

The Victorian Period – 1833-1901

- I. Historical background
 - A. Reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901)
 - B. Effects of the Industrial Revolution
 - 1. Booming economy – world leader in manufacturing
 - 2. Rapid expansion – factory towns became large cities
 - 3. Growth of new social classes
 - a. Industrial working class
 - b. Modern middle class
 - C. Military power expanded
 - 1. Powerful navy
 - 2. New colonies – “the sun never sets on the British empire”
 - D. Social concerns and reform
 - 1. Poor working conditions in factories
 - 2. Poverty and slums in cities
 - E. Growth of constitutional monarchy
 - 1. Duties of monarchy increasingly ceremonial
 - 2. New political parties – Liberal and Conservative
 - F. Darwin’s theory of evolution – natural selection
- II. Victorian Literature
 - A. Literary movements
 - 1. Romanticism – continued as major influence
 - 2. Realism – new, brought on by social change, attempt to portray life realistically
 - 3. Naturalism – influenced by science, portrayed nature as harsh and indifferent
 - 4. Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood – ignored ugliness of industrial life, sought to portray nature like medieval Italian art
 - 5. Aesthetic movement – turned away from everyday world and sought to create “art for art’s sake”
 - B. Poetry
 - 1. Romantic style most popular
 - a. Tennyson – most popular poet, named poet laureate in 1850
 - b. Brownings
 - 1) Robert – dramatic monologue form, showed influence of realism
 - 2) Elizabeth – famous for love poems
 - 2. Influence of realists and naturalists
 - a. Naturalists – Hardy, Houseman
 - b. Realists – Rossettis, etc.
 - 3. Rudyard Kipling – famous for prose and poetry (lyric and narrative)
 - C. Drama – not popular except for Wilde at end of age
 - D. Fiction – novel reached height
 - 1. Brontes, Dickens, Eliot, Thackeray, Kipling, Stevenson, etc.
 - 2. Serial form in newspapers, etc.
 - E. Nonfiction – histories and social criticism