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Topic: Women Novelists of the Victorian Age/ Novels of the Victorian Period.

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Women Novelists of the Victorian Age/ Novels of the Victorian Period

The novel was the characteristic literary form in the Victorian age; just as drama was especially suited to the genius of the Elizabethan age. The novel in the Victorian age showed great variety. We have domestic novel, historical novel, psychological novel, adventurous novel and series novels of purpose dealing with social problems. The fiction had become the dominant literary form in the Victorian literature and the problem of recording even its main types become difficult. However, the main contribution of Victorian novels practically developed by some women novelists who are the remarkable achievements rather than the men novelist during the Victorian Age. Though the development of women novelists practically begins with Fanny Burney and ends with Jane Austen. But the remarkable contributions to the art of Victorian fiction are added to the three sister of Bronte, George Eliot and Mrs Elizabeth Gaskell.

Charlotte Bronte was the earliest of the Victorian women novelist in the popular sense of the term. Her talent was more diffuse than that of her sister, Emily Bronte. But she made her mark through a number of novels: Jane Eyre, Shirley, Villette and The Professor. "Jane Eyre" is the story of a governess. Jane Eyre goes to the house of Rochester, with whom she falls in love.

Emily Bronte, Charlotte's younger sister, was both a novelist and a poetess. Emily was definitely more talented than Charlotte. Wuthering Heights, the single novel written by Emily Bronte, is highly unique creation. It is conceived on the highest poetic level. Heathcliff and Catherine are immortal lovers. The story has a wild and cruel reality, and is original beyond any other novel in the century. It is a novel without predecessors and successors.

George Eliot(1814-1880) is the pen - name of Mary Ann Evans. She brought to the novel rare intellectual quality. She was highly educated. In

her first novel- "Scenes from Clerical life", she used her pen name George Eliot for the first time. She is well known for her novels Adam Bede, The Mill on the Floss, Silas Mariner, Romola and Middlemarch. She nearly married Herbert Spencer, the philosopher and he found her 'morbidly intellectual'. The problem for George Eliot as a novelist was whether her intuitions or her intellect would ultimately gain control. Ultimately, her intellect won, and she failed as a novelist because of her intellectually.

However, George Eliot is at her best when she writes about her personal life in Adam Bede and The Mill on the Floss. The Portrait of her father appears in Adam Bede . She reproduced her own girlhood relations with her brother Isaac in the relations of Tom and Maggie Tulliver in her novel The Mill on the Floss. Her chief contribution to the development of English novel is the psychological analysis of human motives and desires. She could depict the psychology of a character in growth. "The Mill on The Floss" is said to be her masterpiece, although Silas Mariner is a fine achievement. Middlemarch and Daniel Doranda describes life in higher classes of society.

Mrs Elizabeth Gaskell(1810- 1865) is well known for her novels, Mary Barton and North and South. These novels deal with the life of the working class in an industrial town. Mrs Gaskell had no political theory or affiliation like Disraeli. She dramatizes forcefully some of the basic problems of working-class life. She contrasts industrial England with rural England.

Thus, the Victorian age offers us some interesting and powerful women novelists. Their novels attained an all-round perfection and was sufficient to satisfy the new hunger for intellectual food, due to the growing education of the masses.