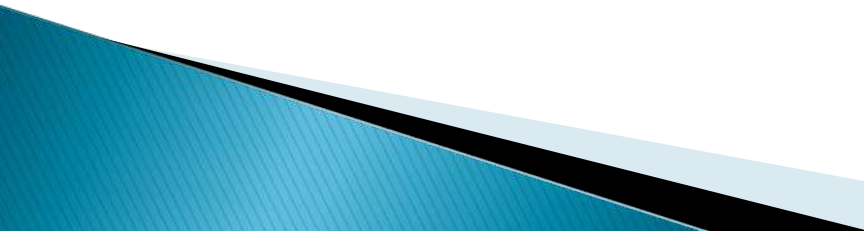


The Paradox of Progress: Gains and losses

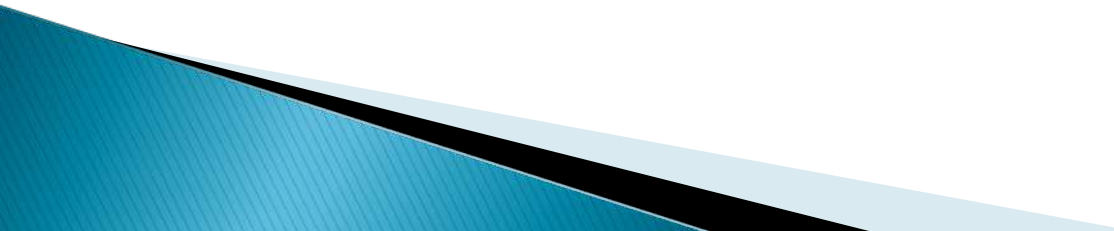
The Victorian Age (1830–1901)



- ▶ Pivotal city of western civilization shifted from Paris in the 18th century to London in the 2nd half of 19th century.
 - ▶ London expanded from 2 millions inhabitants when Victoria came to the throne to 6.5 millions when she died (in 1901).
 - ▶ Shift of life based on ownership of land to a modern economy based on trade and manufacturing
 - ▶ Minds and habits of ordinary English people were transformed.
- 

- . England was the first industrialized country, but its transformation was painful
- . Industrialization brought wealth and influence to England, captured markets all over the globe, developed colonies & by 1890 England owned a 1/4 of territory on earth-1 out of 4 people on earth was a subject of Queen Victoria.
- . Expansion came at the expense of human happiness; it caused the abandonment of the traditional rhythms of life and traditional patterns of human relationship

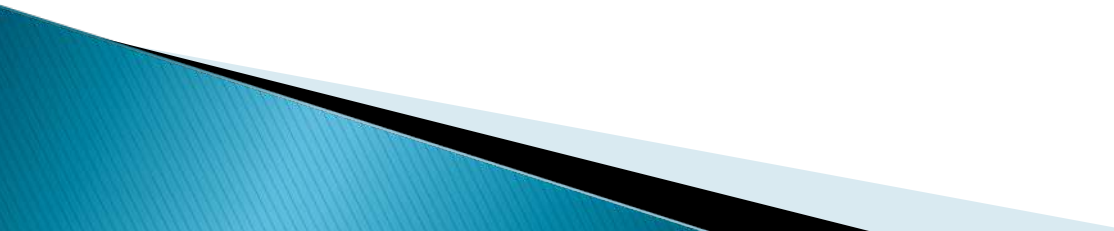
Queen Victoria and the Victorian Temper

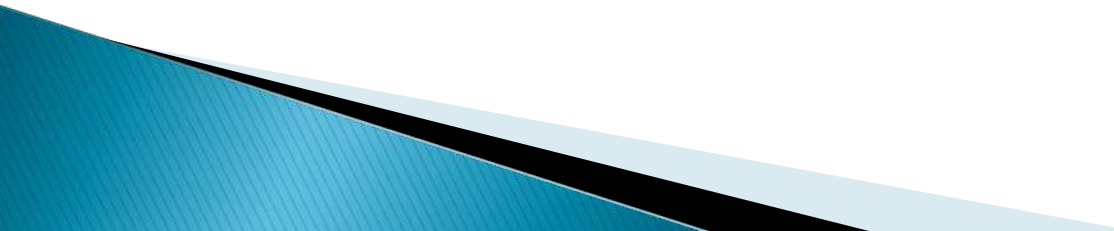
- ▶ Some qualities associated with the period are personal identification of the Queen: earnestness, moral responsibility, domestic propriety.
 - ▶ As a wife, mother of 9 children and widow, she represented the domestic fidelities her citizens cherished, embraced.
 - ▶ Victorian writers wanted to break away from the Romantics.
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The Victorian period, which is about 70 years in length is often divided into three parts:

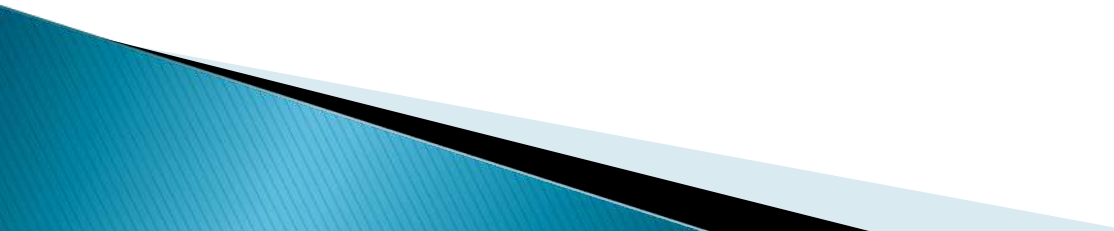
- ▶ The Early Period (1830-1848): A time of troubles
- ▶ The Mid-Victorian Period (1848-1870): Economic prosperity, the growth of empire and religious controversies
- ▶ The Late Period (1870-1901): Decay of Victorian values

The Early Period (1830-1848: A time of troubles

- ▶ **By 1830 economic distress brought England close to revolution**
 - ▶ **Manufacturing groups wanted to be involved in the political process. They led workers in agitating for reform**
- 

- ▶ Because of fears of revolutions, voting rights were extended to all males owning property worth 10 pounds or more in annual rent
 - ▶ Only the lower middle classes and not the working classes were allowed to vote until 1867 when the 2nd Reform Bill gave working classes voting rights.
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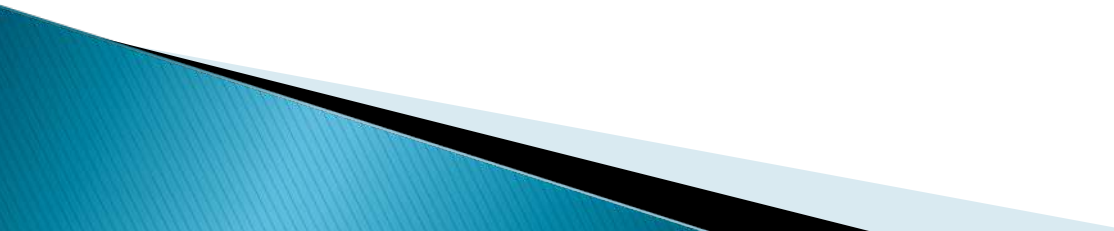
Industrialization brought:

- ▶ unemployment
 - ▶ abject poverty
 - ▶ high prices of bread
 - ▶ scarcity of food
 - ▶ rioting
 - ▶ terrible working conditions
 - ▶ workers and families crowded in slumps
 - ▶ unsanitary housing
 - ▶ women and children toiling in mines and factories for long unbearable hours.
 - ▶ An official report on child labor described five-year-old dragging heavy tubs of coal thru low-ceiling mine passages for 16 hours a day.
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The Mid-Victorian(1848-1870)

2. The Mid-Victorian Period (1848-1870): Economic prosperity, the growth of empire and religious controversies

- ▶ **Writers attacked the failures of the Victorian social scene, the evils of Victorian industry.**

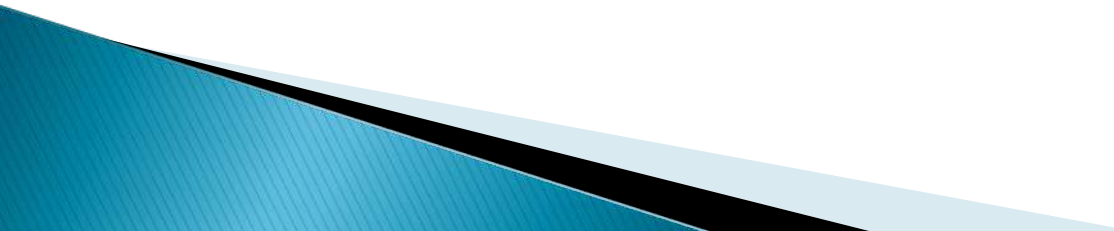
- ▶ It had harassing problems, but was also a period of prosperity.
 - ▶ Agriculture, trade and industry flourished.
 - ▶ Factory Acts in parliament restricted child labor, limited hours of employment and relatively improved working conditions.
 - ▶ Victorian complacency or stability or optimism usually refers to this mid-Victorian phase: “The Age of Improvement”
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- ▶ England's prosperity led to the enormous expansion of its influence: In 1876, Queen Victoria was named empress of India.
- ▶ England established a framework of education and government that preserves British influence in former colonies even today
- ▶ Expansion of British empire viewed as a moral responsibility to English people, often referred to as "the Whiteman's burden." To Queen Victoria herself, the imperial mission was "to protect the poor natives and advance civilization"

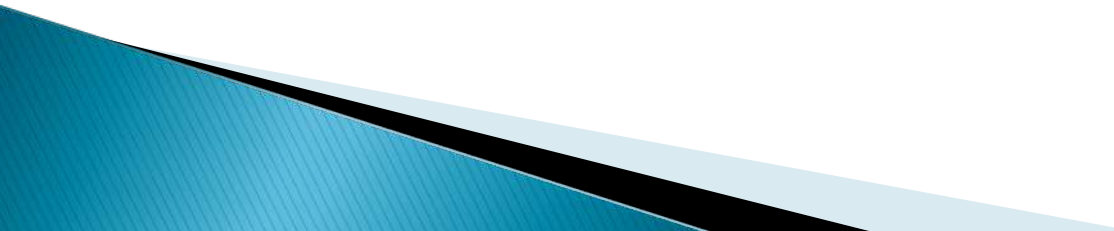
The Rise of Etheism

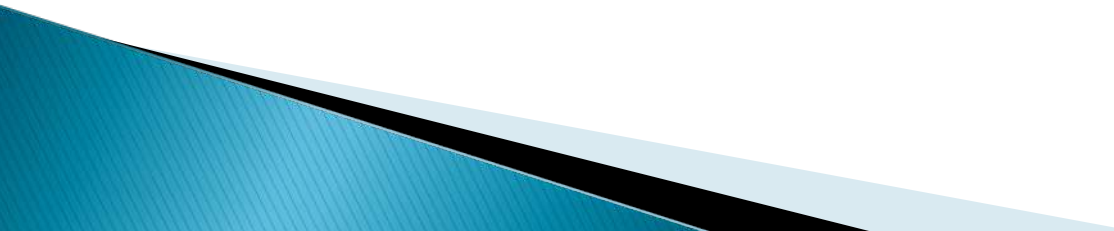
- ▶ Increasing debate about religious beliefs: **Jeremy Bentham's (1748-1832)** saw religion as an outmoded superstition.
- ▶ Charles Darwin's theory on the origin of species and the descent of man-The Origin of Species (1859), The Descent of Man (1871) challenged religious beliefs.

3. The Late Period (1870–1901): Decay of Victorian values

- ▶ Victorians saw this phase as the time of serenity and security, the age of house parties and long weekends in the country.
 - ▶ The apex of British imperialism was reached in this last decade.
 - ▶ It also saw rebellions, massacres, bungled wars in various colonies
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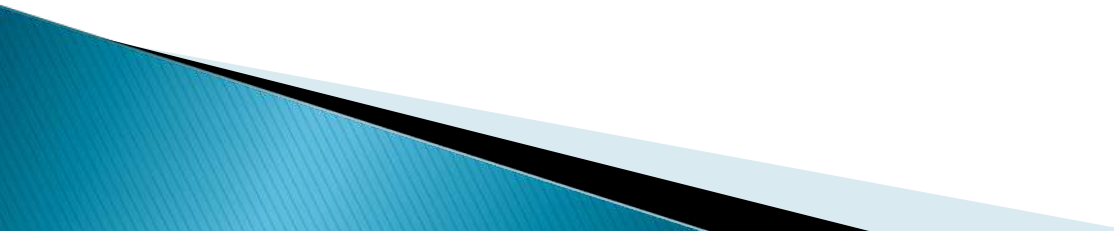
The Role of Women

- ▶ Women could not vote or hold political office: **Voted first in 1918.**
 - ▶ Men could divorce their wives for adultery, but wives could divorce their husbands only if adultery is combined with **cruelty**, **bigamy**, **incest**, or **bestiality**.
 - ▶ Divorce was too expensive for ordinary people.
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- ▶ Limited educational and employment opportunities for women. This led to the “Woman Question” and challenged of Long established assumptions about women’s role.
 - ▶ Bad working conditions and unemployment drove thousands of women into prostitution, which became increasingly professionalized in the 19th century.
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- ▶ Only occupation for unmarried middle-class citizens was governess with minimal wages, no security of employment, and isolation within the household.
- ▶ By the end of Victoria's reign, women could take degrees at 12 universities or colleges, and could study but not earn a degree at Oxford and Cambridge.

The Novel

- ▶ The novel was the dominant form of Literature.
 - ▶ Novelists addressed a large social world that comprised variety of classes and social settings.
 - ▶ They presented a world where material conditions indicate social position, where money defines opportunity, where social class enforces strong sense of stratification, yet where chances of class mobility exist
- 

- ▶ Main plot of novelists focuses on a protagonist who struggles to determine his/her place in society: tension is between the protagonist and society as he/she aspires for love, social position etc. Women struggle for self-realization in the context of social restraints imposed on her. e.g Jane Eyre, Isabel Archer, Tess of the d'Urbervilles.
- ▶ **Some of the novelists are Charlotte Bronte, Jane Austen, George Eliot, Charles Dickens etc.**

Poetry

- ▶ Victorian poetry developed in the context of the novel. Poets sought new ways of telling stories in verse.
- ▶ Victorian poets developed in the shadow of Romanticism.
- ▶ By 1837 when Victoria ascended the throne, all major Romantic poets had died, except Wordsworth.
- ▶ All Victorian poets show the strong influence of Romantics, but did not measure up in terms of imagination.
- ▶ - Victorian most distinctive achievement is poetry of mood and character.
- ▶ * **Some Victorian poets are: Alfred Tennyson, Christiana Rossetti, Robert Browning, Thomas Hardy...etc**

Victorian Drama and Theatre

- ▶ Unlike other main genres, plays were written mostly in the last decade of the period.
 - ▶ Bernard Shaw began writing plays that addressed social issues.
 - ▶ In the 1890s, Shaw and Oscar Wilde transformed British theatre with their comic plays
 - ▶ Their plays attacked Victorian pretence and hypocrisy.
 - ▶ Some Victorian playwrights are George Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde
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