

Victorianism: A Detailed Note

Introduction

Victorianism is one of the most representative ages in the history of English Literature after Elizabethan Age. The very age is treated the best of the time and the worst of the time and there of the reason and the age of the foolishness as well. It refers to the state of doubt and faith, moral beliefs, attitudes and its own cultural practices. The period is dominated by the reign of **Queen Victoria (1837–1901)**. But It also refers to the periods of restlessness, the restless and complexities in the age is the blend of confidence and contradiction, progress and repression and doubt and faith; people were externally sound but internally unsound ie restless. The reason of restlessness lies in innovation and development, urbanisation and industrialisation but all these underlines facts were creating frustration unemployment, mechanisation, social division in terms of class and the imperial expansion.

Historical Background

Undoubtedly Victorianism is the part of the Industrial Revolution that has given a complete Britain in terms of overall development of the country such as factories, railways, the expansion of city and urbanisation of the small villages. But it was just merely a spirit of the development in terms of the national interest, it was nothing to do with common people and poor. The idea of national interest was not an individual interest but in national interest where the lower middle class can be merely be observer. The national interest was maintained for the pride of the nation by Charles Darwin's theory of Evolution.

Salient Features of Victorianism

1. Moral Seriousness and Respectability

Reading social history of Victorianism, it was found that social norms and discipline were strict. People were strongly bonded in terms of the family bond and practice such as family life, marriage and sexual restraints etc. But there were victims of doubt and faith due to the *Theory of Evolution* by Darwin. There were not able to understand which road to life would be better for them.

2. The Cult of Domesticity

The social structure of victorians was based idealism in terms of staunch morality of life. Women are performers at the centre of home, they are expected to be more pure and scarifying towards the moral duties. Men are supposed to be breaded winner and

protector and care taker for the family structure. It is supposed to be moral responsibility of the men take care their families.

3. Industrialism and Social Reform

Industrialisation was a subject of development and economic growth at the same time it was striker for the downfall and frustration of the child labour, slums and labour exploitation. For the child labour and labourers there was not a fair and fine wage due to the hunt for cheap labour. Undoubtedly capitalism was at rise and peak for the exploitation of ahistorical labourers.

4. Imperialism and National Confidence

The idea of making the Britain great was key belief through the expansion of the imperialism, the state of underlying ideology has frozen made people believe that by the expansion of the imperialism, the Britain will be representative country of the world to civilise uncivilised people and undiscovered land of the world. The idea of imperialism was based on civilising people of Non-British counties especially third world countries. The idea was nothing but a white man's burden that is embodied to the representatives of the imperialism.

Major Themes

- Spirit of innovations and elopement
- Imperialism and the strategies for implementation
- Social injustice and class conflict
- Moral responsibility and ethical struggle
- Conflict between faith and doubt
- The individual versus society
- Gender roles and women's oppression

Major Literary Forms

- The novel gained popularity
- Poetry focused on faith, loss, and introspection
- Non-fiction essays addressed politics, education, and morality

Major Victorian Writers

- **Charles Dickens** – Social criticism and humanitarian concerns (*Oliver Twist, Hard Times*)
- **George Eliot** – Moral realism and psychological depth (*Middlemarch*)
- **Thomas Hardy** – Pessimism and conflict between tradition and modernity (*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*)
- **Alfred Tennyson** – Faith, doubt, and loss (*In Memoriam*)
- **Robert Browning** – Dramatic monologues exploring human psychology

Contradictions within Victorianism

Victorianism is often criticised for its contradictions:

- Moral strictness versus social hypocrisy
- Progress and wealth versus poverty and exploitation
- Religious faith versus scientific skepticism
- Ideal womanhood versus female oppression

Conclusion

Victorian society was rich in terms of social and scientific awareness, Victorians remained deeply connected to their own culture and innovation. We still have the larger reflections Victorian innovation in arts, architecture, culture and innovation. It remained a foreground for the twentieth century literary and cultural landscape.