

Victorian era literature essay

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Queen Victoria Reigns After the Romantics From the romantics, to queen Victoria; it was a time of great social struggles for the poor.

Yet a different story was occurring for the middle class, the higher classes where in a time of “ relative political and social stability” (Gray 783). These conditions helped shape and greatly impacted the novel writing of the era. In the midsts of the reign of Queen Victoria, the poor went through a time of great struggles, however reforms were occurring, and an industrial revolution took place.

Social changes and undertakings played a great role in the writing and themes of the novels of the era. After a time of transition from romantics to the Victorian era a “ novel [was] a realistic portrayal of society” (Victorian Age 1). Society’s growing emphasis on humanitarianism along side of the social conditions contributed to the novels and the realization of poverty during the Victorian era. In the beginning of the Victorian period, Victoria started her reign as queen of England; as England was in the middle of an industrial revolution (Fletcher 1). The revolution had a great impact on England, making it “ the richest nation in the world” (Fletcher 1). Even though this great nation was doing so well, things were not always going the best in this era.

Since you can not ignore and pay no heed to the existence of the poor in the midst of this prosperous nation. And England did well since these lower classes, to an extent, where not ignored. For “ the middle and upper classes awoke to some extent to their duty to the poor, and sympathetic benevolent

effort, both organized and informal, increased very largely in amount and intelligence" (Fletcher 1).

The analyzing of the previous statement let us know that " the middle and upper classes" realizing and paying attention to the lower classes enlarged their knowledge (Fletcher 1). With this " intelligence" the " popular education, too, which in 1830 had no connection with the State and was in every respect very incomplete, was developed and finally made compulsory as regards the rudiments" (Fletcher 1). The advancement in education raises the literacy rate, which was part of Thomas Babington Macaulay's dream since " He would have the houses numbered and a population literate enough to read signs" (Gray 786). The advancement in the literacy rate increased the value of writing, therefore impacted the novel writers of the Victorian era. Schooling had impact on how you were viewed, for example " the vocabulary of class dominated assumptions about both a person's place in the social structure and the proper function of social institutions" (Heyck 1). People wanted to be looked as a upper class, therefore education instructed them to sound like a more intelligent and wise person. The Education of the common people leads us to what they learned. They of course learned to read, but what where they to read or who where these writers? Since the literacy rate increased from education " novel-reading was [now] one of the chief occupations of the educated public" (Victorian Age 1).

The works of many authors such as, " Tennyson, Browning, Dickens, Thackeray, Macaulay, Arnold, Carlyle and Ruskin" contributed to the works of the Victorian era (Patel 1). These writers did not to a great extent have an impacting effect on the society and what was going on inside of the country.
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Yet what was accruing during this time in the midst of these people of intellect effected what they wrote about, and for the most part what the themes were of their writings were.

As Rakesh Patel states, “ most of the writers exalt a purely ideal life. It is an idealistic age where the great ideals like truth, justice, love, brotherhood are emphasized by poets, essayists and novelists of the age” (1). As the conditions where of this era, the poetry was written reflecting its circumstances and surroundings. The common themes in the “ literature of this age tends to come closer to daily life which reflects its practical problems and interests. It becomes a powerful instrument for human progress” (Patel 1).

And human progress is what the Victorian people where focused on; the “ humanitarian consciousness, however, gained greatly during this period” (Fletcher 1). The society wanted and became more “ conscious” of the need of “ humanitarianism” , this impacted what novelist and writers wrote about, which then in return became a “ powerful instrument for human progress” (Fletcher 1, Patel 1). The main stream of the writing led to an optimistic view of society. Even though England was doing well, it also had a downhill side of the story. There where the “ Hungry Forties” with had left many without jobs , and then the potato famine in Ireland which led even more people to England (Gray 786-787).

Although the “ havoc caused” during this time the people did not seem to care too much (Victorian Age 1). Also the middle class tended to be optimistic and say everything was going great and things have yet to

become even better (Gray 788). The time period from 1832 till 1901, during the reign of Queen Victoria, known as the Victorian era consisted of positive and negative stability of the English society. The start of the era, coming out of the romantic period, was a very good time for the country because of the industrial revolution. Although there were the ups, the down sides know as the “ Hungry Forties” and the potato famine can not be ignored (Gray 786-787).

These all led to a “ humanitarian consciousness” which led the people to an education. These people wanted to be educated and read the works created by novelists (Fletcher 1). These novelists reflected what was occurring amongst the common people, writing about the “ daily life” (Petal 1). This theme in writing helped along side of what the society wanted, the increase of “ human progress” (Petal 1).

The writing of this era helped the people to be more “ optimistic” about life, and not be pessimistic when the society had to be striving to survive (Gray 788).