

م.د.محمد ناجي حسين

تدريسي في قسم اللغة الانكليزية / كلية التربية الاساسية / جامعة ديالى

محاضرة نموذجية تركز على العصر الفكتوري والعوامل التي اثرت على حيات الناس وانعكاساتها على كتاب الادب الانكليزي

A critical summary about the Victorian age

The Victorian age was the era of many social and political upheavals. It witnessed a variety of changes in science and technology. These changes transformed the lives of the people and influenced their conventional outlook on life. This age was also an era of several unsettling social developments. Therefore, Victorian literature was greatly affected by these changes. Major Victorian writers dealt with these changes and how these changes challenged and questioned their views on religion, beliefs, morals, social and political controversies and issues. Their literature is a representative picture of the reality of their time. This enabled the writers to write about the sufferings of the people of that age. Thus, their writings, reflect and question the growth of the new values of democracy, education, materialism, religion, science, and evolution.

Charles Darwin's 'On the Origin of Species (1859)' has challenged and shattered many religious beliefs of the Victorian age. Many writers of this age were shocked by Darwin's theory of evolution, because it caused a revolution in biological science and greatly affected the religious thoughts. Furthermore, Darwin's theory contradicts with the biblical account of the creation of life. It questions the very basic Christian belief about the creation of man and the genesis of the universe .

The Bible asserted that God created man in His own image, whereas Darwin demonstrated that man is the product of evolution, though he is the crown of the evolutionary process. His theory also showed that 'survival of the fittest' is the law of nature and nature is unscrupulous as it observes no moral laws. Hence, such a theory and other scientific advancements made people skeptical about the traditional values of life. They were torn between two worlds- science and religion, faith and doubt. They lost their peace of mind and were

shockingly upset by these developments in science. In other words, people were terribly confused in such revolutionary changes.

Another equally powerful shock came from industrialization. New methods of large-scale production by machines changed the very structure of human society of that time. Cities grew in size and number. Along with urbanization, there were slums. A new poor working class was born. The industrialists / capitalists exploited these workers as there were no favorable laws on the side of the workers. Even innocent children were put to work in squalid conditions. They were poorly paid and cruelly and inhumanly maltreated and abused. The society, the state and the Church neglected these children and women. Charles Dickens and William Blake represented the darker aspects of this age very vividly and powerfully in their works. The poor and weak sections of the society, especially the helpless women and children, were worst affected. Such women had to sell themselves for their livelihood. No one had mercy for these poor souls. Thomas Carlyle exposed the ills of the age and advocated for the basic and old values of life .

Victorian society provided a great opportunity for the emergence of the romances and pessimistic novels. These types of novels represent almost every aspect of nineteenth century of the Victorian life. For example, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, which is one of the pessimistic novels by Thomas Hardy, portrays the story of the trapped and victimized girl, Tess, who pays a very heavy price for no fault of her as she is raped by Alec d'Urbervilles. Charles Dickens' novels are more representative and realistic. He dealt with the people who were inhumanly victimized. His novels depict many aspects of the social reality like incest, crime, pain, adulation, and antagonism toward women.