

Victorian Literature

Victorian literature is characterised by its elements of Social realism in its writings. The novels from this period showcased complicated lives in which hard work, perseverance, love and luck register triumph in the end. Besides, they were also inclined towards improving nature with a central moral lesson at heart. The new scientific discoveries of the period also impacted literature; Charles Darwin, *Origins of Species*, in particular, remained famous.

Victorian Novelists

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) was, arguably, the most famous novelist of the period. He not only created some of the most memorable literary characters but also criticised the excesses of the period in his works. His famous works are *Oliver Twist*, *Great expectations*, *David Copperfield*. His novels portrayed the hardships of the middle class and other social issues. Some of his memorable characters are Oliver Twist, Tiny Tim, Lady Havisham, Mr Micawber and David Copperfield. Dickens loved the 'rags to riches stories' as portrayed in *Oliver Twist* and *David Copperfield*. He frequently criticised the social evils of Victorian society and expressed his views in his remarkable humour.

George Eliot (1819-1880), was also one of the leading novelists of the Victorian era. Mary Ann Evans used the pen name 'George Eliot' (a male name) so that she could be taken seriously. Her major works are *Adam Bede*, *Mill on the Floss*,

Middlemarch, *Silas Marner* etc. Her novels are remarkable for the portrayal of rural life with the elements of realism and psychological insights.

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863) is famous for his satirical novel, *Vanity Fair* which presented a panoramic view of Victorian England. His other works are *The Luck of Bary Lyndon*, *The Book of snobs*, *Pendennis* etc. Thackeray wrote in the realistic tradition as opposed to the exaggerated sentimentality of some of the writers of his period.

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) was an English novelist and poet. His famous novels are *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*. Many of his novels concern tragic characters struggling against their passions and social circumstances, and they are often set in the fictional town called Wessex. He criticised Victorian society, particularly the declining status of rural people of England in his time. He is also remembered for his accessible lucid prose.

(To be continued...)