never publicly read, were immediately published under the title Discourses on the Scope and Nature of University Education: Addressed to the Catholics of Dublin. In total, ten discourses, along with a preface, constitute the first book of Newman’s Idea. The second book of The Idea of a University, which largely expands on the concepts and themes of the first book and also sheds considerable light on the evolution of Newman’s thoughts, from the 1850s to the 1880s, regarding the relationship of religious life to university research and teaching. It also reflects the paradoxical nature of Newman’s own life. He was a well-known conservative religious leader who championed the revival of Catholic liturgical rituals that had been discarded during the English Reformation, yet he believed in liberal scientific inquiry free from suppression or censorship. He was also a Catholic priest and cardinal who embraced a life of seclusion and introspection, yet he was a willing and skilled orator. The Idea of a University embraces these tensions, and, in fact, makes a compelling and indelible argument — namely that the university is a valuable institution allowing individuals to question dogma, build on previous knowledge, and make sense of the paradoxes between faith and reason.

Newman noted that “if certain branches of knowledge were excluded, those students of course would be excluded also, who desired to pursue them” (p. 23). Newman’s view of the nature of knowledge was not solely influenced by England’s historical exclusion of Catholic students, but it also revealed a desire to have different “branches of knowledge” — such as religious studies and various areas of science — inform each other’s

work, rather than existing in silos. Additionally, Newman felt that argumentation was vital to the lifeblood of a university. He found doctrinaire thought that dutifully passed knowledge down from generation to generation objectionable to the pursuit of "Truth" and hoped that universities would instead encourage reasoned debate. In Discourse Eight of book two, Newman asserted that "to erect a university ... [it] is pledged to admit, without fear, without prejudice, without compromise, all comers, if they come in the name of Truth; to adjust views, and experiences, and habits of mind the most independent and dissimilar" (p. 303).

Second, Newman considered the role of religious belief in higher education at considerable length. Whereas many might consider the combination of science and religion to create the conditions for epistemological incoherence, Newman felt that the two, by necessity, needed to be explored and extended in tandem for human progress to transpire.

This belief in Truth as an attainable and aspirational goal for university faculty and student's marks Newman as something of an early positivist. Indeed, much of his writing counsel's patience in the search for Truth, acknowledging the necessity for trial and error in university research. Newman's writings on education for university students are notable for their repudiation of the Utilitarianism of Locke (1700) and Mill (1859), who argued that a primary objective of educational institutions should be the development of marketable skills in service of broader economic goals. In *The Idea of a University*, Newman shows considerable (and consistent) disdain for educational outcomes "which can be weighed and measured", contending that the purpose of education needed to be conceived more broadly than student evaluation and specialization within a given discipline. While Newman was not necessarily against training for a vocational career, he wanted the university curriculum to encourage study in multiple fields so that students and scholars alike could identify connections and engage humanity's most difficult philosophical questions, social issues, and scientific problems. Newman may have been disappointed to see the contemporary university, with its discrete colleges of business, education, engineering, fine arts, law, and the corresponding lack of communication between each of them.

In short, Newman makes a twofold argument concerning the nature of education for students. He passionately defends a liberal education that prizes the development of individual intellect over institutional measurement and narrowly-defined skill development. He also believes in the potential of the university to bring together diverse perspectives and areas of expertise in service of greater understanding. When first composed, *The Idea of a University* were explicitly addressed to members of the Catholic church who were predominantly Irish. Moreover, the tone of Newman's writing might be distasteful to secularists who are uncomfortable with his idiosyncratic integration of religion with science. And while it is always perilous to critique the writing of previous generations by the accepted standards of the present, Newman's consistent use of masculine pronouns betrays an attitude that, for all its impassioned

defense of diverse thought and experiences, implicitly excludes women from his vision of university life.

And yet, Newman's elegant prose, grand arguments, and meticulous logic in *The Idea of a University* seemingly maintain great resonance with readers well into the twenty-first century. Barr (2015), in fact, has estimated that, at a minimum, Newman's *Idea* exists in at least nineteen versions, with translations in a variety of European languages, including French, German, Italian, and Spanish. Numerous editions of the text have also been published in recent years by scholarly publishers, including Notre Dame and Oxford, as well as religious and secular presses.

Writers and scholars throughout the twentieth century have been drawn to ideas from *The Idea of a University* and made use of them in their work. One finds echoes of Newman in James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, when Stephen Dedalus protests the orthodox lessons and vocational emphasis of his professors (Muller, 1996; Pribek, 2004). Saïd's (1991) defense of argumentation and debate under the provision of academic freedom can be viewed as an extension of Newman's *Idea*. Both Joyce and Saïd, among other intellectuals, deeply respected Newman's prose. Newman was a man of brilliant personality and the master of a lucid and fine prose style as well as of a powerful argumentation of mind. He stands as a supreme and his prose is characterized by lucidity, restraint, balance and wonderful transparency. He is as clear in handling his subject of extreme subtlety. The description of a classic author that he once offered in a lecture to the School of Philosophy and Letters describes him well: "A great author, Gentlemen, is not one who merely has a copriaverborum, whether in prose or verse, and can, as it were, turn on at his will any number of splendid phrases and swelling sentences; but he is one who has something to say and knows how to say it." Newman had a lot to say; he had read and thought much about history, theology and education. His language expresses, not only his great thoughts, but his great self. Certainly, he might use fewer words than he uses; but he fertilizes his simplest ideas, and germinates into a multitude of details, and prolongs the march of his sentences, and sweeps round to the full diapason of his harmony. The style is graceful, quiet, flowing, mature, like a calm but powerful river. It is a wonderful combination of formality and intimacy, just right for the subject matter: the history of the theological opinions of a man composed of equal parts high intellect and religious passion.

7.4 CONCLUSION

Newman's depiction of university life and its potential for transformative learning has long been praised by educational administrators, policymakers, and scholars. Today, researchers and practitioners frequently refer to Newman in criticisms of increased neoliberalism and corporatization in higher education, arguing in favor of a more holistic vision for the contemporary university (Blass, 2001; Craig et al., 1999; Deboick, 2010; Thornton, 2004). Teachers interested in promoting "whole person" education, including aesthetic appreciation and critical thinking

skills, also regularly cite Newman and engage with his conceptualization of “liberal education” (Christie, 2011; Gruenwald, 2011; McAllister, 2015; Sullivan 2015). Newman’s influence on post-World-War-II higher education, and Newman’s continued relevance in the wake of increased secularization, multiculturalism, and digitization in higher education (Castro-Klarén, 1996; Garland, 1996; Landow, 1996; Marsden, 1996; Turner, 1996). Historical scholarship on Newman’s life and influences also continues to be published (Cornwell, 2010; Ker, 2009). Since its publication, scholars have long utilized Newman’s *Idea of a University* as a starting point for imagining and conceptualizing contemporary reforms of higher education, and the text may serve as inspiration decades into the future.

7.5 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Critically examine Newman’s essay on ‘The Idea of a University’.
2. Trace the importance of Newman as an essayist.

7.6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Newman <https://www.cardinaljohnhenrynewman.com>.
- Barr, C. “Historical (mis)understandings of ‘The Idea of a University’”, in F. D. Aquino & B. J. King, eds, *Receptions of Newman*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. 114-136
- Blass, E. “What’s in a Name? A Comparative Study of the Traditional Public University and the Corporate University”, *Human Resource Development International*, 4.2 (2001): 153-172.
- Castro-Klarén, S. ‘The Paradox of Self in “The Idea of a University”’, in F. M. Turner, ed., *The idea of a university*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996. 318-38
- Christie, R. C. “Newman’s Aesthetic Vision: Theology and the Education of the Whole Person”, *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 23.1/2 (2011): 43-57.
- Cornwell, J. *Newman’s Unquiet Grave: The Reluctant Saint*. New York: Continuum, 2010.
- Craig, R. J., Clarke, F. L., & Amernic, J. H. “Scholarship in University Business Schools - Cardinal Newman,
- Creeping Corporatism, and Farewell to “Disturber of the Peace?”, *Accounting, Auditing, and Accountability Journal*, 12.5 (1999): 510-524.
- Darwin, C. *On the Origins of Species by Means of Natural Selection*. London: Murray, 1859.

- Deboick, S. “Newman suggests a university’s ‘soul’ lies in the mark it leaves on students”, *The Guardian*, 2010.
- Dunne, J. ‘Newman Now: Re-examining the Concepts of “Philosophical” and “Liberal” in “The Idea of aUniversity”’, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 54.4 (2006): 412-428.
- Garland, M. M. ‘Newman in his own day’, in F. M. Turner, ed., *The Idea of a University*. New Haven, CT: YaleUniversity Press, 1996. 265-81
- Gruenwald, O. “The University as Quest for Truth”, *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 23.1/2 (2011): 1-18.
- Joyce, J. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. 1916. New York: Viking Press, 1968.
- Ker, I. *John Henry Newman: A Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Landow, G. P. ‘Newman and the Idea of an Electronic University’, in F. M. Turner, ed., *The Idea of a University*.New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996. 339-61.
- Locke, J. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. 1700. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1995.
- MacIntyre, A. ‘The Very Idea of a University: Aristotle, Newman, and Us’, *British Journal of EducationalStudies*, 57.4 (2009): 347-362.
- Marsden, G. M. ‘Theology and the University: Newman’s Idea and Current Realities’, in F. M. Turner, ed., *TheIdea of a University*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996. 302-17.
- McAllister, J. “The Idea of a University and School Partnership”, in R. Heilbronn & L. Foreman-Peck,eds, *Philosophical Perspectives on Teacher Education*. Chichester: Wiley, 2015. 38-53.
- McDaniel, C. A., & Woods, V. E. ‘Martin Luther and John Henry Newman: Balancing Heart and Mind in HigherEducation’, *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 23.1/2 (2011): 19-40.
- McMannus, E. L. “Newman’s ‘great anxiety’”, *Catholic Historical Review*, 80.3 (1994): 457-475.
- Mill, J. S. *On Liberty*. London: J. W. Parker, 1859.
- Muller, J. “John Henry Newman and the Education of Stephen Dedalus”, *James Joyce Quarterly*, 33.4 (1996): 593-603.
- Newman, J. H. *The Idea of a University*. 1852. London: Aeterna Press, 2015.

- Pribek, J. “Newman and Joyce”, *An Irish Quarterly Review*, 93.370 (2004): 169-184.
- Saïd, E. W. “Identity, Authority, and Freedom: The Potentate and the Traveler”, *Boundary*, 54 (1991): 4-18.
- Sullivan, J. “Newman’s Circle of Knowledge and Curriculum Wholeness in “The Idea of a University”, in F. D.
- Aquino & B. J. King, eds, *Receptions of Newman*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. 95-113.
- Thornton, M. “The Idea of the University and the Contemporary Legal Academy”, *Sydney Law Review*, 26(2004): 1-22.
- Tierney, W. G. (2016). “Portrait of Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century: John Henry Newman’s ‘The Idea of a University’”, *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 19.1 (2016): 5-16.
- Turner, F. M. ‘Newman’s University and Ours’, in F. M. Turner, ed., *The Idea of a University*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996. 282-301.
- Michael Lanford (University of North Georgia)
- Lanford, Michael. “The Idea of a University “. *The Literary Encyclopedia*. First published 02 April 2019[<https://www.litencyc.com>, accessed 01 August 2019.]
- This article is copyright to © The Literary Encyclopedia.
- <http://www.theguradian.com>
- Most of Newman’s works can be found at:
<http://www.newmanreader.org>
- The official canonization website
- <https://www.newmancanonisation.com>.
- Passages on education can be found on:
www.ideaofauniversity.website



ESSAYS-II- JOHN RUSKIN

Unit Structure

- 8.0 Objectives
- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Analysis of Ruskin's Selected Essays
- 8.3 Conclusion
- 8.4 Check Your Progress
- 8.5 Bibliography

8.0 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this Unit is to make the students familiar with John Ruskin and his style of writing with the help of close readings of his selected essays. As both the essays are based on 18th century Victorian morality, the students can get acquainted with it. In addition, they will understand that Ruskin's literary style is a personification of Johnson, Pope and Byron.

8.1 INTRODCUTION

John Ruskin's "Sesame and Lilies", first published in 1865, stands as a classic 19th-century statement on the natures and duties of men and women.

8.2 ANALYSIS OF RUSKIN'S SELECTED ESSAYS

John Ruskin's "Sesame and Lilies", first published in 1865, stands as a classic 19th-century statement on the natures and duties of men and women. Although widely popular in its time, the work in its entirety has been out of print since the early 20th century. This volume, by including the often ignored "Of Kings' Treasuries", offers readers full access to Ruskin's complex and sometimes contradictory views on men and women. The accompanying essays place "Sesame and Lilies" within historical debates on men, women, culture and the family. According to Ruskin in the preface of his 1882 edition of *Sesame and Lilies*, *'it must be premised that the book is chiefly written for young people belonging to the upper, or undistressed middle, classes; who may be supposed to have choice of the objects and command of the industries of their life'* [p.25.]. Elizabeth Helsinger examines the text as a meditation on the pleasures of reading; Seth Koven gives a wide-ranging account of how Victorians read "Sesame and Lilies"; and Jan Marsh situates the work within controversies over educational reform. This volume reunites the two halves of the work: "Of

Kings' Treasuries", in which Ruskin critiques Victorian manhood, and "*Of Queens' Gardens*", in which he counsels women to take their places as the moral guides.

John Ruskin's essay '*Of Queen's Gardens*' was originally given as a public lecture before being published in his two-essay collection *Sesame and Lilies* (1865). It is regarded as epitomizing the conservative Victorian ideal of femineity which defined women as passive and belonging to the private sphere of the domestic home – in comparison to the man who was 'the doer, the creator, the discoverer' of the public sphere... of men and urges the parents of girls to educate them to this end. It comes very close to Dicken's *Domboy and Son*. Feminist critics of the 1960s and 1970s regarded "*Of Queens' Gardens*" as an exemplary expression of repressive Victorian ideas about femininity, and they paired it with John Stuart Mill's more progressive "Subjection of Women". Where Mill's women are realistic, progressive and egalitarian invited in public life, legalequality and even service to nation, Ruskin pushes her to house and the inner walls. For Ruskin as a queen is responsible for the moral atmosphere of her country; so, it is with a wife in her home. According to John Ruskin in his lecture, *Of Queen's Gardens*, a husband is to be a shield for his wife from public stains so that in turn she may infallibly provide a home of comfort and safety through her office, presence, and wisdom. By using rhetorical means Ruskin convinces readers even today to see the importance of a woman's role in society. Her position is conveyed through emotion and rationale. Because John Ruskin holds the women to high standards, he develops credibility in his argument as he gains nothing for his sex in voicing his insightful perspective. The Victorian Era was mostly about advancements in society. Then came the question about women: should they advance their education so as to further their usefulness to society? John Ruskin addressed this in "*Of Queen's Gardens*" by presenting the question: what is "the woman's true place and power" in society? (Ruskin 1615) He is commenting on the two spheres perceived by the majority of the middle class: private and public. Ruskin is acting as a reformer of moral responsibility. In order to properly understand a women's role in Victorian society, one must first see her office. Although a woman is expected to be educated, her "*intellect is not for invention ...show more content...*" Ruskin knows that women with all their positive qualities are still flawed through human nature; however, "*so far as she rules, all must be right, or nothing is.*" Her wisdom is not meant for self-betterment, but for the furthence of her kingdom. She is wise "*not that she may set herself...but with modesty of her service*" "*Be thou glad, oh thirsting Desert; let the desert be made cheerful, and bloom as the lily; and the barren places of Jordan shall run wild with wood.*"—ISAIAH xxxv, I. (Septuagint.) The theme of this essay is how women can possess kingly power conferred to them by education. If women get education, they become powerful and prestigious. There is no difference between man and woman; they are complementary to each other. Aim of education is to get acquainted with the wisest and greatest people through books.

The women in literature are drawn strong but when they are willful everything goes wrong. Shakespeare is said to have no heroes but only

heroines. Othello, Hamlet, Julius Caesar, Merchant and Orlando are all weaker than Desdemona, Cordelia, Isabella, Portia and Rosalind. Tragedy occurs because the heroes do fatal mistake. Shakespeare's women are clever and intelligent. Among Shakespeare's women Ophelia is weak and Lady Macbeth, Regan and Goneril are wicked. Thus, Shakespeare views women to be more capable than men. He also quotes women characters of Walter Scott, Dante and Chaucer. Women in this literature are real and not imaginary. The view that men are always wiser, the thinker and the ruler is wrong. Women are not dolls. They play the role of a lover to encourage and guide men. The lover has sense of duty towards her man. Their marriage marks the change of temporary service into eternal affair. Man works out of his home. He faces a lot of trouble and he is hardened. Woman is the mistress of home and she is to maintain peace and good atmosphere at home. A good wife is a home in herself. Women must be educated in physical training. They should gain good health and beauty. This essay reflects Wordsworth's "Education of Nature" and Tennyson's "A Prayer for my Daughter." A woman's good nature is reflected in her face. She should never suffer. She should have three characters – physical beauty, natural instinct of justice and natural tact of love. She must read history. Theology is a dangerous science for women. It makes her superstitious. Her knowledge must of general nature. She need not specialize in a specific field. She must not read romantic novels and poetry, because they contain falsehoods. Girls should be left in library. They must be taught music, because music has healing power. As boys are courageous, girls are also courageous. They should not develop any complexities like superiority or inferiority complex.

Later he talks about role of women in society and politics. Man's public duties are extensions of his duties at home similarly woman's duty could be extended to public. Man defends the country and a woman defends the family economy. A woman is a queen, a queen of her lover, queen to her husband and children. She can be called the "prince of peace". Ruskin is not surprised by the loss of life in war but the wasting of women power surprises him. The world is a big garden. There is war all over the garden. If women walk in the garden there could be change in war. Women should come into the garden. They must help men to get shelter. As Diana Birch and Francis O'Gorman have argued, 'Ruskin's complicated relationship with Victorian gender politics is now being recognized and explored. Assessments of his interventions that stop at a hasty reading 'Of Queens' Gardens' (1864) are becoming fewer' (p.1.). Similarly, Deborah Epstein Nord has noted that 'without reading the two parts as one, without seeing "Kings" and "Queens" together, as it were, we miss [the] distinctiveness of Ruskin's social vision' (Nord; 2002, xv).

Hasty readings may be no more, but it still has a tendency to overlook Ruskin's construction and representation of men in favour of the idea that the gender narrative of *Sesame and Lilies* is only about women and their domestic virtues. How many of us with an interest in gender have extended our close reading beyond Ruskin's description of men in 'Of Queens' Gardens' and set this alongside his chapter 'Of Kings' Treasuries' in order to contextualize his well-known account of

masculinity? What Ruskin meant when he stated in 'Of Queens' Gardens' that

"[T]he man's power is active, progressive, defensive. He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discover, the defender. His intellect is for speculation and invention; his energy for adventure, for war, and for conquest, wherever war is just, wherever conquest necessary...The man, in his rough work in the open world, must encounter all peril and trial: to him, therefore, must be the failure, the offense, the inevitable error: often he must be wounded, or subdued; often misled, and always hardened. But he guards the woman from all this; within his house, as ruled by her, unless she herself has sought it, need enter no danger, no temptation, no cause of error or offense".

John Ruskin opens his essay *Of King's treasures* by apologizing for the ambiguity in the title. He says that the title is ambiguous and figurative in nature. By king's treasures, he means the best books written by the most brilliant authors and no other material things. The whole of the lecture is about books and the way to read them. He says that modern education is materialistic and it aims at advancement. This aim is narrow. The speaker says that love of praise and reputation moves humankind primarily. On the other hand, duty moves them secondarily. He says that clever persons wish to become high in status. To achieve higher status, we should have sincere and good friends. Best books are said to be best friends. He divides books into four types: a) Good books of the hour – has enlightened talks of some persons. They could talk about travels or in the form of novels. b) Good books for all life. (c) Bad books of the hour. (d) Bad books for all life. Great authors, statesmen, philosophers and thinkers write books for all life. Nobody can enter into these unless they stoop. We must enter into the thoughts of such writers, which is a difficult task. They write long sentences and serious thoughts are hidden in those sentences. So, we should read them carefully. An educated man need not know all things but he must learn a few languages. He must be aware of words and its origins. English language is of a mongrel breed. Their words are deceptive. For example, the word condemn originates from the Greek word "damno". It does not have the power of the Greek word in it. A good scholar must know the vital meanings of words. Ruskin asks the readers to read Max Muller's "The Science of Languages" to understand English language better. Later Ruskin analyses Milton's *Lycidas*. He considers Milton as a great scholar. Common minds are full of filth and prejudice. It should be cleansed. It is necessary to burn the jungle of bad ideas than to sow the fertile ground among thorns. The real gift of great writers is that they kindle passion in us. Passions are good things but they must be tested and disciplined. In England, passion means low-headed crimes. Ruskin attacks English people. They are under the control of passion. English people spend a lot of money and time in horse and not on books. English people despise science. There are very few utilitarian inventions in England when compared with other countries. English arts are far behind other countries. English people destroy nature and create racecourse. English economics is also very poor. There is wide gap between the rich and the poor. The churches and the cathedrals are also

current in England. Ruskin concludes his lecture by saying that a nation rich in literature would be the best in the world. A king must be sympathetic to his people and he should encourage people to read more books.

Considering Ruskin's description of men in *'Of Queens' Gardens'*, and Ruskin being so critical of his male counterparts in *'Of Kings' Treasuries'* is surprising. Men were, according to Ruskin, too bent on *'passions, and powers'* and expending their *'masculine energy into the false business of money-making'* to do their Christian and national duty.' (59). For Ruskin, men's reluctance to be *'faithfully helpful and compassionate'* meant that they had *'no true emotion'* (59). British middle-class men had simply constructed an artificial masculinity that had infantilized them. Thus, for Ruskin, 'modern man' was simply a well-dressed empty vessel with no personal soul (60).

'Of Kings' Treasuries' was, as Seth Koven notes, pitched towards the Manchester man and those values that Ruskin thought personified Manchester (Koven; 2002, 169). The Protestant ethic, to use Max Weber's phrase, had, according to Ruskin, created a masculine identity that was excessively concerned with wealth, praise and social standing. Early in his lecture, Ruskin turned to his audience and asked them if *'the strongest motive in men's minds in seeking advancement'* was the *'love of praise'* or *'the honest desire of doing any kind of duty'* (30). He reported that more hands went up for the 'love of praise' than for duty leading him to conclude *'Very good. I see you are with me'* (30). The problem with praise, according to Ruskin, was that kings measured their success by size and *'love-latitudes'* (62) rather than recognizing their duty to others as well as the cultivation of their own souls. As such, he saw them to be cultural philistines, supporting Matthew Arnold's argument that the middle class were philistines. Ruskin criticized his male audience for their inability to read the right books written by 'Great men' like John Milton, William Shakespeare, St. Francis, Alighieri and Dante (39). Instead, these men preferred to converse with others; *"Will you go and gossip with your housemaid, or your stable-boy, when you may talk with queens and kings; or flatter yourself that it is with any worthy consciousness of your own claims to respect, that you jostle with the hungry and common crowd for entrée here, and audience there, when all the while this eternal court is open to you"*. (33).

By reading a specific canon, men would be able to *'enter into their Thoughts'* and discover *'what is True'* (45-46). Rather than simply *'play with the words of the dead'* (60), he suggested that men should truly read and re-read their words for if they did, they would have spiritual and social nourishment. This was important because their role and life choices impacted on the national consciousness. After all, *'No nation can last, which has made a mob of itself, however generous at heart...a nation cannot last as a money-making mob: it cannot with impunity, – it cannot with existence, – go on despising literature, despising science, despising art, despising nature, despising compassion and concentrating its soul on Pence'* (49). It is perhaps not a surprise then that Ruskin advocated the

development of a civic sphere centered on libraries and art galleries. Yet, the image of the philistine can also be expanded to include the social duty men had towards their inferiors. Ruskin was appalled by men's inability to take better care of the poor. He used specific cases to highlight his disdain at how the poor were being ill-used and compromised by their poverty. Like the middle classes, the poor lacked not only spiritual nourishment but also, more disturbingly for Ruskin, the means to buy food in a capitalist system that only profited the already wealthy. How could capitalists justify costly wars when their poorer brethren went hungry? For Ruskin, men had great potential. It just seems interesting to read that they were not quite the Kings implied in his chapter '*Of Queens' Gardens*'. In attacking men in the first chapter, he sought to show them what they could and should be in his second chapter. At the same time, it might also show that his idealization of the 'separate characters' revealed that he was an outsider. He was neither the Manchester man nor had great knowledge of women, save his idealization of women like Adele Domecq, Effie Grey (who he married) and Rosa La Trouche. Despite this, the first chapter enables him to construct his own masculine identity, an identity that positioned him on the same lines as those 'great men' he discusses. "No writer of prose," says Frederick Harrison, "before or since has ever rolled forth such mighty fantasias, or reached such pathetic melodies in words, or composed long books in one sustained strain of limpid grace." (Frederick Harrison. "Tennyson, Ruskin, Mill." p. 51-2)

His taste in literature in writing both these essays come close to his reading of the Bible, considering it "the most precious and on the whole the one essential part" of all his education. Especially the entire Bible distributes the role of men and women, tilting towards men being the head of family, society, church and nation, for example, Ephesians 5:22-33, "*Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior... so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...*" Further St Paul writes, "*I do not allow a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man*" (1Tim 2:12), he means to prohibit women from teaching in a domineering fashion..."The word commanding women to "*keep silent in the churches*" (1Cor 14:34) The above stated quotations from Bible shows how the Bible became to Ruskin the ultimate standard of literary style and thoughts Where Sesame talks about the treasures to be found in books; lilies talk about women as preservers and beautifiers of the world and how their education should prepare them for this. When you read both the lectures there is a peculiar musical quality of Ruskin's prose. One can scarcely read a passage of it without being struck with its easy, graceful, flow, its exquisitely modulated cadences, "The melody of Ruskin's prose," says Frederic Harrison, "may be matched with that of Milton and Shelley. I hardly know any other English prose which retains the ring of that ethereal music echoes of which are more often heard in our poetry than in our prose Frederic Harrison". (Tennyson, Ruskin, Mill. p. 165.) George Saintsbury in the '*History of English Prose Rhythm*' writes that Ruskin largely relies

for his effects on alliteration and assonance, particularly the latter. That Ruskin uses alliteration to a very considerable degree the secret of Ruskin's rhythm is found in his descriptive art; he had not only "the voice of the lyric poet," but also the ear, the intuitive sense of the melody of language. It is seen not simply in the movement but in the phraseology, imagery and allusions; his works have a decided biblical coloring. They are filled with quotations from the Scriptures and references to them; these are so numerous that one comes to mind as a vital part of Ruskin's style. Ruskin loved long sentences and often allowed them to take on enormous proportions, frequently building them up in clauses, tier after tier, until the result is a gigantic sentence of two or three hundred words, with a profusion of commas, semicolons and dashes, and perhaps several parentheses. Ruskin also employed with considerable mastery the long periodic sentence with its impressive rise and dramatic suspense.

Balance, parallelism and antithesis, and repetition of important words and phrases, are among his literary tools; they are however seldom conspicuous; if Ruskin does employ "Johnsonian balance" he is not noticeably "Johnsonese." (Saintsbury. "Specimens Of English Prose Style." xix., XX.)

These lectures are written in the quiet style, with its simplicity and naivete; but it is the quiet style brightened with a delightful play of fancy, and softened with a note of tenderness, which alone would reveal the author's well-known loneliness for young girls. "*Of Queens' Gardens*" strikes the note of chivalrous devotion to women and "*Of Kings' Treasuries*" is urging men to do their Christian and national duties, by using two metaphors of 'Sesame' as a potent herb seed that expands and grows and the 'Lilies' that signifying purity, innocent beauty and fertility. 'Home' is used a symbol for a place of peacefulness from anxiety and privation and from the terror of the outer life. Ruskin's works are filled with allusion; indeed, one must know the Bible, Classical Mythology, Dante, Chaucer and the whole sweep of English Literature to understand many of Ruskin's arguments and illustrations. There is no doubt that Ruskin was gifted with exceptional powers of perception, expression, absolute accuracy, ornate style, and powerful rhetoric that produced sonorous effects of unusual beauty and sublimity. There is splendor of diction and imagery in his essays as they stimulate arguments and encourage discussion. The beauty of both the lectures is Ruskin's ability to shift from the subject of women to the subject of men and weave them together.

8.3 CONCLUSION

Thus the selected essays of John Ruskin reveal his style of writing and the influence he was having of the great prose writers like Johnson and Pope. The study of his essays further exemplifies Ruskin's command over his subject and his moral bent of mind.

8.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Critically examine role of women in 'Of Queens Gardens'?
2. For Ruskin, men's reluctance to be 'faithfully helpful and compassionate' meant that they had no feelings' Justify the comment?
3. Write a note on prose style of Ruskin?

8.5 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- All references to John Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies* are from Deborah Nord's 2002 edition.
- <http://karthickenglish2020.blogspot.com>
- <http://core.ac.uk>. Harrison, Frederic. John Ruskin. London, 1907.
- John Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*. Edited by Deborah Epstein Nord. Copyright ©2002 by Yale University. ISBNs: 0-300-09259-8(cl.); 0-300-09260-1(pbk.)
- The Works of John Ruskin, Thomas Cook and Thomas Wedderburn (1903-1912)
- John Rosenberg, ed., *The Genius of John Ruskin: Selection from His writings* (Boston: Houghton Muffin, 1963)
- John Stuart Mill, *The subjection of Women* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1970)

