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Important Victorian Ideas and
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Julia Prikoszovits

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1. INTRODUCTION

When reflecting on the Victorian Age, the majority of people would associate the term 'transition' in the first place. Indeed, the '[t]he Victorian age was first and foremost an age of transition' (Mitchell, xiv). Before 1837, the year Queen Victoria I. succeeded to the throne, Great Britain was mainly an agricultural society. Approximately 70% of its inhabitants lived in rural areas and were bound to a strict feudal system, and the illiteracy rate was quite high, as only half of Britain's population was able to read and write accurately. By the turn of the century a whole new world had emerged. The majority of people lived in bigger cities, and used the underground railways in order to get to their workplaces, usually in factories or mills. Electricity and telegraph messages had facilitated daily routines, and education had become compulsory. Not only were there social or economic changes, but also the political platform had been transformed. Great Britain had become a democracy, and people seized the opportunity to take part in political decision-making, and to contribute to the political discourse. However, the social, economic and political transformations did not only bring about improvements. In fact, these changes did also encourage class division, exploitation, as well as repression of various social groups¹. Victorian culture, its ideas and assumptions were, thus, regarded as highly controversial.

In the course of the nineteenth century reality had so profoundly changed that Victorians were seeking ways of accommodating themselves to their new environment². Writing literature was one way of coping with the extensive transformations of this particular epoch. Not unlike the other members of Victorian society, novelists and poets responded in various different ways to the developments that took place on the social, political, economic and scientific level. As literature always tries to reflect reality, it comes as no surprise that different attitudes and opinions towards these changes can be detected in Victorian poetry.

¹ Cf. Mitchell, xiii.

² Cf. Altick, 73.

Due to nineteenth-century social and political transformations which improved the living conditions of the lower classes and which extended franchise to men, the position of women in society and their role in politics were questioned. It was the only social group which did not witness any improvements. So, this topic became a major issue to be discussed in Victorian poetry. Many poems seem to promote the ideal image of the Victorian woman, and / or allude to the concept of the "Geschlechtscharakter" which tries to justify the existing inequality between men and women. One of the most famous pieces of literature written at this time, Alfred Tennyson's poem "The Lady of Shalott", is a poem indirectly reflecting the image of the "The Angel of the House". By describing the life of the Lady of Shalott, a cursed medieval woman, Tennyson alludes to Victorian ideas, attitudes of morality, and the Victorian code of behaviour which women were supposed to follow. Not only Tennyson, but also Robert Browning seems to propagate the image of the ideal Victorian woman. In his poem "My Last Duchess – Ferrara" he presents a rather narrow-minded and antiquated attitude towards the role of women in society, and refers to topics such as women's sexual repression, and their subordinate role within the family as well as within society. However, Victorian poetry is not only marked by accounts of women's repression - emancipation is also a topic dealt with by many, mostly female, poets such as Elizabeth Barrett-Browning. The request for accepting women as equal is submitted in her poems "To George Sand – A Desire" and "Aurora Leigh", where she tries to promote the stereotype of "the new woman".

Other prominent features in nineteenth-century poetry were the Industrial Revolution, and the technical progress which caused tremendous economic changes. Several poets devoted themselves to describe the positive aspects of modern progress and their impacts on daily life. Alexander Anderson was among those who attached importance to the advantages of the Industrial Revolution to mankind. Especially in his poems "A Song of Progress" and "The Spirit of the Times" his enthusiasm becomes apparent. Besides praising

the effects of modern progress on the position of workers in society, Anderson refers to the self-confidence that had developed among members of the lower classes, and discusses topics such as economic growth and urbanization. Nevertheless, Victorian poetry is not entirely enthusiastic about modern progress. Critical reflections on the economic transformations and their side effects can as well be detected in nineteenth-century literature. Many poems paint a rather dark picture of the Victorian working conditions and their impacts on culture. Two poems of minor poets, namely Frederick William Orde Ward's poem 'Progress?', and Robert Leighton's 'Modern Progress' can be referred to in this context, as both works prove to be representative poetry commenting discerningly on the technical achievements and economic changes.

The positions of religion and science in society were other issues which raised vivid discussions among Victorians, because the belief in the new scientific theories contrasted strongly with the faith in God, and the accuracy of the Bible. This struggle, which finally resulted in the 'crisis of faith', is therefore a major topic ventilated by Victorian authors. The Victorian poet Gerard Manley Hopkins seems to use his poetry for appealing to his contemporaries to confess their faith, and not to believe in the scientific theories. In his poem "God's Grandeur" Hopkins puts special emphasis on the importance of religious belief, and stresses the existence of God. While Hopkins firmly rejected the scientific theories constructed by thinkers such as Darwin, Huxley, or Lyell, other poets, such as Matthew Arnold and Alexander Anderson seem to have been influenced by these ideas. Arnold's most famous poem "Dover Beach" makes allusions to Lyell's theory on the history of the earth, Alexander Anderson and Frederick William Orde Ward seem reflect on Darwin's works about the history of mankind. The fact that all three pieces of literature refer to scientific theories, admit the interpretation that these poets have accepted validity of the theories.

All poems mentioned above can be put in relation with the historical context, but, of course, do not necessarily mirror nineteenth-century reality, especially those pieces of literature which are not set in the Victorian Age, such as Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott", for example. However, as the poets are certainly influenced by the social standards and moral values set out by their contemporary society, it can be argued that all poems under consideration reflect, at least to some extent, the ideas of the nineteenth century. Allusions to the epoch's beliefs and ideas can, therefore, be detected in all pieces of literature.

2. THE VICTORIAN AGE

An accurate understanding of an era's literature depends to a greater or less[sic!] extent on a grasp of its historical context, but the danger of misreading and of anachronistic criticism increases when one deals with literature so intimately connected with contemporary life as was that of the Victorians (Altick, preface).

As Richard Altick suggests in his book *Victorian People and Ideas*, Victorian literature is strongly influenced by the Victorian Age, its ideas and concepts. Thus, an overview of the historical developments, the transformations that took place on the social, economic, political and scientific level must be provided here.

2.1. Economic changes

2.1.1. Industrial Revolution

The changes that took place on the economic level in nineteenth century Britain are often conveniently reduced to the term Industrial Revolution³. The word revolution stands for 'any extensive or drastic change' (Webster, 627). Indeed, the events that are aptly summarized to the term Industrial Revolution were radical as the series of events had completely overthrown the old economic system. In the course of the Victorian Age, there was a transition to a long-lasting and accelerated economic growth. Thus, it is true to speak of a revolution in the area of economy. The driving force behind the extensive changes was the series of new inventions that first revolutionized the textile industry, then boosted the heavy industries, and finally encouraged emergence of the electrical industry. The centre of the Industrial Revolution was London, from where the trend spread across the rest of Britain.

³ Cf. McCord, 77.

By the end of the eighteenth century London was the biggest city and the financial heart of the British economy⁴. It had the largest population and, therefore, London was the 'largest producer and consumer' (Ashworth, 225). Moreover, London was a conurbation surrounded by counties that all had well-developed industries. At the beginning of the nineteenth century most of the cities in the home-counties had already specialized in the production of particular items and had developed an efficient factory system, by which the process of production was dispersed, and different cities, towns or villages were responsible for a particular stage of the manufacturing process⁵. In this way the productivity was steadily increased, and the amount of products that could be manufactured augmented substantially. Increasing the productivity in order to produce a greater output of certain products was an imperative necessity, because the requirements of the growing population, especially in and around London, had to be met. Factories and mills of the textile industry were the first to adopt this factory system.

The textile industry was the first branch of the economy to be revolutionized, and it remained the motor throughout the Industrial Revolution. In 1764 James Hargreaves invented the spinning wheel which enabled automatic production of threads. Using the "spinning jenny", as he called the wooden machine, one worker was able to produce a number of threads with the same effort that was needed for the production of one thread. As the spinning wheel could easily be manufactured, spinning factories spread rapidly, and soon the supply of threads was enormous. The vast amount of threads had to be further processed, and that is why the weaving mills sprawled all across Britain. These innovations actuated the textile industry. However, it was not only the invention of the spinning wheel that caused a significant upturn in the textile industry, but also the fact that cotton could be acquired much more easily than before facilitated the development. A 'fundamental factor in the staggering rise of the British cotton industry was the massive increase in raw cotton production in the United States: from 2m lbs in 1791 to 182m lbs in 1821' (Ashworth, 226).

⁴ Cf. McCord, 317.

⁵ Cf. Ashworth, 225.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the ordinary “spinning jenny” was replaced by a new power loom and this provided the textile branch with another boost, because using this machine a worker could operate about 1,500 spindles at a time.

The ‘iron man’ allowed one person assisted by two or three boys or girls to operate 1,600 spindles as comfortably as that person had done previously for only 300 spindles. Where they were installed, the owners of the mills had to double the size of the plant in order to accommodate them (Ashworth, 226).

The new power loom, or “iron man” as the machine was also called, was manufactured from iron, so there was a growing demand for this raw material. In this way, the textile industry actuated the heavy industries (iron, coal and steel). Vast amounts of iron were required for the construction of the new power looms, and coal was extracted in abundance as the huge looms were no longer driven by water power but by steam power, because of its many advantages. Steam power was quite reliable and it had become quite cheap in the 1830s and 1840s⁶. Britain’s consumption of coal was immense by the middle of the nineteenth century, as it was five times as much as the consumption of the rest of Europe. By 1800 only 15m tons of coal were needed, but by 1850 the coal consumption was five times higher with about 70m tons⁷. The only disadvantage of the use of coal was the environmental pollution. It is not surprising that Victorians were looking for finer and cleaner energy forms. So, by the turn of the century the electric motor, based on principles developed by Werner von Siemens in 1860, replaced the steam engine.

2.1.2. Working conditions

⁶ Cf. Ashworth, 227.

⁷ Cf. Ashworth, 228.

Industrialization boosted the economy and made Britain “the workshop of the world”. However, it created horrible working conditions for men, women and children. Working in a factory - may it be a spinning or weaving mill, or a plant producing any other necessity for daily life - meant working about twelve hours a day for extremely low wages, and risking health damages.

A typical factory day started at about 6 or 7 am and lasted to 6 or 7 pm. It was only interrupted by the half-hour morning break and the one-hour dinner break in the evening. Later in the century, after successful negotiations of trade unions had improved labour conditions, workers were able to leave the factory at noon as well. They could enjoy their meals at home, as the worker’s lodges were often built right next to the factories⁸. Although the working day was quite long, factory work was often considered to be fairly agreeable, as workers were not supervised by the factory owner. Instead, their working rhythm was dictated by the machines. Once workers got used to their daily routine, they could talk to their colleagues in order to make their working day more enjoyable, and it was often pointed out that “[an] appealing element of factory work, for some workers, was the group spirit that developed when large numbers of people were engaged in the same occupation` (Mitchell, 57). However, the group spirit that may have developed among the workers in the factories did not really make up for the poor and health-damaging working conditions men, women and children were confronted with.

Any man who has stood at twelve o'clock at the single narrow door-way, which serves as the place of exit for the hands employed in the great cotton-mills, must acknowledge, that an uglier set of men and women, of boys and girls, taking them in the mass, it would be impossible to congregate in a smaller compass. Their complexion is sallow and pallid--with a peculiar flatness of feature, caused by the want of a proper quantity of adipose substance to cushion out the cheeks. Their stature low--the average height of four hundred men, measured at different times, and different places, being five feet six inches. Their limbs slender, and playing badly and ungracefully. A very

⁸ Cf. Mitchell, 42.

general bowing of the legs. Great numbers of girls and women walking lamely or awkwardly, with raised chests and spinal flexures. Nearly all have flat feet, accompanied with a down-tread, differing very widely from the elasticity of action in the foot and ankle, attendant upon perfect formation. Hair thin and straight -- many of the men having but little beard, and that in patches of a few hairs, much resembling its growth among the red men of America (Gaskell, n.p.).

Working conditions obviously left marks on the physical condition of workers. Their health was damaged by dim light, 'cotton dust or metal fragments in the air, by heat, by damp, and by crippling chemicals such as the lead in pottery works and the sulfur in matchmaking' (Mitchell, 57). Dirty work was not only done by adults, but also by children as the employment of children had a lot of advantages for the factory owner. Children were a cheap workforce and they could be recruited easily. In the decades before the Industrial Revolution the birth rate and the mortality rate were quite high. Many people, especially workers, died middle-aged and left their children as orphans⁹. Having lost their parents, these children were often forced to earn money on their own.

Millowners made agreements with local authorities in impoverished areas to take orphan children [...] off their hands. They were lodged in dormitories and worked shifts, twelve hours at time, day and night (Mitchell, 43).

Children were also employed because their small hands and bodies were needed for particular tasks, such as the cleaning of machines, crawling into factory chimneys or mining shafts etc. Thus, they were appallingly exploited although there were several laws restricting child labour.

Already in 1802 the first Factory Act was passed which regulated the work of children. In particular, it regulated the work of orphans under the age of twelve who worked in a factory. The law demanded compulsory classes and a restriction of working hours to twelve hours a day. Another act passed in

⁹ Cf. Mitchell, 43.

1833 forbade 'employment of children under the age of nine in textile mills, and it limited the work of children between ages nine and twelve to forty-eight hours a week' (Mitchell, 44). In the second half of the nineteenth century, as more and more industries were added to the list that forbade employment of children, child labour could be limited considerably. From 1850 onwards several laws were passed and a lot of industries were regulated, so that by 1901 a child had to be aged twelve or older in order to be able to be employed in a factory, a mine or a workshop¹⁰.

Children were not the only ones being exploited. Women who were also a cheap workforce were confronted with harsh working conditions in the factories and mills as well. They did not work less than men; it was actually quite common that women did the same work which men did. They were not only employed in factories, but they also worked in shops, as domestic servants, midwives, schoolmistresses, broom makers, butchers, blacksmiths, glove makers, laundry workers, carriers and various other professions. Thus, it is not surprising that women accounted for one third of the total workforce receiving regular income¹¹. In some branches, such as in the textile industry and in the domestic sector women were employed almost exclusively. 'The needle traders were (after domestic service and factory work) the third major source of employment of women' (Mitchell, 62). Women who got a job as a needle trader could consider themselves fortunate, because in this job, after several years of apprenticeship, women could earn a considerable income. 'When [the woman] reached senior status in a good house and was supervising younger workers, her wages could be as high as 80 pounds per year' (Mitchell, 62). Compared to other jobs - domestic servants, for example, usually earned not more than about 25 pounds per year - needlework happened to be very profitable¹².

¹⁰ Cf. Mitchell, 45.

¹¹ Cf. Mitchell, 47.

¹² Cf. Mitchell, 55.

2.2. The Victorian society

Questions of class are fundamental to nineteenth-century British history. Class was a pervasive part of contemporaries' world view, and class distinctions were deeply embedded in the social fabric. For much of the century class was not only the single most important form of social categorization, but also the bedrock of understandings of political and social change [...] (Hewitt, 305)

The Victorian society is most commonly divided into classes. Legally there were the two classes, namely the aristocrats and the commoners. In fact, there were three classes: the upper class, also called the gentry, the middle or industrial class which emerged in the course of the century and the working class¹³. Every aspect of life was determined by class, as each set its own standards concerning moral values, family life, education, clothing, food, housing and recreation facilities, and class members were supposed to conform to these rules¹⁴.

2.2.1. The upper class

At the top of the social pyramid of Victorian society one can find the aristocracy or gentry. The class was also called "landed class" as they were landowners, and derived their incomes from dividing their properties and leasing their farm estates to the members of the lower classes. The estate as well as the title of the aristocratic family was usually inherited by the eldest son in order to guarantee high social status for the offspring. Together with the inheritance of the title also the seat in the House of Lords, the Upper House of Parliament, and various other privileges were passed on. For example, a peer 'could not be arrested for debt' (Mitchell, 23), nor would he be judged by any ordinary court if he committed a crime. Instead, a "jury of

¹³ Cf. Hewitt, 306.

¹⁴ Cf. Mitchell, 17.

his peers” would sit in judgment on him¹⁵. Among the peers the title of the duke was the highest. Besides, the peerage consisted of marquesses, earls, viscounts and barons.

Ranks and Titles				
Peers:	Title	Address	Wife	Address
Duke	The Duke of August	Duke, or Your Grace	The Duchess of August	Duchess, or Your Grace
Marquess	The Marquess of July	Lord July, or My Lord	The Marchionesse of July	Lady July
Earl	The Earl of June	Lord June, or My Lord	The Countess of June	Lady June
Viscount	The Viscount May	Lord May, or My Lord	The Viscountess of May	Lady May
Baron	The Lord April	Lord April	Lady April	Lady April
Titled, But Not Peers:				
Baronet	Sir Thomas March, Bt.	Sir Thomas	Lady March	Lady March
Knight	Sir Thomas February	Sir Thomas	Lady February	Lady February

Figure 1: Ranks and titles of peerage ¹⁶

While the eldest sons were blessed with the heredity of the title and privileges, the younger sons were expected to find professions in order to keep up the living standard of the class they were born into, and to which they got used to. Most commonly they made their fortune by entering positions in the state system, as administrators, clergymen or military officers¹⁷, and became highly regarded members of the society.

The standard of living enjoyed by the upper class families was actually very high, but could easily be kept up by the high incomes derived by renting out

¹⁵ Cf. Mitchell, 23.

¹⁶ Cf. Mitchell, 23.

¹⁷ Cf. Mitchell, 22.

their estates to the lower classes. Aristocrats of the highest rank, such as dukes or marquesses, had an income of about £ 30,000 or more, while the families of lower rank had to get by with £ 10,000. The largest amount of money was needed to keep the town mansions, usually in Park Lane or Piccadilly, and / or the country estates in good condition¹⁸. An appropriate house for an upper class family had at least ten rooms - it had to be equipped with a kitchen and a dining room, two rooms for the servants to sleep, three family bedrooms, a nursery, a library and a drawing room¹⁹. Among the aristocrats, the families of the peers normally occupied the biggest town houses. These mansions were needed as they spent most of the year in London in order to be close to the parliament, and because the space was needed for the receptions or balls the members of aristocracy were expected to give, especially during the "London season" which took place from May to beginning of August²⁰.

Dinner parties were usually very formal events, because not only the course of dishes, but also the behaviour of guests and hosts was prescribed by etiquette. The appropriate hour for giving dinner parties was between 7:30 pm and 8:30 pm. Guests were normally waiting in the drawing room for the host to announce which gentlemen would escort which lady to the dining room. After dinner, which usually consisted of three or four courses, men and women separated, and had conversations until about 11 pm, the time guests were supposed to leave²¹. Dinner parties, receptions or balls were perfect opportunities for the presentation of the fashionable clothes. Members of the upper class had their attire specially-tailored and fitted, and always wore clothes in the latest style. That is why the upper class stood out from the rest of the society, because the members of the lower classes had to sew or change their garments themselves, and so their clothes often fitted badly²². Not only clothing, but also the diet revealed class and status. As regards the food, what distinguished the upper classes from the middle and working

¹⁸ Cf. Mitchell, 34.

¹⁹ Cf. Mitchell, 110.

²⁰ Cf. Mitchell, 152.

²¹ Cf. Mitchell, 127-129.

²² Cf. Mitchell, 137-8.

classes was the eating of meat and dessert. In fact, English upper classes enjoyed two or three different kinds of meat in every hot meal that was served, while the members of lower classes ate meat every now and then²³.

Class, status and social background were not only conveyed through food or clothing. First and foremost, it was conveyed through education. In upper class families it was common to

[...] put aside £ 150 a year for each son, from the day of his birth, in order to send him to Eton; and to save £ 100 a year for each daughter to cover the expenses of her social debut (Mitchell, 34).

Sons enjoyed expensive education in the public schools such as Eton or Rugby, while daughters were normally educated at home by a governess²⁴. Girls did not receive a scientific education as upper class women were not expected to work later in life. Although upper class women did not pursue a profession, their schedules were tight as they had social obligations²⁵ such as representing the family, and accompanying their husbands to ball or receptions. These events normally kept parents apart from their offspring for the most of the time. So, children were not brought up by their parents, but by nannies and nurses, and they even had their own floors in the house separate from those of their parents.

Children were separated from adults to give them a sheltered and structured routine and to train their character. Adults were freed for their own pleasures and responsibilities, and for the London season and foreign trade that were an expected part of aristocratic life (Mitchell, 146).

²³ Cf. Mitchell, 125.

²⁴ Cf. Mitchell, 24.

²⁵ Cf. Mitchell, 141.

While children of upper class members lived a life separate from their parents, middle class children enjoyed a secure infancy sheltered by their affectionate mothers and fathers.

2.2.2. The middle class

The idea of the typical middle class family, of father, mother and children living together happily, was developed during the Victorian period. Only the middle class families could live together - this is what makes this social group distinct. Upper and working class children were separated from their parents fairly early, only middle class children could truly enjoy and experience family life.

There were strict rules and firm ideas about how life should be²⁶. The father was regarded as the head of the family, and children, servants, and even the wife had to accept his authority, as they were all dependent on his income. When the father was away, the mother took over control, and became responsible for making the decisions concerning family life. Married middle class women did not really have much to do - they did not have any social obligations such as women of the upper class, nor were they expected to do any work such as females of the working class. Furthermore, all household chores were normally done by the servants, and so it is not surprising that middle class mothers could concentrate their entire attention on looking after the children, and on organizing family life. Women's contribution was often invisible, as it primarily took place in the privacy of their homes. They

[...] helped maintain the family's social and commercial credit through demonstrating the status of the family by their display and demeanour in social life, in orchestrating appropriate marriages for sons and daughters, as well as bringing up

²⁶ Cf. Mitchell, 141.

children and managing an appropriately genteel servant-keeping household (D´Cruze, 263).

Daily tasks of middle class women included arrangement of the family prayers which usually took place before breakfast, and instructing the servants about the routine of the day²⁷. Moreover, the children´s clothing for the “children´s hour” had to be selected, and on Sundays the tea hour and the churchgoing needed to be prepared²⁸. It seems that there were firm ideas about women´s daily routines, and their behaviour. In fact, the image of the ideal Victorian middle class woman, “The Angel in the House”, developed in the first half of the nineteenth century. Contemporaries firmly believed that

[i]n three particulars, [...], the effect of the female character is most important. First, In contributing daily and hourly to the comfort of the husbands, or parents, or brothers and sisters, and of other relations, connections, and friends, in the intercourse of domestic life, under every vicissitude of sickness and health, of joy and affliction. Secondly, In forming and improving the general manners, dispositions, and conduct of the other sex, by society and example. Thirdly, In modeling the human mind during the early stages of its growth, and fixing, while it is yet ductile, its growing principles of action; children of each sex being, in general, under maternal tuition during their childhood, and girls until they become women (Gisborne, 12-13).

Apart from social and moral standards, members of the middle class attached great importance to education. Families of the upper middle class usually sent their sons to elite schools, or at least to the nearest grammar schools, as they wanted to guarantee that their sons could pursue professions equally respected as the ones of their fathers - respectability was the most important aim to be achieved by members of middle class. In fact, attitudes towards family life and moral values made a person or a family “middle class” – ‘[...] money was not the defining factor’ (Mitchell, 20).

²⁷ Cf. Mitchell, 143.

²⁸ Cf. Mitchell, 144.

Although members of the middle class shared the same views and had the same attitudes and morals standards, there was still an internal division within this particular class due to the different levels of income. Members of the upper middle class were clergyman of the Church of England, military officers, university professors, architects, or they had jobs in prestigious branches like law or medicine. Normally, the income of these upper middle class men was between £ 2,000 and £ 1,000²⁹. With this sum, the upper middle class family could afford to live in a town house with about ten rooms, three or more servants, and the elite boarding schools and university for their sons³⁰. Civil servants of lower social rank or less successful businessmen were paid £ 800 - £ 600, and they were considered as members of the typical middle class. Men of the lower middle class such as shopkeepers, police inspectors, bank clerks and small businessmen had an income between £ 300 and £ 150. Therefore, their living conditions were much lower. Lower middle class families usually lived in semidetached houses or row houses in the suburbs of the big cities, and usually sent their children to local grammar schools³¹. Living conditions of lower middle class families usually resembled those of skilled workers, and this is the reason why no clear class line could be drawn.

2.2.3. The working class

Skilled workers such as workers in shipbuilding or steelmaking, but also skilled artisans such as mechanics, scientific instrument makers or carpenters earned between £ 200 and £ 100 per year³². Thus, they position themselves on the borderline between the lower middle class and working class³³. The skilled workers usually made up about 15 % of the working class, which used to be the largest group of Victorian society including

²⁹ Cf. Mitchell, 21.

³⁰ Cf. Mitchell, 35.

³¹ Cf. Mitchell, 36.

³² Cf. Mitchell, 37.

³³ Cf. Mitchell, 20.

everybody doing physical labour. Apart from the skilled workers, there were also semi-skilled, unskilled and agricultural labourers. So, an internal division also existed within the working class. However, the differences concerning living conditions between the various subclasses could not be noticed at first sight, as they were not revealed through housing conditions or clothes, but rather through aspects such as the food, family life or children's education.

Typical annual incomes of members of the working class	
Highly skilled mechanics and artisans	£150 - £300
Skilled workers, including cabinetmakers, typesetters, carpenters, locomotive drivers, senior dressmakers	£75 - £100
Average earnings for semiskilled working men and for skilled women in factories and shops	£50 - £75
Seamen, navies, longshoremen, some domestic servants	£45
Farm laborers, soldiers, typists	£25
Lowest rank shop assistants, domestic servants, needleworkers	£12 - £20

Figure 2: Annual incomes³⁴

While semi-skilled and unskilled workers often had to live on the breadline, because their income was less than £ 50 a year, skilled labourers enjoyed a comfortable life with an adequate diet. However, by adequate diet working class members understood meals that could be cooked out of bread, butter, cheese, salt, potatoes and some vegetables. Only these comestibles could easily be bought with the limited family budget³⁵. Meat or bacon was eaten only once in a while. When the family budget was tight, usually

[m]en, the major wage-earners, were entitled to their 'relishes': a kipper or a chop. Mothers' priorities were first to feed the husbands and then their children. If necessary they went without food themselves (D'Cruze, 259).

³⁴ Cf. Mitchell, 34.

³⁵ Cf. Mitchell, 122.

This is not surprising, since the men had to do the physical labour in order to earn money to support the family. As food was very important, people even saved tiny amounts because they knew that these could decide on whether a hot meal would be served by the end of the day, or not³⁶. If money was so short that not enough food could be bought, workers would send off their children and wives to work. They were expected to earn additional money so that the family budget could be balanced. This is only true for children of unskilled workers - children of skilled workers did not have to work, they could go to school until the age of twelve, and even serve an apprenticeship³⁷. While living conditions were distinct, housing conditions were practically the same for all members of the working class. The family normally lived in a row house which had two rooms, one downstairs, and one on the first floor. These row houses were relatively small, and extremely crowded due to their availability and the reasonable price that even the migrants from the countryside could pay.

Workers' working and living conditions were considerably improved in the second half of the nineteenth century due to the decline of living costs – these were reduced by the availability of cheap food from North America, and by the mass production of reasonably-priced clothes and shoes³⁸. Also housing conditions were improved in the second half of the nineteenth century. By 1850 the majority of row houses were not equipped with indoor plumbing or electricity. Instead, people used small fireplaces for cooking or heating their homes. It comes as no surprise that the lack of plumbing and sanitary facilities caused severe public health problems, which then encouraged installation of piped water, gas, light and sewer tunnels³⁹. As living and housing conditions were already exactly the same as those of middle-class families, it was not unusual for workers to cross the border to middle class.

³⁶ Cf. D'Cruze, 259.

³⁷ Cf. Mitchell, 18.

³⁸ Cf. Mitchell, 38.

³⁹ Cf. Mitchell, 29.

2.2.4. Transformation of society

The classes of Victorian society were not fixed. In fact, society was slowly transformed in the course of the nineteenth century. Due to the growth of population from 8.5 million in 1801 to 32.5 million by 1900, the changes of the economy and the mass migration, some classes had grown substantially⁴⁰. The classes that signified considerable improvements were the middle and the working classes, while the gentry was confronted with an eclipse due to the economic, political and technical changes⁴¹.

The Industrial Revolution encouraged accumulation of factories and industrial areas, so it is not surprising that there was a heavy demand for cheap workforce in the bigger cities. This development prompted many people from the countryside to move to urban centres, as they wanted to find jobs in the numerous factories and / or mills. At the beginning of the nineteenth century far more people worked in domestic households and in the agricultural sector, but at the end of the century labour force in dependent employment accounted for about 85%, of which 75% were manual workers⁴². So it can be said that '[...] over the century [the working class] became predominantly urban and wage-earning' (Hewitt, 308).

Besides the working class, also the middle class increased substantially. Skilled workers and talented artisans, who already 'occupied the borderline territory between working and middle classes' (Mitchell, 20), could earn up to £ 200 a year. So they could send their children to school and let them serve an apprenticeship. Therefore, successive generations of skilled workers were likely to become members of the middle class. The crossing of class border

⁴⁰ Cf. D´Cruze, 255.

⁴¹ Cf. Hewitt, 308.

⁴² Cf. Hewitt, 309.

was not the only reason why the middle class grew from 15% to 25% of the total population. New professions emerged in the course of the Industrial Revolution, and these civil engineers, merchants, bankers, accountants and traders represented the new middle class⁴³.

Reasons for the growth of the working and middle classes are obvious, and so are the reasons for the reduction of the upper class. In the 1850s the typical middle class jobs became more profitable, as the average incomes increased due to the successful negotiations of trade unions and other collective organizations. Not only did these organizations improve the contract conditions, but they also helped people to gain political power⁴⁴. In this way, upper middle class families dislodged upper class members from their leading position in society.

The pre-eminence which the upper classes enjoyed at the start of the century was progressively if slowly eroded. The dismantling of the system of 'Old Corruption' threw the aristocracy back onto reliance on the land, while new forms of wealth emerged to rival them (Hewitt, 309).

However, the aristocracy could not rely on the land any more, as land rental values and prices for agricultural products were gradually declining in the second half of the nineteenth century. By 1900 only half of the wealthiest men in Britain were landowners, the other half made their fortune with jobs in commerce and in the financial sector⁴⁵.

In the course of the nineteenth century the borders between the various classes were blurred. Successful middle class businessmen acquired possession of estates and entered the landowning class, and educated

⁴³ Cf. Mitchell, 21.

⁴⁴ Cf. Hewitt, 309.

⁴⁵ Cf. Hewitt, 309.

workers could scale the wall to the middle class⁴⁶. However, there was one social group that remained stable and self-contained. It was the group that was found at the bottom of the social pyramid; people not doing work on a regular basis such as homeless, beggars, vagabonds, criminals etc.

2.2.5. Transformation of daily life

2.2.5.1. Transport

The new technologies which were invented in the course of Industrial Revolution helped to revolutionize the transport systems. The steam engine, one of these new inventions, replaced the horse-pulled railways and in this way, transportation got a lot faster. In 1825 the first railway line to be operated by steam power connected the cities Stockton and Darlington⁴⁷. This new locomotive provided a suitable model for the railway lines which were built in the successive years⁴⁸, and so a complex network of railways developed in the following two decades. Especially, in the years between 1844 and 1847 the greater part of the network was constructed, and that is why the term “railway mania” is often applied to this particular time period⁴⁹. By 1849, when the first vivid construction phase was over, Great Britain had a railway network of about 5,569 miles that employed about 54,000 people. Moreover, another 104,000 people were busy constructing new railway lines ensuring that the trend was not broken. By 1860 the total railway network had a length of 10,500 miles and more than 163 million people were transported⁵⁰. In short, within only 11 years the length of the railway system, as well as the number of passengers that could use these lines had more than doubled⁵¹.

⁴⁶ Cf. Hewitt, 310.

⁴⁷ Cf. Mengel, in Beck, Schröder, 257 – 258.

⁴⁸ Cf. Ashworth, 233.

⁴⁹ Cf. Ashworth, 233.

⁵⁰ Cf. Mengel, 10-11.

⁵¹ Cf. Mengel, 11.

It does not come as a surprise that daily life had been considerably transformed due to the emergence of the new railway network, which connected the majority of England's and Wales' cities and towns. Many people from smaller towns could go to the city for a shopping trip, middle-class people could spend their weekends in the countryside, and even working-class members paid visits to their relatives who lived in the smaller towns and villages⁵².

Even the most ordinary aspects of daily life were changed: fresh milk, for example, could be brought daily from the country to the city doorsteps; and fresh fish, quickly transported inland, made fish and chips the most popular fast food in working-class neighborhoods (Mitchell, 74).

However, the advantages of conveying goods by sophisticated rail or road transportation systems were recognized fairly late, while the transportation of people started much earlier⁵³, especially in London. The construction of the first underground railway system already started in 1854 and it was completed in 1863, when the first line 'The Metropolitan Line' was opened. These new underground railways reduced the speed and cost of urban transportation tremendously. This new form was much cheaper than any other form of public transportation, omnibuses or the coaches, respectively⁵⁴. All things considered, it is obvious that contemporaries thought that '[...] the coming of the railway was the great demarcation line between past and present' (Altick, 75).

2.2.5.2. Urbanization

A good infrastructure and factors such as the accumulation of administrative and financial institutions, markets, institutions of culture and, of course, the

⁵² Cf. Mitchell, 74.

⁵³ Cf. Ashworth, 232.

⁵⁴ Cf. Mitchell, 77.

size and the city's population are criteria for considering a place as 'urban'⁵⁵. A definition for the term emerged in the late Victorian Age when urbanization was far advanced. In the early nineteenth century, there was '[...] no common consensus about what counts as 'urban' (Gunn, 239). Prior to 1851, there were only a few British towns, London, Birmingham, Glasgow and Manchester, that had a population of over 100,000⁵⁶. In the second half of the nineteenth century, however, these provincial cities had already doubled their population and became provincial capitals.

Not only the big cities were growing, but also many smaller towns expanded. Especially towns that were based on the boom industries, such as Middlesbrough which was important for iron and steel, and Swindon a railway centre, increased dramatically in size. Small towns also specialized in a certain branch of industry. Sheffield, for example, had specialized in manufacture of cutlery, Leeds was known for wool workmanship, and Newcastle was famous for coal and heavy engineering. These are only a few examples of towns whose growth was a direct product of the Industrial Revolution⁵⁷. By 1870 Britain can be described as 'urban' or 'urbanized', as almost 70 % of Britain's population lived in towns or cities⁵⁸. In contrast, before 1837, the year Queen Victoria succeeded to the throne, Great Britain was an agricultural society with about 70% of its inhabitants living in rural areas. Within only 33 years the structure of industries, as well as the demographic structure was completely reversed.

Urbanization and the expansion of the cities were encouraged by the growth of population as well as by mass migration. Families were coming from the countryside to find a job in the numerous factories or mills, and there was also a steady influx of Irish people who were emigrating from Ireland due to the great famine in the 1840s⁵⁹. These social groups settled in particular

⁵⁵ Cf. Gunn, 239.

⁵⁶ Cf. Gunn, 240.

⁵⁷ Cf. Ashworth, 225.

⁵⁸ Cf. Hürten, 356.

⁵⁹ Cf. Gunn, 241.

areas of the towns or cities '[...] creating the teeming, insanitary 'slums' for which 'Victorian Britain was notorious' (Gunn, 241). London, for example, had an East End and West End division. The upper classes were living in the west part of the city, as it was the most fashionable area and as it was far away from the industry and working-class districts, whereas the lower classes of society lived in the eastern part of the city. Not only in London, but also in other cities such as Leeds the east - west division can be noticed⁶⁰, as any other big city had separate areas for the various social groups. Normally, there were working class neighbourhoods, middle class neighbourhoods, and areas where the upper classes took up their residences, and although these neighbourhoods were relatively close to each other, people lived completely separate. This is largely due to the fact that social segregation was, first and foremost, encouraged by class or social background. Segregation was

particularly evident [...] when the cultural characteristics of those who moved were different from those of the populations of the areas to which they moved, as with rural, Gaelic-speaking Highlanders or Irish moving to British industrial cities (Whyte, 273).

The most isolated group of society was the working class, especially members of the "lower" working class, since the majority of these people lived in lodges right next to the factories, and these were usually located in the outskirts of the big cities. The slums were often dirty, dusty and dark, as the factories chimneys polluted the neighbourhood's streets and houses. However, many people would have been satisfied if they had lived in these slums, as a high percentage of working class members and a considerable number of people from the lowest class of society did not even have their own homes. They were forced to live in workhouses or on the streets⁶¹.

⁶⁰ Cf. Gunn, 242-243.

⁶¹ A major source for the living conditions of the poor in Victorian England is Henry Matthews's book *London Labour and the London Poor* (Cf. Roberts, poverty).

2.2.6. Population theories

By the end of the Victorian Age, between 30% and 25% of the working class were living in poverty⁶². Generally, half of Britain's population lived on the breadline in the second half of the nineteenth century, as the population grew so fast that it could no longer be sufficiently sustained by the industries. Within one hundred years, from 1801 to 1901, the population of England and Wales soared dramatically from 8.5 million to 32.5 million, of which 6.5 million lived only in London and its suburbs.

Reasons why the population grew so fast in the course of the nineteenth century are manifold. Firstly, the population grew because the nineteenth century was a very peaceful epoch and people did not die in war. Secondly, medicine and health care made a lot of progress. Due to the discovery of the usefulness of vaccinations and the invention of new drugs, the lives of many people, especially the lives of young children, could be saved, and this had a considerable impact on the mortality rate. Thirdly, there was no epidemic in the nineteenth century. In former centuries millions of people died of illnesses such as the pest, but by 1800 this disease and various other illnesses had been totally combated. The fourth reason for the rapid growth of population was food. Due to the increased productivity of the factories, and the improved transport system, food was no longer scarce, and people did not have to starve.

Although food was available at any time, not all people could afford to buy it. This was the fact that prompted many scientists to construct theories explaining the correlation between population growth and poverty. One of these who focused on the relationship between poverty and population growth was the political economist and demographer Robert Malthus. In his major work *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, which he published in

⁶² Cf. Hewitt, 310.

1798, Malthus explains that he considers poverty as an inevitable result of the rapid growth of population. In his opinion, population increased in geometric progression while food supply increased arithmetically⁶³, and so it does not come as a surprise that he believed starvation to be the only possible and logic consequence as food would be scarce. Malthus does not only explain the reasons for poverty, but he devotes himself to provide solutions to the problem. In order to prevent starvation, Malthus suggests 'two possible kinds of checks that limited population growth: preventative checks and positive checks' (Bloy, n.p.).

By the term 'preventative checks' Malthus means sexual restraint and / or birth control. While sexual restraint is usually exercised by the upper classes of society in order to reduce the number of children born in a marriage, birth control is the lower classes' means to control family size. Besides the preventative checks, population growth is also curbed by positive checks such as periods of starvation or famines, wars or epidemic plagues⁶⁴. According to Malthus, times of crisis are necessary, because within these periods population is naturally reduced. Those who cannot afford to buy food or receive medical treatment would die. As Malthus considers the "natural" reduction of population as beneficial, it is not surprising that he rejects the support of the poor or any other form of charitable giving. Robert Malthus even requests the upper classes to retain their money, as he thinks that they

[...] [are] responsible for – either in person or through patronage – for all the great achievements of society: art, music, philosophy, literature and so on [owe] their existence to the good taste and generosity of these people. Taking money from them to help the poor would deprive the world of culture (Bloy, n.p.)

⁶³ Cf. Bloy, n.p.

⁶⁴ Cf. Morus, 467.

2.3. Scientific progress

Robert Malthus was not the only one who occupied himself with a particular branch of science. In the course of the nineteenth century science had become more important than ever before, as contemporaries strived after providing scientific explanations for causes and effects of economical, political and social phenomena in order to make sense of their environment. Not only did the Victorians scrutinise their microcosm, but they also questioned man's place in the world and the common explanations for the history of the earth⁶⁵. Due to the emergence of revolutionary theories constructed by thinkers such as Charles Lyell, Robert Chambers, Thomas Henry Huxley and Charles Darwin, there was an increasing interest in scientific fields such as geology, biology, astronomy and natural history.

2.3.1. Charles Lyell

Prior to the Victorian Age most phenomena were explained through natural theology. Believers in natural theology thought that the earth and mankind developed according to a divine plan, and that perfection was the final aim to be achieved⁶⁶. The nineteenth century was characterized by the rise of scientific interest, and standardization of methods. Charles Lyell was one of the new scientists who criticized the fact that former ones were using the Bible for supporting or explaining geological findings, or geological phenomena. He declared this approach unscientific, and he came out in favour of the application of scientific methodology. In his work *Principles of Geology* Charles Lyell devotes himself to argue his concept of causation, and claims that only the true causes, the causes that can be observed in

⁶⁵ Cf. Guy, 203.

⁶⁶ Cf. Guy, 204.

geological formations, should be taken into consideration when discussing the history and development of the earth⁶⁷.

Applied to geology, Lyell's argument held that the entire history of the earth could be understood in terms of causes observable in present-day geological formations; these causes were the same both in kind and degree as the causes which had acted in the past [...] (Guy, 205).

'Lyell's thesis (which was referred to as 'uniformitarianism') amounted to a 'steady-state' (as opposed to a directed or progressive) view of geological development' (Guy, 205).

Besides providing a theory about the history of the earth, Lyell also makes propositions about how humans and animals react to the environment that is subject to constant change. According to him, individual species only cease, because they are not able to adapt to the new environment. New species which have already accommodated themselves in the environment then fill the gaps which are left by the extinct old species. What Charles Lyell does not explain is how and under what circumstances the new species would develop⁶⁸.

2.3.2. Charles Darwin

While Lyell's work does not provide an explanation or a theory for the biological evolution of species, the works of English naturalist Charles Darwin do. In his work *On The Origin of Species* which was published in 1859 Darwin proposed his revolutionary theory of evolution. According to Darwin,

⁶⁷ Cf. Guy, 205.

⁶⁸ Cf. Guy, 205-206.

all species have a common ancestor, and new species develop from already existing ones through an adjustment process when separated geographically. In short, Darwin is thinking of a 'branching model of evolution in which species evolve and multiply through time and by dint of spatial isolation' (Guy, 208). Additionally, Darwin includes a third element in his theory of evolution, namely the principle of natural selection. What he suggests is that only the species which are best adapted to the environment will survive. In fact, Darwin considers the natural selection as the driving force behind all processes that creatures undergo in the course of the history of the earth, may it be the a process of transformation, adaptation or extinction.

Natural Selection – its power compared with man's selection – its power on characters of trifling importance – its powers at all ages and on both sexes – Sexual Selection – On the generality of intercrosses between individuals of the same species – Circumstances favourable and unfavourable to Natural Selection, namely, intercrossing, isolation, number of individuals – Slow action – Extinction caused by Natural Selection – Divergence of Character, related to the diversity of inhabitants in a small area, and to naturalization – Action of Natural Selection, through Divergence of Character and Extinction, on the descendants from a common parent – Explains the Grouping of all organic beings (Darwin in Guy, 228).

According to Darwin, natural selection is the motor of evolution. However, as natural selection does not have a direction, nor can be reconstructed, all species, including man, are involved in a constant struggle for survival. Darwin considers nature not to be created for man, as it has been long believed, but humans are also forced to adapt themselves to nature again and again.

It seems obvious that Darwin's theory aroused indignation among contemporaries who still believed man to be the highest creatures. The majority of Victorian people also believed in natural theology and rejected the new theories constructed by so-called experts. Thus, it is not surprising that

Darwin's theory of evolution and natural selection was a highly controversial topic. Equally debated was his work *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* which he published in 1871⁶⁹. In this book natural selection was again the centre element, because Darwin applied his theory of natural selection to human evolution attempting to explain the differences between races and sexes.

Although Darwin's theories caused a great stir among contemporaries and were often met with disapproval, his books sold extremely well, and they made him go down in history as one of the most influential scientists ever⁷⁰.

⁶⁹ Cf. Guy, 208-209.

⁷⁰ Cf. Guy, 227.

3. REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN IN VICTORIAN POETRY

3.1. The position of women in Victorian society

The position of women in Victorian society and the roles ascribed to them are revealed in the following quotation, which is concerned with describing the

[...] attitude of the early-Victorian mother who, when her little girl, restless for occupation, begged, 'Mamma, what shall I think about?' replied, very properly according to early-Victorian standards of feminine usefulness, 'My dear, don't think!' (Willis, 13).

It seems that the position of women in nineteenth-century society, and the roles that they were expected to assume were clearly defined. There were firm ideas about how females of the upper and middle classes would behave at home, and their daily routines and recreational activities were prescribed in detail. Moreover, there were strict rules about how women should appear in public even though '[they] were sedulously set apart from the worlds of commerce and, generally, of intellect' (Altick, 50). Separation of women from the public was definitely a nineteenth century phenomenon, as in former centuries, ladies of the upper classes of society actively participated in public life by pursuing various professions and attending to the family estates⁷¹. Only in the Victorian Age women were kept away from their workplaces.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century the powerful concept of "refinement" prescribed that all women outside the working class abstain from gainful employment except in cases of extreme necessity (Altick, 51).

⁷¹ Cf. Altick, 50.

Upper and middle class women were not expected to have a steady job or career, they were supposed to stay at home. Therefore, girls of the upper classes of society did not receive any scientific education. Moreover, they were refused an academic education at universities, as there was the assumption that women's brains were not adapted to the learning about scientific subjects⁷². Instead, girls were homeschooled by a governess in subjects such as singing, painting, dancing, arranging flowers, and playing instruments such as the piano or the harp etc⁷³. These skills had to be acquired so that they could become "accomplished ladies".

The ladies of the upper and middle class did not only occupy themselves with the "female accomplishments", but they also had daily tasks to fulfil. These included instructing and supervising the servants, as well as organizing the private family life⁷⁴. First and foremost, the mother and / or wife was responsible for 'preserving the home as a refuge from the abrasive outside world' (Altick, 53). What other tasks the ideal wife and mother was expected to perform, and how she was supposed to behave is best presented in by Coventry Patmore's poem "The Angel in the House" published in 1854⁷⁵.

Man must be pleased; but him to please
Is woman's pleasure; down the gulf
Of his condoled necessities
She casts her best, she flings herself. [...]
(Patmore, book I, canto IX, The wife's tragedy)

The message conveyed in Patmore's poem is that '[a] pure woman's life was supposed to be entirely centered on the home' (Mitchell, 266). The wife was responsible for preserving moral values, caring for the children and guarding the husband's conscience⁷⁶. Patmore's poem describes the ideal wife as

⁷² Cf. Altick, 54.

⁷³ Cf. Altick, 52.

⁷⁴ Cf. Altick, 52.

⁷⁵ Cf. Hall, 437.

⁷⁶ Cf. Mitchell, 266.

obedient and submissive to her husband. By saying that the wife must be submissive, Patmore means that the woman should be sexually submissive as well, and this fits into the common picture of the

[...] Victorian patriarch who holds lengthy family prayers before breakfast, and married, relatively late in life, a virginal bride with whom he has an infrequent and inhibited sex life and who now spends much of her time lying on a sofa exhausted by childbearing and the strain of marriage to such a man [...] (Hall, 432).

The quotation above was certainly true for numerous marriages in Victorian society. It was common that husband and wife did not know each other well before the wedding. 'Middle class women, like those of the upper classes, usually married men they met within their family's social circle' (Mitchell, 155). As love was certainly not the prime motive for marriage⁷⁷, it is not surprising that women were anything but happily married. However, there is evidence that some women successfully refused to submit themselves to Victorian morality and the code of behaviour. For example, the way Mary Ann Evans lived was considered immoral by the majority of Victorians, as she did not at all fit into the image of the ideal Victorian woman. Mary Ann Evans made her living as the writer "George Eliot", and so she pursued a profession that was regarded as a "male profession". Moreover, Evans chose not to marry, but was famous for her affairs - she even had relationships with married men⁷⁸.

Although Mary Ann Evans can be cited as an evidence for the women's sexual emancipation, the fact that she still used the pen name "George Eliot" shows that women were not accepted in public or intellectual life⁷⁹. As far as the public and political platform was concerned, women remained excluded.

⁷⁷ Cf. Mitchell, 155.

⁷⁸ Cf. Hall, 432.

⁷⁹ Cf. Altick, 51.

Whatever their social rank, in the eyes of the law women were second-class citizens. Although there was sporadic discussion of the female franchise, and some mild agitation in its favour, women were at the bottom of the electoral priority list, and the only concession made to them by the end of the century was the right to vote in local elections (Altick, 57).

Winning the right to vote was a very important goal to be achieved in the second half of the nineteenth century. 'During the later eighties and the nineties "the new woman" was a familiar figure in social commentary [...]' (Altick, 59). This new stereotype was single and lived alone, she was well educated and pursued an intellectual profession⁸⁰. She believed in equality of men and women, wore sensible clothes, she was more mobile due to the invention of the penny-farthing bicycle, and she made her living on their own. In short, "the new woman" was very independent⁸¹. The only thing she could not do was to determine her destiny, as she was denied the participation in politics. It is obvious that the voices requesting the expansion of franchise to women were getting louder in the last quarter of the Victorian Age.

Women's suffrage movement was encouraged in the years between 1870 and 1890 as some earlier feminist movements happened to be quite successful⁸². After 1839 women were able to retain the custody of their children even when it was the case that they lived separate from their husbands, and during the 1870s other changes in law – after 1870 women were allowed to have property of their own - enabled women to become more independent. However, as far as enfranchisement was concerned, campaigns were not successful. It was not until 1919 that women were allowed to cast their votes in national elections. However, only women over thirty were allowed to give their votes⁸³. Unlimited franchise was reached fairly late, in 1928. Then all women could participate in national elections.

⁸⁰ Cf. Mitchell, 269.

⁸¹ Cf. Altick, 59.

⁸² Cf. Crawford, introduction.

⁸³ Cf. Altick, 57-58.

Before 1919, or 1928 respectively, women were refused a role in public life. They were only accepted in public when accompanying their husbands or when they attended their social duties which included 'taking blankets and basins of soup to the unfortunates on the estate [or] visiting the local school the family supported' (Altick, 52), donating money or collecting charity. Only women, especially those of the landed class, were imposed these social obligations, and this is largely due to the emergence of the concept of the "Geschlechtscharakter", which tried to explain that men and women were equal, but different as regards their characters and bodies⁸⁴. Victorian contemporaries thought that as the genders have different characters, their lifestyles and spheres in which they should act must be different as well. It is not surprising that the areas of life were separated. As regards these spheres of men and women, John Ruskin commented as following⁸⁵:

The man's power is active, progressive, defensive. He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender. His intellect is for speculation and invention; his energy for adventure, for war, and for conquest whenever war is just, whenever conquest necessary. But the woman's power is for rule, not for battle,-- and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement, and decision... Her great function is Praise: she enters into no contest, but infallibly adjudges the crown contest. By her office, and place, she is protected from all danger and temptation. The man in his rough work in the open world, must encounter all peril and trial:-- to him, therefore, must be the failure, the offence, the inevitable error... But he guards the woman from all this; within his house, as ruled by her, unless she herself has sought it, need enter no danger, no temptation, no cause of error or offence. This is the true nature of home -- it is the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt and division. ("Of Queen's Gardens", John Ruskin, 1865).

Words such as publicity, activity, independence, ambition, rationality, intellect, power and violence were typically attributed to men. Men appeared

⁸⁴ 'Geschlechtscharakter heißt die Mann und Weib voneinander unterscheidende, vom Geschlecht abhängige Eigentümlichkeit der Menschen' (Kirchner; Michaëlis, n.p.).

⁸⁵ Ruskin, quoted in Mitchell, 266.

in public, drew an income, and were the highest authority within their families as children, servants and even the wives had to submit themselves to them. When, in the course of the nineteenth century, household and the place of work were separated, women were forced back into privacy as they were not expected to work, although they were public figures in the centuries before 1800⁸⁶. This is why women were described as passive, homely, modest, sensitive, warm, tender, beautiful, affectionate and lovely⁸⁷. It was believed that they were '[...] predestined to function as moral standards for both husband and children' (Hecher, 3).

The mid-century saw the development of a liberal 'separate but equal' argument which sometimes angled with, sometimes included the definition of women's sphere and the development of the cult of true womanhood. (Kaplan, 74)

3.2. Poems reflecting the traditional role of women

3.2.1. Alfred Tennyson – "The Lady of Shalott"

Together with "Maud" and "In Memoriam" the poem "The Lady of Shalott" is one of Alfred Tennyson's most popular pieces of poetry. It was published in 1842, a time of industrial development and progress. Tennyson, strongly influenced by the poetry of the Romantic Era, composed a poem that is at first sight not at all consonant with the *zeitgeist* and the lifestyle of the Victorian Age, as medieval England was chosen as a setting. However, when observing the poem more closely, and when reading between the lines, it becomes apparent that this piece of literature, indeed, promotes the ideas

⁸⁶ Cf. Klinger, 22.

⁸⁷ Cf. Klinger, 29.
Cf. Gisborne, 23.

and opinions developed in the Victorian Age, especially with regard to gender roles.

The poem's harmonious countryside description in the first part provides a clear contrast to the typical picture of the industrialized cities with their big factories and smoking chimneys, because it is set in medieval England and offers a description of the beautiful landscape. Tennyson may have had various reasons for choosing the medieval period as a setting for his poem, a time that strongly contrasts with the environment he was born into. He may have considered his own time as not worth writing about, or he wanted to perpetuate romanticism. Although the setting is not characteristic for the Victorian Age, the content of the poem certainly is, as it reflects the attitudes of Victorian society, especially in the presentation of the life of the Lady of Shalott. Although she is a medieval woman, the description of her living conditions mirrors those of Victorian women. Thus, it seems that Tennyson promotes the picture of "The Angel in the House" by fostering the idea that females should be kept away from the public, as they are not adapted for acting in a complex and corrupt society.

Already in the first part of the poem, Alfred Tennyson makes reference to the image of the ideal Victorian woman, as he describes the Lady of Shalott as imprisoned in a grey tower and separated from the outside world. While the countryside and the surroundings of the town of Camelot are described as harmonious – a river flows through '[...] long fields of barley and rye [...]' (Tennyson, I, 2) – the castle is delineated as mysterious and secretive, as it is said that willows, aspens and lilies bloom on the island. Thus, it seems that 'the vibrancy of the outside world contrasts with the Lady's prison of "gray" walls and towers, asserting her isolation from the activity of life' (Frauenhofer, n.p.).

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,

That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
 And thro' the field the road runs by
 To many-tower'd Camelot;
 [...]

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
 Little breezes dusk and shiver
 Thro' the wave that runs for ever
 By the island in the river
 Flowing down to Camelot.
 Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
 Overlook a space of flowers,
 And the silent isle imbowers
 The Lady of Shalott.
 (Tennyson, I, 1 - 5, 10 - 18)

The fact that the lady is forced to live on an island entails an isolated life, and her isolation and seclusion is further emphasized by her being imprisoned in a fort. The facts that the lady is imprisoned in a tower on an island and that the island is separated through a river shows that the lady is strictly excluded from the lively city of Camelot⁸⁸. Tennyson portrays the Lady as secluded from the rest of the world by both water and the height of the tower' (Kurshan, n.p.). The Lady of Shalott is definitely refused a life in public, and so were Victorian women. They were supposed to stay at home sheltered from the abrasive world outside, they did not have access to the public and, thus, they could not participate in public life. Due to the lack of social relationships and entertainment, the lives of Victorian women were, like the lady's, rather "grey". Women of the upper and middle classes did not have much to do. Besides looking after the children, they occupied themselves with "female accomplishments" such as singing, drawing, reading or embroidering in order to pass their time. So does the Lady of Shalott. She is shortening her time by weaving a colourful web.

[...]
 There she weaves by night and day
 A magic web with colours gay.
 She has heard a whisper say,
 A curse is on her if she stay

⁸⁸ Cf. Kurshan, n.p.

To look down to Camelot.
 She knows not what the curse may be,
 And so she weaveth steadily,
 And little other care hath she,
 The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
 That hangs before her all the year,
 Shadows of the world appear. [...]
 (Tennyson, II, 1 – 9, 10 - 12)

The Lady of Shalott busily weaves a web as it is the only pastime she has, and because a strange voice had told her that she will be put under a curse if she stops weaving. Afraid of what might happen to her if she does not follow the instructions, she contents herself with the weaving of the web and the glimpses of the outside world she catches from the mirror⁸⁹. It can be argued that the lines '[...] She heard a whisper say / A curse is on her if she stay / To look down to Camelot [...]' (Tennyson, II, 3 - 5) allude to the public opinion of Victorians about how women should behave. The whisper tells the lady what to do and how to behave. Thus, the whisper could stand for the Victorian code of behaviour, whereas the Lady of Shalott represents the ideal Victorian woman who was satisfied with her role as submissive wife and affectionate mother, and who did not dare to question her isolated life. The "Angel in the House" took her seclusion for granted and knew that she did not fit into the abrasive outside world. Like the Lady of Shalott, the Victorian wife got glimpses of the public life by talking to her husband, who was an active member of society and her only link to the public.

In the poem "The Lady of Shalott" the role of the husband is taken over by the knight Lancelot. He is the lady's link to the outside world and makes the public life attractive to the lady. Being presented as '[...] bold Sir Lancelot [...]' (Tennyson, III, 5), Lancelot is described as powerful, strong and courageous. His absorbing appearance encourages the Lady of Shalott to leave her loom and to escape from the tower. The fact that Lancelot provokes the poem's turning point indicates his dynamic and forceful

⁸⁹ Cf. Kurshan, n.p.

personality. Also, he is the only one who dares to speak when the Lady of Shalott is found, and this circumstance points to his strong character as well.

With regard to the descriptions of Lancelot and the Lady of Shalott, it can be argued that the Alfred Tennyson definitely makes allusions to the concept of the “Geschlechtscharakter”, which was gaining importance in the course of the nineteenth century. Lancelot is definitely described as an active member of society and as a brave knight who is constantly in contact with other people. He is even active in his appearance, as Lancelot’s suit of armour sparkles and rings, the bells attached to his twinkling bride ring loudly when he is riding through the fields, and his dark hair is streaming. In order to place further emphasis on Lancelot’s appearance, Tennyson uses various alliterations in lines like ‘[...] the bridle bells rang merrily [...]’ (Tennyson, III, 13), or ‘The helmet and the helmet-feather / Burn’d like one burning flame together’ (Tennyson, III, 21 - 22).

[...]
 The gemmy bridle glitter’d free,
 Like to some branch of stars we see
 Hung in the golden Galaxy.
 The bridle bells rang merrily
 As he rode down to Camelot:
 And from his blazon’d baldric slung
 A mighty silver bugle hung,
 And as he rode his armour rung,
 Besides remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
 Thick-jewell’d shone his saddle-leather,
 The helmet and the helmet-feather
 Burn’d like one burning flame together,
 As he rode down to Camelot.
 (Tennyson, III, 10 – 18, 19 - 23)

Generally, it can be said that Lancelot ‘[...] is the sun god, as the Lady is the moon goddess; he is *vita activa*, as she is the *vita contemplativa*’ (Cullen, 45). In fact, Tennyson juxtaposes the presentations of Lancelot and the Lady

of Shalott⁹⁰. While the knight is represented as vigorous, agile, doughty and masculine, the lady is described as passive, 'feminine and recessive' (Cullen, 45). The lady's passiveness and isolation are further emphasized by the fact that she does not have an identity. Unlike Lancelot, the Lady of Shalott does neither have a name – she is only known as the Lady of Shalott - nor does she have an appearance, as nobody knows how she looks like, or if she really exists. Her identity could be just an illusion, as people are not sure if they have really seen her.

[...]
 But who hath seen her wave her hand?
 Or at the casement seen her stand?
 Or is she known in all the land?
 The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
 In among the bearded barley,
 Hear a song that echoes cheerly
 From the river winding clearly,
 Down to tower'd Camelot:
 And by the moon the reaper weary,
 Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
 Listening, whispers " 'Tis the fairy
 Lady of Shalott."
 (Tennyson, I, 24 – 27, 28 – 36)

The fact that the Lady of Shalott has never been apperceived by anybody stresses her seclusion on the island of Shalott. Although she sometimes reveals herself at the wing of the window, the people who are walking the street to the town of Camelot are not sure if they have really seen the lady. They say that she may be only a fairy. Tennyson further emphasises the lady's loneliness and dissociation from society by saying that the reapers can only hear the echo of her voice. The fact that they only hear an echo and not her voice itself keeps the lady separate from the rest of the community. She is unable to communicate with the other people as she can only address them indirectly with the echo of her voice, and therefore, the lady can never become an active member of society.

⁹⁰ Cf. Cullen, 45.

The Lady of Shalott is definitely refused a role in public, as she is refused a voice. The lady cannot make herself heard and she cannot give voice to her thoughts. Thus, it can be argued that the poem "The Lady of Shalott" makes reference to the women's subordinate position in politics. Victorian women were refused to cast their votes in elections and could not contribute to the political discourse. Not unlike the Lady of Shalott, these women could not give voice to their thoughts. In contrast, men had unlimited electoral franchise. As Lancelot stands for the typical Victorian patriarch, it is not surprising that Tennyson equips him with a voice, of which he makes constant use. Lancelot sings "Tirra, lira" when riding through the fields, and he is the only one who dares to comment on the lady's death - 'She has a lovely face; / God in his mercy lend her grace, / The Lady of Shalott' (Tennyson, IV, VI, 169-171). This, again, emphasises Lancelot's dynamic personality and the lady's passiveness, respectively.

3.2.2. Robert Browning – "My Last Duchess – Ferrara"

Alfred Tennyson was not the only one who refuses the heroine of his poem a voice, Robert Browning did so as well. When the poem "The Lady of Shalott" is

[...] read in comparison to Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess", the idea of distance between the female in the poem and the reader is repeated. The main difference between the poems is that in Browning's poem, the woman does never speak because she is already dead` (Burton, n.p.).

Robert Browning's poem "My Last Duchess", which was written in 1842 is, therefore, equally relevant for the representation of women's subordinate position in society and their repression by men.

The poem opens with the words 'That's my last Duchess painted on the wall / Looking as if she were alive. I call [...]' (Browning, 1-2) and the reader immediately knows that the heroine of this poem is already dead. The reader finds himself in the middle of a conversation between the Duke of Ferrara and an envoy who wants to negotiate the Duke's forthcoming marriage. When the Duke exhibits the portrait of his last wife, he starts reminiscing about her behavior, her character and her appearance⁹¹. 'Gradually, it becomes clear that there were aspects of her personality that irritated him so profoundly that he saw fit to murder her – probably by using hired assassins' (Bristow, 54). So, in the course of the monologue it becomes clear that the Duke is the reason for the death of his wife. When his secret is revealed in the end of the poem, the Duke immediately changes the subject, and gets back to the negotiations concerning the marriage arrangements⁹².

As already mentioned, Browning refuses to equip the heroine of his poem with a voice - as the Duchess of Ferrara is already dead, she is unable to speak. However, the reader is provided with information about her life and her personality, because the description of her character is taken over by her husband, the Duke of Ferrara, who is constantly complaining about her dishonourable behaviour.

For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart---how shall I say?---too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she like whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
(Browning, 21-24)

⁹¹ Cf. Martin, n.p.

⁹² Cf. Martin, n.p.

The Duke of Ferrara accuses his wife of flirting with other men by claiming that '[...]; she liked whate'er / She looked on, and her looks went everywhere' (Browning, 23 - 24). The Duke, who is obviously extremely jealous, thinks that the Duchess had sexual affairs with other men, and does not hesitate to inform the envoy about her unfaithfulness. 'He believes she was conducting an affair, not only with Fra Pandolf, but also with other men on his estate' (Bristow, 58).

[...] Sir, t' was not
Her husband's presence ony, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Fra Pandolf chanced to say 'Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much', or Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat': such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. [...]
(Browning, 13-21)

Besides the Duchess' unfaithfulness, the Duke complains about her disrespect for him, his attitude of morality and his family tradition, as he says that she did not understand his '[...] gift of a nine-hundred-year-old name [...]' (Browning, 33). It seems obvious that the Duke makes an effort to speak ill of his wife, as he only mentions her disrespect for him, and accuses her of having committed adultery.

The Duchess is not able to '[...] defend herself against the accusations by her husband and descriptions of her because she is not present to speak for herself' (Burton, n.p.). Thus, it is apparent that the Duchess is strictly refused a voice. She cannot tell the story from her perspective, anything that can be learnt about the Duchess, her life and her character is told by the Duke. By influencing the way other people see her, the Duke is able to control his wife, even after her death⁹³. Besides her character, the Duchess' appearance is controlled by the Duke of Ferrara. There is no way for the reader to ascertain

⁹³ Cf. Burton, n.p.

what the Duchess looked like - it is only mentioned that she was a beauty⁹⁴. Even though the Duke invited the envoy to view the portrait of the Duchess, the envoy is not allowed to look at her as long as he wants, because the Duke controls the access to his wife's portrait. This becomes obvious when the Duke says '[...] (since none puts by / The curtain I have drawn for you, but I) [...]' (Browning, 9-10).

While the Duchess is completely refused a voice, a life and even an appearance, the Duke is omnipresent. He is the one who holds a monologue about his wife and decides which issue is to be discussed. Therefore, it can be argued that the Duke stands for the typical Victorian patriarch. He considers himself the highest authority and head of the family, and he expects his wife to submit herself to him. While the Duke's attitude towards family life can easily be read out from the poem, his opinion on hierarchy in society cannot be perceived easily. However, by uttering the lines 'Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity, [...]' (Browning, 55) it could be argued that he unveils his view on the position of women in society. The line allows the interpretation that the Duke compares his wife to a sea-horse which he has not been able to tame. It is 'in fact an emblem of the Duke's attempt to dominate his former Duchess as if she were an unruly animal' (Allingham, n.p.) while he himself resembles the god Neptune who domesticates the sea horses⁹⁵.

At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity, [...]
(Browning, 53-55)

As already mentioned, the lines above could allude to the position of women in Victorian society. Women were considered as second-class citizens, while men envisioned themselves as superior. This is the reason why men were always the head of the family, had the control over their wives and children

⁹⁴ Cf. Buron, n.p.

⁹⁵ Cf. Allingham, n.p.

and the power to decide on their lives. The Duke of Ferrara, who represents the quintessential conceited Victorian patriarch, does not have any moral scruples about deciding on his wife's life, as he feels superior to her and sees himself as her lord and master.

Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
 Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
 Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
 As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet [...]
 (Browning, 44-47)

In the course of the poem it is revealed that the Duke is the murderer of his wife, and that he decided to kill his wife because he considered her behaviour as inappropriate. When the Duchess's behaviour got out of hand, the Duke commanded obedience and respect, but as she did not listen, the Duke saw no alternative but to kill his wife⁹⁶.

The reason for bringing the murder to the envoy's notice is probably a reason of power. It seems that demonstrating and exercising power over other people is highly important for the Duke. Indeed, he succeeds in doing so, because it appears that the envoy is overwhelmed by '[the Duke's] conviction of matchless superiority, his intelligence and bland amorality, his taste for art, his manner [...]' (Bristow, 54). While the Duke dominates the envoy fairly easily, his attempts to control his wife have never been successful, and this was certainly the reason for his decision to kill her.

3.3. Poems reflecting women's emancipation

⁹⁶ Cf. Martin, n.p.

3.3.1. Elizabeth Barrett Browning – “To George Sand – A Desire”

While the poems by Alfred Tennyson and Robert Browning clearly convey that women were kept apart from the rest of society, and were refused a role in public, Elizabeth Barrett-Browning’s poems “To George Sand – A Desire” and “Aurora Leigh” are representative for poems promoting the image of the “new women”, which emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century⁹⁷. Both works clearly signify Elizabeth Barrett-Browning’s wish to support the women’s liberation and emancipation movement.

Barrett-Browning’s poem “To George Sand – A Desire”, which was written 1844, can be read as a song of praise for the French writer Aurora Dupin, who wrote under the penname George Sand. George Sand is regarded as the prime example of women’s emancipation due to her lifestyle, which was regarded as inappropriate, strange and absurd – Sand was known for her atypic way of dressing, as she used to wear man’s clothes – and her behaviour – she was smoking in public and used to have affairs with many men⁹⁸. Apart from scandals, George Sand was famous for her literary works which are characterized by harsh criticism over issues such as traditional gender roles, ‘[...] the institution of marriage, the systemized oppression of women, sexual hypocrisy, the archaic hierarchy of the French class system and the failure of established religion [...]’ (Avery, Stott, 93). Elizabeth Barrett-Browning who was also a firm believer in equality of men and women shared Sand’s views regarding women’s position in society. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that Browning’s works are strongly influenced by George Sand and her novels, such as *Indiana* and *Lélia*⁹⁹.

In the poem “To George Sand – A Desire” Barrett-Browning praises Sand’s work and her courage to stay true to her principles by calling her ‘Thou large-brained woman and large-hearted man’ (Barrett-Browning, 1). The

⁹⁷ Cf. Altick, 59.

⁹⁸ Cf. Avery; Stott, 92.

⁹⁹ Cf. Avery; Stott, 92-93.

employment of these words ' [...] large-hearted man [...] admits the interpretation that Barrett-Browning alludes to Sand's status as a writer. Writing was considered as a male profession and Barrett-Browning tries to declare her opinion that, although being a female writer, Sand is able to stand her ground. The lines may also be interpreted as an allusion to Sand's lifestyle, as it was common knowledge that she had a preference for dressing like a man and for having affairs with different men.

George Sand's power and agency for undermining traditional models of femininity are emphasized throughout the poem, as Barrett-Browning says that Sand had '[...] tumultuous senses, moans defiance' (Barrett-Browning, 3) which implies that the French writer is compared to a lion who roars. The metaphor of a lion is used in this context, because it is the poet's intention to place emphasis on Sand's courage and strength in offending against tradition, and not complying with the traditional status of women.

Above the applauded circus, in appliance
Of thine own nobler nature's strength and science.
Drawing two pinions, white as wings of swan,
From thy shoulders, to amaze the place
With holier light! That thou to woman's claim [...]
(Barrett-Browning, 6-10)

Society, nineteenth century society, is here compared to a circus in which George Sand is outstanding with her strength, attitudes and view on the world. Using the words '[...] holier light [...]' (10) Barrett-Browning actually says that George Sand's intellect and her inspiration are not only remarkable or striking, but are ahead of her time. Sand is compared to an angel who has come to promote her feminist and socialist beliefs, and to bring a change. Therefore, she must not be blamed for her attitude and lifestyle¹⁰⁰ - '[...] an angel's grace / Of a pure genius sanctified from blame [...]' (Barrett-Browning, 11-12).

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Avery, Stott, 92.

3.3.2. Elizabeth Barrett-Browning – “Aurora Leigh”

Inspired by George Sand and the open way in which the French writer expressed her beliefs, Elizabeth Barrett-Browning wrote the poem “Aurora Leigh” in 1857¹⁰¹. The poem, which is considered as her masterpiece, deals with a woman’s struggle for survival and acceptance in Victorian society¹⁰².

The intertwined themes of Elizabeth’s greatest poem are important, both for themselves and as illustration for her life and character, a strong firm claim for women’s freedom, a passionate avowal of the true artist’s integrity of mind and purpose, dedicated to God’s service, and the supreme importance of married love.

Aurora Leigh is perhaps no longer a living influence, but once it was a direct inspiration to women’s sighing out their lives in close parental drawing-rooms, longing to escape; proving to them there were other duties beyond submission (Hewlett, 291).

The narrative “Aurora Leigh” is about a young woman who wants to become a professional poet. At the age of 13, after having lost her parents, Aurora is forced to leave Italy in order to live with her aunt in England. Aurora thinks that she leads a dreadful life, the only things she really enjoys is reading. When Aurora is twenty, Romney, who is her cousin, proposes to her, but Aurora chooses to reject his marriage proposal¹⁰³, as she feels offended by his views on family life, and this attitude towards women. Romney firmly believes in traditional role models, and thinks that women are not able to pursue male professions such as writing – his attitude is obviously one that Aurora cannot tolerate. Having left Romney, Aurora is left only £300 (she refuses Romney’s money) and heads for London and a garret where she

¹⁰¹ Cf. Hayter, 16.

¹⁰² Cf. Isaacs, n.p.

¹⁰³ Cf. Roberts, (Aurora Leigh).

slowly builds herself a reputation as a writer´ (Kaplan, 72). While Aurora is busy establishing her reputation, Romney falls in love with Marian Earle, a poor seamstress, and proposes to her in order to prove that he does not care about class barriers¹⁰⁴. His decision enrages Lady Waldemar who is deeply in love with Romney, and who then tries to prevent Romney from marrying Marian by persuading Aurora to intervene. Later, Aurora learns that ´ [...] Marian had been persuaded against the marriage by Lady Waldemar, betrayed by her servant and raped and abandoned in France´ (Kaplan, 72). It is in France where Aurora finds Marian and convinces her to live together. After some time, Marian, Romney and Aurora encounter each other, and Romney proposes to Marian a second time. Again, she rejects him by saying that she does not love him¹⁰⁵. However, in the course of the poem Aurora and Romney learn lessons from their experiences, and both change their minds and beliefs. While Aurora undergoes a change and matures, Romney repudiates his former beliefs and accepts that women can have a public life as well. Eventually, Romney and Aurora unite and decide to marry¹⁰⁶.

In the poem “Aurora Leigh” Elizabeth Barrett-Browning reviews the typical Victorian attitudes towards women. First and foremost, she criticizes women´s subordinate position in society, which is, according to Barrett-Browning, largely due to the fact that women were refused a profound education. It is the education system that keeps women separated from the public world, and, correspondingly, from the world of intellect. The character Aurora is used to offer harsh criticism on society. This is obvious because Aurora constantly complains about the poor education she received when she was a little girl, and expresses her anger aroused by the fact that she was denied a profound education.

I learnt my complement of classic French
(Kept pure of Balzac and neologism,)
And German also, since she liked a range
Of liberal education,—tongues, not books.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Kaplan, 72.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Kaplan, 73.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Isaacs, n.p.

I learnt a little algebra, a little
 Of the mathematics,—brushed with extreme flounce
 The circle of the sciences, because
 She misliked women who are frivolous.
 I learnt the royal genealogies
 Of Oviedo, the internal laws
 Of the Burmese Empire, . . by how many feet
 Mount Chimborazo outsoars Himmeleh,
 What navigable river joins itself [...]
 (Aurora Leigh, I)

Aurora explicitly criticizes her education, and her aunt who was in charge of it. She feels that her aunt wants to force her into the role of a typical Victorian woman, as she is only taught “female skills” such as stitching. Being irritated by the expectations her aunt holds, she makes fun of the “female accomplishments” which she was supposed to acquire - they seem unnecessary and useless to her, because Aurora is intent on becoming a writer later in life.

I learnt cross-stitch, because she did not like
 To see me wear the night with empty hands,
 [...]
 The works of women are symbolical.
 We sew, sew, prick our fingers, dull our sight,
 Producing what? A pair of slippers, sir,
 To put on when you're weary—or a stool
 To tumble over and vex you . . 'curse that stool!
 Or else at best, a cushion where you lean
 And sleep, and dream of something we are not, [...]
 (Aurora Leigh, I)

Through the character of Aurora Leigh Barrett-Browning not only criticizes the insufficient education girls received, but she also attacks the Victorian code of behaviour. By claiming that girls are just educated in order to bear their husbands adequate company, Aurora definitely reproaches the Victorian code of behaviour. She alleges the argument that women were only taught basic knowledge so that they can follow their husbands' conversations – ladies had “[...] [t]heir right of comprehending husband's talk / When not too deep, and even of answering / With pretty 'may it pleasure you', or 'so it is', -

-- [...]’ (Barrett-Browning, I). Being furious with women who submit themselves to their husbands and the code of behaviour, she starts comparing their lives to those of birds kept in cages¹⁰⁷. Especially the description of her aunt’s life unveils Aurora’s attitude.

The book-club guarded from your modern trick
Of shaking dangerous questions from the crease,
Preserved her intellectual. She had lived
A sort of cage-bird life, born in a cage,
(Aurora Leigh, I)

It is obvious that Aurora is unsympathetic to the Victorian morality and gender segregation. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that she rejects her cousin’s marriage proposal. Romney who is an advocate of patriarchal society and Victorian role models, seems unacceptable to Aurora, and she does not hesitate to state her reasons - ‘You have a wife already whom you love, / Your social theory. Bless you both, I say.’ (Barrett-Browning, II) . Although Aurora loves her cousin, she is still determined to stay true to her principles.

'Farewell, Aurora, you reject me thus?'
He said.
 'Why, sir, you are married long ago.
You have a wife already whom you love,
Your social theory. Bless you both, I say.
For my part, I am scarcely meek enough
To be the handmaid of a lawful spouse.
[...]
'Nay so, I speak in earnest,' I replied.
'You treat of marriage too much like, at least,
A chief apostle; you would bear with you
A wife . . . a sister . . . shall we speak it out?
A sister of charity.'
(Barrett-Browning, Aurora Leigh, II)

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Bycroft, n.p.

Aurora cannot accept his marriage proposal as it is incompatible with the life she wants to lead. She knows that '[...] the standard view of middle-class female identity involving love and marriage contradicts the idea of a woman's poetic vocation' (Byrecroft, n.p.). As Aurora does not want to content herself with being only the submissive wife and caring mother, and as she definitely feels a vocation to write, she sees no other alternative but to reject Romney. Although she may have a passion for him, her passion for poetry is much greater. This is obviously unveiled by the following lines: ' [...] O life, O poetry, Which means life in life! Cognizant of life / Beyond this blood-beat,- passionate for truth / Beyond senses, -poetry, my life, [...] (Barrett-Browning, I) and in 'I, too, have my vocation, work to do,' (Barrett-Browning, II).

When deciding against marriage and domesticity, Aurora enters the public as a female writer. So she becomes part of the corrupt and amoral society, but remains pure and does not get corrupt herself. Aurora is deliberately presented as a preserver of morality and virtue¹⁰⁸, as it was Barrett-Browning's intention to express that a woman can be an active member of society and still '[...] perform her function as moral repository' (Farrell, n.p.). In this way she alludes to Coventry Patmore's poem "The Angel in the House", and this is not surprising since "Aurora Leigh" was published only three years after Patmore's poem¹⁰⁹. Although, Barrett-Browning seems to agree with Patmore that women serve the function of conveying moral values, providing shelters for her husband and children and keeping virtues, she declares that women can pursue professions as well. Aurora definitely believes in the equality of men and women as she comments as following:

'You misconceive the question like a man,
Who sees a woman as the complement
Of his sex merely. You forget too much
That every creature, female as the male,
Stands single in responsible act and thought
As also in birth and death. Whoever says
(Barrett-Browning, Aurora Leigh, II)

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Farrell, n.p.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Eron, n.p.

In the course of the poem, Aurora matures, learns her lessons and changes her mind on certain issues regarding the relationship between men and women. At the end of the poem, having abandoned her social theory, she is able to talk to Romney and acknowledges her wrongs and faults. Aurora admits that she might have made a mistake rejecting Romney's marriage proposal, and '[...]' tells Romney that she was wrong in her initial assumption that she could not simultaneously be a wife and an artist' (Farrell, n.p.) Aurora sees that she is an artist but an "imperfect woman" (Barrett-Browning, IX, 649), since she is not married and does not have children. It can be argued that by making the confession that she is an imperfect woman without a man, Aurora alludes to Victorian morality. In the end of the poem, Aurora starts defining herself through the relationship with a man, although she has always condemned women for doing so¹¹⁰. 'Aurora, by the novel's end, has given in to the dominant gender construction in which women define themselves through their relationships with men' (Farrell, n.p.). Although Barrett-Browning gives in to the prevailing opinion about gender roles, there are several other situations in which traditional models of womanhood are undermined.

'Aurora, Marian and Lady Waldemar form the triptych through which Barrett-Browning speaks her views on the woman question' (Kaplan, 73). All three characters serve the purpose of deranging typical images of the Victorian woman. Marian is not the typical lower class woman, Aurora's behaviour as well as her attitudes are atypical, and Lady Waldemar does not behave in a way in which women of the upper class were supposed to do. As regards Marian Erle, the fact that a poor working class woman stands up her wealthy groom on the wedding day is rather unimaginable for Victorians¹¹¹. Moreover, the rejection of Romney's second marriage proposal and her decision to live her life as a single mother are atypical and absurd. As there was the general idea that working class women were looking for gentlemen to marry, it was

¹¹⁰Cf. Farrell, n.p.

¹¹¹ Cf. Kaplan, 72.

unbelievable that a poor woman would reject a wealthy husband who promises to care for her and her child. Lady Waldemar is an atypical upper class woman as well. In Victorian society upper class women normally did not have problems with finding a husband. As they were expected to inherit a considerable fortune, ladies of the upper class were considered to be highly courted. Lady Waldemar is not courted. In fact, she is rejected by her Romney whom she loves.

4. POEMS REFLECTING THE ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL CHANGES

4.1. Economic and technical changes and their effects

The nineteenth century was, above all, an age of economic growth. The changes that took place on the economic level were so extensive that they had significant effects on the social and political structure as well. The Industrial Revolution made Britain “the workshop of the world”, and stimulated developments that paved the way for establishing superiority in world trade and world economy¹¹².

In the course of the nineteenth century, the textile industry became the most important sector of British economy. It was the first branch to be transformed by the Industrial Revolution, and remained its motor throughout the Victorian Age. In 1850 the wooden “spinning-jenny” was replaced by the steam-powered “iron man”, a new power loom also based on the principles set out by James Hargreaves, but made from iron and steel¹¹³. This idea not only boosted the textile industry considerably, but it also revolutionized the heavy industries, as vast amounts of coal, iron and steel were demanded in order to build the power-looms, other steam-powered engines, railways and ships. There was obviously a shift of power from the primary sector to the secondary and the service sectors, which becomes apparent observing the number of people employed in the various areas of industry.

At about 1850 the biggest part of the workforce accounted for agriculture, this was a bit more than 1.7 million people. The second largest source of employment was the primary sector, as nearly a quarter of all men over 20 were doing physical labour. About 1 million people were employed in the

¹¹² Cf. Howe, 21.

¹¹³ Cf. Ashworth, 226.

domestic branch, and about half a million labourers were recruited by the secondary sector, by textile industry, or building industry etc. Thus, the domestic and secondary sector were other the important sources of employment. The rest of the labour force was employed in the service industry and / or the public sector¹¹⁴. In the course of the second half of the nineteenth century, the distribution of labour force was changed quickly. After 1850, the number of labourers in agriculture, which was once the biggest employer, decreased substantially¹¹⁵, so that by the turn of the century only 6% worked in this area of economy.

Agriculture's share had already declined relatively before mid-century, and after 1850 it fell absolutely. Employment in mining and heavy industry increased, as these sectors took a more central role in economic growth' (McCord, 316).

Due to the numerous inventions and innovations, the industry sector grew substantially, and this development had numerous side effects. The increase of the industry sector triggered off decline in handicraft and other craftwork, and an improvement of trade relations¹¹⁶. Besides the growth of the industry, the number of people in the textiles and manufacturing had grown to 1.5 million people¹¹⁷. The only sector that remained relatively stable was the domestic one – by the end of the Victorian Age still more than 1 million people, mostly women, were employed in this area. In the course of the second half of the nineteenth century the service sector and the trade continued their expansion, which was mainly encouraged by the considerable increase in shipbuilding and the rapid emergence of a complex railway network.

At about 1850 the railway industry was one of the biggest employers, an average of about 65,000 people was hired in the years between 1830 and

¹¹⁴ Cf. McCord, 214-215.

¹¹⁵ Cf. McCord, 316.

¹¹⁶ Cf. McCord, 317.

¹¹⁷ Cf. McCord, 436-437.

1870¹¹⁸ - the period in which the greater part of the network was constructed. Victorians were very enthusiastic about the railways, mainly because daily routines were facilitated, as long distances could easily be covered in a few hours. People had the chance of going anywhere at any time, the railway had totally overthrown people's perception of time and space¹¹⁹. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that it was considered as the most important achievement of the Industrial Revolution, and became a symbol for technical and economic progress.

The first real railway to be operated by steam power was opened in 1825 and connected the cities Stockton and Darlington¹²⁰. Victorians realized the advantages of the railway extremely quickly, and so a complex network emerged in the years between 1844 and 1847, the period which is frequently referred to as the time of "railway mania"¹²¹.

After the early heroic phase, the railways settled down into an established system. The 6,000 miles of track built by the mid-century more than doubled by 1871; the number of passenger journeys more than quadrupled, with the third-class passengers providing most of the extra business. (McCord, 325)

It is obvious that the new railway lines were actively used by the Victorians. Therefore, it is not surprising that the railways changed social life considerably. People from smaller towns could go to the city in order to run errands, to make shopping trips or to visit relatives¹²². Also other aspects of daily life were changed. For example, postal services profited from the growth of the railway system, and basic food such as fresh milk, meat, fish and bread could be transported to any place, wherever they were needed. This certainly had a tremendous impact on the growth of population in the second half of the nineteenth century. By 1851, the United Kingdom had a

¹¹⁸ Cf. McCord, 215.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Mengel, 1.

¹²⁰ Cf. Mengel, in Beck, Schröder, 257 – 258.

¹²¹ Cf. Ashworth, 233.

¹²² Cf. Mitchell, 74.

population of about 27.4 million people, in 1901, only fifty years later, it was already about 41.6 million¹²³.

The new railway system did not only facilitate daily routines, but it also improved trade relationships. Industrialization, in all its forms, was the reason why there was active trading with various nations - the major source for Britain's wealth¹²⁴. Besides the emergence of the new transportation networks, clever economic strategies developed by economists such as David Ricardo or John Stuart Mill paved the way for economic hegemony¹²⁵. When Ricardo suggested that '[...] Britain's wealth would depend on her ability to specialize in those industries in which her world lead was greatest [...]' (Howe, 19), the first step towards economic supremacy was done. In the first half of the nineteenth century, British economy concentrated entirely on increasing the output of manufacturing industries. Simultaneously, Britain made an effort to find new markets in order to stimulate and develop trade, and succeeded in doing so. Markets were found in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America, and export figures augmented dramatically¹²⁶.

Exports to Asia and Africa accounted for 44.5 per cent of the increase in total exports 1814/18 to 1842/6. Their share of total exports rose from 7.9 to 21 per cent, just as that of northern Europe and the USA fell from 44 per cent in 1814/18 to 27 per cent in 1842/6. (Howe, 20)

Another important step towards Britain's dominance of the world market was the shift from neo-mercantilism to free trade in the 1840s¹²⁷. Furthermore, the railway system and shipbuilding made significant contributions towards making Britain the dominant economic power.

¹²³ Cf. McCord, 211, 433.

¹²⁴ Cf. Howe, 18.

¹²⁵ Cf. Howe, 19.

¹²⁶ Cf. Howe, 23.

¹²⁷ Cf. Howe, 20.

‘It was by the 1840s possible to argue that railways would produce a global market in industrial goods, promoting commerce as the bond of peace between nations, a development greatly assisted by the oceanic steam shipping’. (Howe, 23)

Britain’s innovative transportation systems enabled the swamping of foreign markets with cheap products. As a result, industrialization was delayed in many European countries, as they did not have to develop their own industries. Britain easily prevailed against all other semi-industrialized countries¹²⁸.

The economic growth and expansion of trade relations went with the improvement of workers’ position in the second half of the nineteenth century. Workers conditions were getting much better, because they had a higher self-esteem, as they felt that they contributed to the economic growth. Secondly, workers were allowed to participate in national elections since 1867¹²⁹. Thirdly, working conditions were substantially improved. Trade unions were quite successful in negotiating better terms - new labour agreements limited the number of working hours, determined minimum incomes and made wages more stable. Actually, workers’ incomes had doubled in the course of the nineteenth century, and studies showed that the levels of wages in Britain were the highest in comparison with those in other European countries¹³⁰. Due to the satisfactory trade relationships, living conditions were improved. Costs were notably reduced by the availability of cheap food from North America, and ‘[f]ood supplies were improving in quantity, variety and nutritional quality’ (McCord, 448). Moreover, reasonably priced clothes and shoes could be bought everywhere¹³¹. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century Victorians were busy modernizing housing conditions - all houses were equipped with indoor plumbing, electricity, and

¹²⁸ Cf. Howe, 21.

¹²⁹ Cf. Beck, Schröder, 278.

¹³⁰ Cf. McCord, 447.

¹³¹ Cf. Mitchell, 38.

other sanitary facilities¹³². In fact, '[t]here were only few parts of the world, and none elsewhere in Europe, where living standards were better than in Britain in the early twentieth century' (McCord, 447).

The improvement of working and living conditions, as well as the fact that the franchise was extended, contributed to a new self-confidence among workers. By the end of the century, workers had stable incomes, the right to actively participate in elections, nice houses and they lived in comfort. For the first time ever, workers did not consider themselves as outsiders, or as being on the margins of social life, but they felt as active members of society. The fact that workers started to pursue intellectual professions such as writing shows the extent of labourers' emancipation.

4.2. Poems reflecting positively on the technical and economic changes¹³³

4.1.2. Alexander Anderson "The Spirit of the Times" (from *A Song of Labour*)

Alexander Anderson is the classical example of the workers' emancipation and a '[...] notable example of the working man as poet [...]' (Evans, 321). Anderson who was born in Kirkconnel, Dumfriesshire, decided to leave school at an early age, and accepted a job as a surfaceman on a railway. Not satisfied with the poor school education he received, Anderson decided to study further and, finally, started to write poetry¹³⁴.

¹³² Cf. Mitchell, 29.

¹³³ The technical changes as well as transformations on the economic level that took place in nineteenth-century Britain are often conveniently reduced to the term 'Industrial Revolution'. Therefore, the term is used as a synonym for the phrases 'economic and technical changes' in this chapter.

¹³⁴ Cf. Evans, 321.

Due to his social background and his working experience, Anderson's poetry is primarily characterized by his excitement at the new self-esteem of the working class, and his enthusiasm about technical as well as economic progress. Presentations of labourers' working conditions, and presentations of class feeling are, therefore, central elements of his literature – Anderson used his working experience as source of information¹³⁵. Moreover, descriptions of railways and steamships are the centre of attention. Being delighted with these achievements, Anderson draws comparisons between the Victorian culture and former cultures. Generally, Alexander Anderson's poems can be regarded as songs of praise for technical achievements, and as appeals to the working class.

A prime example of Anderson's literature is the poem "The Spirit of the Times" written in 1873, as it contains all prominent features of his poetry, and conveys his enthusiasm about the Industrial Revolution and modern progress fairly well.

Come, fling for a moment, my fellows,
 The pick and shovel aside,
 And rise from the moil of our ten hours' toil
 With a heart beating high with pride.
 What though our mission can do without thought,
 And the music and cunning of rhymes;
 Yet shame on that bosom that will not throb
 To the spirit and march of the times.
 (Anderson, The Spirit of the Times, 1-8)

The poem is a dramatic monologue made by the speaker of the poem to the working colleagues, as direct addresses are frequently used in lines such as 'my fellows' as in 'Come, fling for a moment, my fellows, / The pick and shovel aside,' (Anderson, Spirit, 1-2). Besides the direct appellation, Anderson finds other ways of appealing to his colleagues. For example, by using the collective 'we' and the pronouns 'us' and 'our' in the lines such as 'What though our mission can do without thought' (Anderson, Spirit, 17) and

¹³⁵ Cf. Evans, 321.

‘And rise from the moil of our ten hours’ toil’ (Anderson, Spirit, 3), the poet tries to bond with his fellows. Another trick applied for the purpose of winning his fellows’ favour is the application of words such as ‘pick and shovel’ - by employing these words Alexander Anderson reveals himself as a worker, and declares that he is one of them.

Come, then, let us thunder our watchword still,
 “Make way for the tools and the man,”
 Let the rough hand work what the thought will shape
 To its highest miraculous plan---
 Till the gods, who loll at the edge of the stars,
 Look down as we labour below,
 And swear by their nectar these puppets beneath
 They know how their planet should go.
 (Anderson, The Spirit of the Times, 17-24)

Although Anderson describes the workers’ labour as toil and ‘rough hand work’, he does not merely regard the working conditions as arduous and exhausting, but he rather saw labour as a contribution to progress. Anderson is pointing to the harsh working conditions in order to make people aware of the substantial contributions labourers made towards boosting modern progress. In fact, Anderson is not so much interested in opening people’s eyes, but the poet rather intends to appeal to his colleagues - he wants workers to realize that their work performance and their effort are essential to modern progress, and that they should be proud of their work. So, Anderson invites them to sing their watchwords - ‘Come, then, let us thunder our watchword still, / “Make way for the tools and the man,”’ (Anderson, 17 – 18).

Not only does “The Spirit of the Times” praise workers’ labour, but it also glorifies nineteenth-century technical achievements. Anderson, who was favourably impressed by innovations of this particular epoch, uses the poem to convert his contemporaries to the attainments of the Industrial Revolution - the products of labourers’ hard work. Accordingly, special emphasis is placed on the technical achievements such as railways and steamships, and so,

detailed descriptions of both symbols of modern progress dominate the poem "The Spirit of the Times".

Wrench the coal from her grasp to the light of the sun,
 That the giant of steam may have birth.
 Lay the pliant rail on her full broad breast,
 That, swift as the lion springs,
 The engine may hurtle and roar---the Danton
 Of this wondrous birth of things!

Build the ship into being from stem to stern,
 But not with wood as of yore,
 But with iron plates that may laugh at the shock
 Of the thunder hammer of Thor.
 Let the sea swell up in this white-lip'd wrath,
 As the circling paddles fly,
 And Neptune himself groan for want of room
 Till the iron hulk goes by.
 (Anderson, *The Spirit of the Times*, 27-40)

As far as the railway is concerned, Alexander Anderson unveils his enthusiasm for the 'giant of steam' by stressing its size, speed and strength. In order to do so, the metaphor of a lion is used throughout the poem. The railway is said to be roaring and hurtling, and it is described as being '[...] swift as the lion springs' (Anderson, 30). Especially the words 'hurtling' and 'swift' are important in this context, as it is certainly the poet's intention to emphasise the railways' speed - it was actually the speed that made people regard the railways as revolutionary, as the engines' rapidness had completely overthrown people's perception of time and space¹³⁶.

Equal importance is attached to the size and strength of the steam ship, or the 'iron hulk', as Alexander Anderson calls this symbol of progress. Size is definitely stressed by the poet's claim that even the sea god Neptune would '[...] groan for want of room' (Anderson, 39), and the ship's vigorousness and solidness is emphasised by describing the steam ship as 'iron hulk'.

¹³⁶ Cf. Mengel, 1.

Alexander Anderson states his reasons why he regards the steam ships as strong and impregnable by referring to the innovations in ship construction. It is explained that now ships are constructed 'with iron plates' and '[...] not with wood as of yore,' (Anderson, 34), and that this new design makes steam ships stronger and more solid than the ships which were built in former times.

Comparisons between the Victorian culture and the culture and lifestyle of former centuries are drawn, and Alexander Anderson does not hesitate to pass his opinion that nineteenth century can be regarded as one the most sophisticated and most advanced cultures. According to him, this is largely due to modern progress brought about by workers' effort and, of course, by science which is '[l]eaving wonders behind her track' (Anderson, 46).

O, fellows, but this is a wondrous age,
 When Science springs up from her bars,
 And shoots in her thirst from this planet of ours
 To the very front of the stars.
 And we---we watch her as on she glides
 Leaving wonders behind her track,
 Like a huntsman that jerks a hawk from his wrist,
 But who will whistle her back?

So she, and we follow as onward she leads
 With a flush of pride on her cheek,
 And she makes us the greater man, though we work
 In the wake of the Romans and the Greek.
 (Anderson, *The Spirit of the Times*, 41-48, 53 - 56)

Being highly proud of the epoch's achievements on a scientific, social and economic level, Anderson compares the Victorian culture to the high cultures of the Romans and the Greeks. - 'With the flush pride on her cheek, / And she makes us the greater man, though we work / In the work of the Romans and the Greek' (Anderson, 54-56). The poet pretentiously claims that since the ancient cultures no civilization had been more innovative or more forward-looking than the Victorian society. Compared to the Victorian Age, all former ages look like 'infants in their sleep' (Anderson, 65), because they have failed to foster development on various levels. Now, in the nineteenth

century, the earth 'is up from her slumber at length' (Anderson, 84), and development is no longer retarded, or hindered.

The ages behind look like infants in sleep,
 But those that look down on our time
 Cry out with a hundred voices in one
 To nourish them into prime.
 (Anderson, the Spirit of the Times, 65-68)

According to Alexander Anderson, successive generations will not be able to accuse Victorians of having failed to evolve into a more sophisticated and advanced society. Instead, future ages will notice that it was the Victorians who have provided the basis for modern society, and will praise them for their achievements.

Then, hurrah! for our higher fellows that work
 With this thought and its Titan pow'rs,
 And cut through the jungle of creeds and fools
 A path for this planet of ours.
 And hurrah for this nineteenth century time---
 What the future may grow and be!
 Ah, God! to burst up from the slumber of death
 For one wild moment to see!
 (Anderson, The Spirit of the Times, 89-96)

4.1.1. Alexander Anderson "A Song of Progress" (from *Songs of the Rail*)

Equally representative for Anderson's works is the poem "A Song of Progress" written in 1878. Still the typical features of Anderson's poetry such as presentations of labourers' working conditions, appreciation of workers' contribution to progress, and appeals to workers dominate this highly enthusiastic poem – the poet certainly maintained his attitude towards

modern progress. Moreover, Anderson ventilates other developments such as urbanization, economic growth and the increase in trade relationships.

The poem "A Song of Progress" definitely follows "The Spirit of the Times" in terms of presentation of labourers' working conditions. Again, the poet places special emphasis on this particular issue by offering detailed descriptions of the working environment - 'toil in the dark and daylight' - (Anderson, 9), as well as by providing accounts of the health risks workers were confronted with - '[...] aching brain and weary eye,' (Anderson, 9).

Ah! what toil in dark and daylight, aching brain and weary eye,
 Waiting for the magic thought to burst its cycled chrysalis,
 Till at last, like some Messiah, Science brings her hand-maids nigh,
 And we stand on stairs of centuries with a mighty thing like this!
 (Anderson, "A Song of Progress", 9-12)

Once more, Anderson stresses the harsh conditions of labourers' work and expounds the impacts and results of their work. It is claimed that due to their substantial contribution Victorian culture finally stands 'on [the] stairs of centuries' (Anderson, 12). Anderson considers workers as an essential part of the technical progress and he wants to convince his colleagues to be proud of their work. Again, the poet strives after raising workers' awareness for the nobler and higher aims of their work.

Anderson's enthusiasm for the achievements of Victorian society also seems unadulterated, and this is especially unveiled by the ardent imagination of future. Future life is considered as glorious and wondrous, because following generations will be able to '[...] reap all [the] golden grain;' (Anderson, 50) that will grow from the seed sowed by Victorians. In other words, successive generations are going to benefit from the economic, social and technical achievements of the nineteenth century.

For in them is the sure seed from which the ages yet to be,
 Rising up with great broad sickle, shall reap all its golden grain;
 Then the kindlier thought and nobler use of manhood shall be free,
 And be brighter from the struggle such a sunny height to gain.

This we may not see; yet, brothers, it were something grand to die
 But to hear a shout ring upward, through the death-mists thick and vast,
 Loud as when thousand people join in their violence in one long cry,
 That the world's great fight for brotherhood had clutch'd the palm at
 last.
 (Anderson, "A Song of Progress", 49-56)

By picturing and praising modernity, labourers' contribution to life in future is again emphasised. The line 'This we may not see yet; brothers, it were something grand to die' (Anderson, 53) constitutes an attempt to convince workers of the importance of their work, because, according to Anderson, it is worth toiling away for modern progress. So he appeals to his fellows to resume their work by making the request to '[go] back to honest pick and shovel, and to daily tasks again---' (Anderson, 61). As in the poem "The Spirit of the Times", Anderson uses the words 'pick and shovel' in order to bond with his colleagues. By applying the words 'pick and shovel', tools typically used by labourers, he unveils his knowledge drawn from his own working experience, and takes the chance of appealing to labourers on a more personal level¹³⁷.

Back to honest pick and shovel, and to daily tasks again---
 Back with nobler thoughts within me, all the higher aims to cheer;
 Better, too, in having rubb'd a shoulder with my fellow-men,
 And the thinking that I help them at my lowly labour here.
 (Anderson, "A Song of Progress", 61-64)

In contrast to "The Spirit of the Times", the poem "A Song of Progress" is not marked by comparisons between the Victorian culture and previous cultures. Statements regarding previous civilizations and their failure to foster development cannot be found in the poem. Instead of questioning why previous cultures obstructed technical, economic and social progress,

¹³⁷ Cf. Evans, 321.

Anderson concentrates entirely on praising nineteenth-century achievements. The technical innovations, such as the railways and steamships, are expounded in detail, especially with regard to their impact on trade and / or economic growth, and urbanization.

As far as the growth in economy is concerned, various allusions to the significant developments in trade can be detected in the poem.

Everywhere to bound the vision, the miraculous faith of toil
 Rears, as worship; mighty monsters, with their hundred arms flung
 loose;
 Miles of vessels throbbing in their haste to fling a liquid coil
 Of commerce round the nations kneeling with their proffer'd use.
 (Anderson, A Song of Progress, 35-36)

Anderson explains that the new inventions – he again refers to the railways and the steamships - have facilitated commercial relationships with various other nations. By claiming that '[m]iles of vessels [are] throbbing in their haste' and 'fling a coil of commerce round the nations', which are '[...] kneeling with their proffered use' Alexander Anderson actually assents to the public view – the majority of Victorians regarded technical achievements as driving forces behind the boom in trade. The poet explicitly states that, in his opinion, the shipbuilding industry, and international shipping had an enormous impact on commercial relationships. Moreover, Anderson seems to make an allusion to Britain's economic supremacy over various countries by claiming that other nations are '[...] kneeling with their proffer'd use' (Anderson, 36).

Besides trade, urbanization, another nineteenth-century phenomenon, is regarded as a development promoted by the agents of modern progress. The idea of the densely populated urban centre as the perfect environment for an industrialized and sophisticated civilization is another topic ventilated by

Anderson in his poems, as the poet claims that 'the foremost ranks of life' can be found in the city.

Lo! at last the toiling city, where the foremost ranks of life
 Rush and strive in ceaseless struggle, ebbing but to come again; [...]
 (Anderson, A Song of Progress, 17-18)
 [...]

But I wander from the city. Let me turn again to find
 In the waves of human faces rolling past on either side
 Links that, strong as bands of iron, draw me onward to my kind,
 Till their fellowship shoots through me with electric thrills of pride.
 (Anderson, A Song of Progress, 45-48)

The attitude Anderson assumes towards urbanization is definitely a positive one – the poet describes the feeling he experiences when wandering in the city as 'electric thrills of pride' (Anderson, 48).

Not surprisingly, Alexander Anderson's enthusiasm for modern progress is also reflected in the language. The application of words such as 'electric', which was, even at the end of the Victorian Age, not used in common parlance, expose Anderson as a modernist man. Moreover, the employment of words such as 'struggle', or phrases as such "We are apes of broader forehead, with the miracle of speech" (Anderson, A Song of Progress, 26) admit the interpretation that Anderson was not only well acquainted with the new scientific theories, but had actually internalized the theories of thinkers such as Charles Darwin or Thomas Henry Huxley¹³⁸. Besides the language of the poem, the rhythm of the poem is used as another means of conveying enthusiasm for industrial progress. Anderson maintains the regular rhyme scheme ABAB CDCD and regular rhythm – trochaic metre is used – throughout the poem. It can be suggested that rhyme and rhythm are used in order to resemble the noise made by the railways, this is another trick applied by Alexander Anderson to subconsciously appeal to his readers.

¹³⁸ The following chapter is concerned with investigating in how far Anderson's poetry reflects the new scientific ideas of thinkers such as Darwin, Huxley etc.

4.3. Critical reactions to economic and technical changes

4.3.1. Frederick William Orde Ward "Progress?" (from *Women Must Weep*)

As it can be read out from the title of the poem, a rather gloomy picture of the Victorian Age is presented by Frederick William Orde Ward in his poem "Progress?" written in 1888. Not only the title of the poem is used to convey the poet's opinion on modern progress, but also the structure seems to be influenced by his view. All six stanzas deliberately start with the phrase 'boasted progress', and it appears that each stanza presents a different argument against progress. By alleging various different reasons Ward obviously tries to convince his contemporaries that nineteenth-century transformations are burdens, and not remarkable developments.

Already in the first stanza the poet's attitude towards Industrial Revolution is revealed, as he summarizes the technical and economic transformations of his age under the phrase 'boasted progress'. The use of this phrase admits the interpretation that the poet assumes a rather hostile attitude towards his Victorian contemporaries, as he criticizes them for overvaluing the achievements of the Industrial Revolution, and ignoring the risks and dangers brought about by their effects. In order to open people's eyes and to make Victorians aware of the dangers, Ward refers to the damage that is done to the environment.

Boasted Progress, What art thou?
 God, or devil from the pit,
 Reeking of the grime and grit
 Belch'd by mills, which myriad bow
 To the wheels that cravens cow?
 Curse, from which all beauties flit,
 Tender grace and holy vow,

Giant work and flashing wit,
 Which the worlds together knit?
 Blood is on thy wrinkled brow,
 Darkens flame we wonder how,
 As by fires internal lit?
 (War, Progress?, 1-12)

As far as this stanza is concerned, there is great emphasis on the condition of nature. It is argued that numerous factories and mills which have emerged in the course of the Industrial Revolution damage the nature. The 'Reeking grime and grit / Belch'd by mills, [...]' (Ward, 3-4) cause serious environmental problems, as the air is severely polluted by the smoke exhausted by chimneys of mines, manufactories, and railway funnels. Especially the choice of words reflects Ward's pessimistic view. The poet deliberately employs words with negative connotations such as 'belched', 'grime' and 'grit' in order to reinforce his argument that progress should be considered a burden because of the harm that is done to nature, or, to put it in Ward's words, as 'Curse, from which all beauties flit' (Ward, 6).

Modern progress does not only attract criticism because of the damage afflicted to nature, but also because it encourages exploitation of workers.

Boasted Progress, to the strong
 Kindly, crushing down the weak,
 [...]
 Driving serfs, who dare not speak,
 From thy sad and sunless peak,
 To the gulfs where thunders throng;
 Ha! thy victims, cheated long,
 Yet on thee revenge shall wreak.
 (Ward, 13-14, 20-24)

Labourers' working environment, which had been considerably transformed by the Industrial Revolution, is subject matter of the second stanza of the poem. Ward emphasises the deterioration of working conditions by claiming that progress is '[...] crushing down the weak,' (Ward, 13-14), whereas 'the

strong' benefit from the 'boasted progress'. While, 'the strong' - Ward obviously refers to people in charge of accelerating modern progress - derive benefit from the Industrial Revolution, workers are ruthlessly exploited. Labourers are described as 'slaves' and 'serfs who dare not speak' (Ward, 20), and the application of these words imply that Ward wants to call attention to the workers' harsh working conditions. Although pointing to the labourers' unpleasant situation, Ward makes the prediction that they will seek revenge in order to alleviate their misery.

In the third stanza of the poem, Frederick William Orde Ward again mentions the harm that is done to nature, and consequently, brings the deterioration of humans' living conditions into focus.

Boasted Progress, with a knell
 For each old and lovely shape,
 Crown'd by thee with funeral crape,
 Swamp'd by thy confounding swell,
 Fallen as the dead leaves fell;
 Sweeping bloom from purple grape
 From the flower the fragrant smell,
 Leaving wounds that bleed and gape,
 (Ward, Progress?, 25-32)

According to the poet, 'the old and lovely shape' of the earth is gradually destroyed. The metaphor of a funeral – nature is compared to a corpse which is carried to the grave while the death knells are sounded – serves the function of emphasising Ward's grief for former times when nature was unspoiled. Reinforcing his central argument, Ward uses certain words and metaphors that appeal to the human senses in order to make people aware of what they risk losing when they do not impede industrial progress. The word 'knell', for example, is used because it obviously appeals to the sense of hearing, while the visual sense and the olfactory sense are attracted by the lines 'fallen as dead leaves fell' (Ward, 29) and 'from the flower the fragrant smell' (Ward, 31). Furthermore, by describing the damage afflicted to nature as '[...] wounds that bleed and gape' (Ward, 32) the tactile sense is

appealed. Apparently, the poet predicts a miserable future by claiming that leaves will fall down, blooms will be swept away, and flowers will not be able to shed their fragrance any more.

However, the warnings Ward issues in his poem "Progress?" do not only concern nature or environment, but, according to Ward, also society, social structures and, of course, mankind will be in danger.

Leaving wounds that bleed and gape,
 Until man return to ape;
 Drifting whither none can tell,
 Not to heaven --- if not to hell,
 On the rocks no crimes escape.
 (Ward, Progress?, 32-36)

The majority of Victorians certainly regarded industrialization as a means that helped them to evolve into a modern and more sophisticated society. In contrast to his contemporaries, Ward advances the opinion that society is 'drifting whither none can tell / Not to heaven --- if not to hell' (Ward, 34-35), and makes the prediction that if actions are not taken '[...] man return to ape' (Ward, Progress?, 33). What the poet could mean is that mankind could regress to a culture which was not able to control itself, and people risk becoming totally subject to progress, as progress certainly exercises power over the members of society who can do nothing but adapt to the new conditions.

Boasted Progress, fattening still
 On the hearts of holy men,
 Bringing children forth and then
 Feeding on them at thy will,
 Making evermore to kill
 Wretches in thy butcher's pen;
 Yet without one human thrill,
 In thy workshop like a den---
 Whether draining life or fen,
 Heaping up the tomb or till,

Heedless of the good or ill---
 If but onward by thy ken.
 (Ward, Progress?, 37-48)

In this passage, Ward again reflects critically on labourers' working environment by offering the following remark 'In thy workshop like a den' (Ward, 44). Furthermore, by making the assertion that progress is 'heaping up tomb or till' Ward wants to raise people's awareness of the fact that progress is only bent on making profit, and that it is regardless of any consequences and does not care about what is 'good or ill' (Ward, 47).

Boasted Progress, with thy whell [sic!]
 Grinding unto fool and knave,
 For the dastard and the brave
 Equal weight -- while sufferers kneel
 Vainly to those arms of steel;
 If thy path destroy or save
 Careless, so that some one feel
 Something of the rolling wave ---
 So that man become thy slave ,
 (Ward, Progress?, 61-69)

Frederick William Orde Ward ends his poem with a clear statement by claiming that everybody, may it be 'fool and knave' or dastard and brave' (Ward, 62, 63) will be exploited, as progress is primarily concerned with subjecting mankind.

4.3.2. Robert Leighton "Modern Progress" (from *Records and Other Poems*)

Another good example of a poem painting a rather dark picture of modern progress and its impacts on society is Robert Leighton's poem "Modern Progress".

Scottish poet Robert Leighton was born in Dundee on 20 February 1822. After his mother had died, Leighton was forced to live with his brother William, a shipowner at Dundee for whom he started to work in 1837, having finished his formal education. As it was part of his job, Leighton sailed around the world on his brother's ships, before he accepted a job at the London and North Western Railway at Preston where he worked for the rest of his life, until he died in 1869¹³⁹. With regard to his biography and the various professions Leighton pursued – he earned his living by sailing around the world and working for the railways - it is surprising that the poet assumes a rather negative attitude towards economic and technical progress.

Already in the first stanza of the poem Leighton gives his view on modern progress by describing 'discovery, science and invention' as 'gods' and 'wonders three'. Obviously, a quite ironic tone is used in these first two lines, and this circumstance admits the interpretation that Leighton regards modern progress as overrated by Victorians. Besides the tone used, the fact that Leighton employs the words 'gods' and 'wonders' suggests that he criticizes his contemporaries for overvaluing science.

Discovery, and Science, and Invention---
 The gods of modern progress --- wonders three!
 Who dare say, "This surpasses your pretension?"
 Or, "Here your end shall be?"

Leighton's opinion that people are overemphasizing the importance of industrial progress is further unveiled in the following lines in which he asks himself 'Who dare say, "This surpasses your pretension?"/ Or, "Here your end shall be?'" (Leighton, 3 - 4). The application of 'pretension' obviously suggests the assumption that the poet regards the Victorians as being so proud of modern progress that they refuse to see the limitations and disadvantages of nineteenth-century developments. Feeling compelled to

¹³⁹ Cf. <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/archives/ms058.htm>

open people's eyes, Leighton proceeds with criticizing industrial progress and its negative effects.

Each day puts on some newer mode or fashion,
And old things suffer change, or take their leave---
Yea, everything but sentiment and passion:
They are as old as Eve.

From zone to zone the lightening bears our message ---
But Right and Wrong no better understood:
O'er sea and land we speed with eagle passage---
No readier to do good.
(Leighton, 5 – 8, 9 - 12)

Leighton definitely refers to the transformation of daily life, as he mentions that 'Each day puts newer modes or fashion / And old things suffer change, or take their leave---' (Leighton, 5 - 6). Apart from the transformations on the social level, nineteenth-century economic changes such as the developments in trade, and, in connection with it, the economic growth, are called into question. The lines 'From zone to zone the lightning bears our message---' and 'O'er sea and land we speed with eagle passage' definitely constitute allusions to the flourishing trade encouraged by the symbols of modern progress, by the railways and steamships, respectively.

Although Leighton seems to acknowledge the social and economic changes brought about by modern progress, he tries to spread his opinion that these things, even though they may have facilitated certain aspects of life, do not help humans to see things clearer, as he makes people aware that 'Right and Wrong [are] no better understood' (Leighton, 10). Leighton wants invite people to reflect about modern progress and to question if it is really advantageous, as he says that people are '[n]o readier to do good' (Leighton, 12).

Ah, what avails the progress? what reliance

On constant change? It is no onward move,
If we advance not in His deeper science
That binds the world in love!
(Leighton, 13 - 16)

In the end of the poem the question, whether these new developments are beneficial and advantageous to mankind, is posed. Instead of trusting science and progress, people should rather keep their faith in God. According to Leighton, the world can only be bound in love when mankind acts in good faith.

5. POEMS REFLECTING THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN SCIENCE AND RELIGION

5.1. The religious crisis and triumph of science

The Victorian Age was characterized by the emergence of scientific professions, and in connection with it, a decline of religious faith. The triumph of science, with its plausible explanations and findings, was not the only reason for a crisis of religious faith which started in the 60s of the nineteenth century. Besides science, biblical criticism and the moral critique of the Christian doctrine contributed to decline of faith¹⁴⁰.

Biblical criticism which spread in the 1860s provoked a heated public discussion, as there was a growing interest in this issue. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that many historians regard biblical criticism as another major reason for the crisis of faith. In the last third of the nineteenth century, many books were published that gradually questioned the correctness of the Bible and its inspiration¹⁴¹. One of these books was *Essays and Reviews* which is probably the most outstanding work outlining critical views on the Bible and other religious doctrines. Due to the fact that six out of seven authors were clergymen of the Church of England, public attention was quickly aroused¹⁴². However, the book did not only attract notice because of its authors; its date of publication, the year 1860, seems to be even more interesting.

Appearing [...] one year after Darwin's *Origin of Species*, it summed up a three-quarter-century-long challenge to Biblical history by the Higher Critics and to Biblical prehistory by scientists working in the new fields of geology and biology (Everett, n.p.).

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Smith, 345.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Smith, 345.

¹⁴² Cf. Altholz, 59.

In the late 1850s and in the early 1860s a number of scientific works on geology, biology and history were written, and these works rocked the Victorians' world considerably. Charles Darwin published his work *On the Origin of Species* in 1859 and triggered off public discourse about topics such as the development and the descent of man. The discussion about these controversial issues was further heated up in the early 1860s, as in 1863 two influential works, namely *Man's Place in Nature* by Thomas Henry Huxley and *Antiquity of Man* by Charles Lyell, were published¹⁴³. The fact that the natural sciences and their representatives claimed to offer the truth enraged the clergy. Scientific findings and evidence were seen as attacks on the Bible and religious faith, as all explanations provided by the scientists clearly contrasted with the church doctrine, which sees God as the creator of the world and of mankind. Indeed, some books such as Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* ' [...] questioned both the literal accuracy of the first chapters of Genesis and the argument from design and existence of God' (Altholz, 59). Therefore, it is not surprising that Victorian contemporaries thought that science and religion were absolutely opposing each other. People had to decide whether they believed in the new scientific theories or in God, the Bible and the church¹⁴⁴. The ' [...] phrase of Andrew Dickson White "the warfare of science and theology"' (Altholz,59) probably represents best the conflict of creed and belief in science.

First and foremost, the conflict of science and theology was fought out between members of the middle class, clergymen and members of the middle class pursuing secular professions¹⁴⁵. This has a number of reasons. In the course of the nineteenth century many professions, clerical as well as secular, were clearly defined and described, and these definitions caused these professions to disperse from each other. In former centuries the clergymen did not really have a vocation, they were gentlemen and only had some religious duties to fulfill that they could easily integrate into society. After the evangelical revival this was changed quickly. Clergyman had to deal

¹⁴³ Cf. Altholz, 59.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Altholz, 59.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Altholz, 60.

with their religious duties much more seriously, and there were more duties to be carried out. Clergymen were expected to be earnest and serious, and as they should not be distracted by social activities, they were separated from the rest of the community¹⁴⁶. Not only the clerical professions were strictly determined, but also the secular ones developed guidelines such as scientific standards and necessities. The increasing interest in establishing standards and defining requirements for certain professions was one way of dealing with the complex environment which was subject to constant change. Victorians were looking for answers, information and explanations for the transformations that took place on the social, political and economic level, and they wanted to get these answers from skilled intellectual people. Thus, they defined their professions strictly in order to make sense of the world, and to get a conception of order¹⁴⁷.

The standardization of natural sciences resulted in a new-found interest in scientific fields such as geology, biology, astronomy, natural history and history. Even less educated people started to read the theories established by thinkers such as Darwin, Lyell, or Huxley, as all theories were '[...] verifiable and applicable' (Altholz, 61), and scientists needed to provide evidence in order to support their arguments.

A conflict seemed inevitable, since the explanations which were provided by thinkers of the new fields of natural sciences clearly contrasted with what was sermonized by the priests in the church, or taught by the Bible. One might think that the scientists could easily win the war against religion as '[...] they found themselves armed with a weapon which even clergymen were taught to fear, the weapon of truth' (Altholz, 61). However, converting the majority of Victorians to a belief in science was not as easy as it may have seemed. Scientists who made attempts to base their ideas encountered quite a number of difficulties. One of the major problems was raised by the professionalism of science itself, as '[...] scientific facts require scientific

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Altholz, 60-61.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Guy, 203.

minds to appreciate them, and they could have only peripheral effect as long as education remained classical rather than scientific' (Altholz, 61). The other problem was religion. Evangelical revival had produced an orthodoxy of Victorian society which was deeply anchored in the lives of Victorian people - almost every aspect of life was characterized by religious morality¹⁴⁸.

"Victorian morality" was the product of a long process of infusion of religious ideas¹⁴⁹. Victorian morality was a lifestyle, a code of behaviour that was strictly followed by any respectable Victorian, and it included '[...] punctuality, early rising, orderliness, concern for little things, self-denial, self-control, initiative, constructive use of leisure, [and] prudent marriage' (Mitchell, 264). Moreover, the respectable Victorian did never speak in a loud voice, had good manners, and was expected to be honest, earnest and serious¹⁵⁰. These virtues were promoted in books, magazines, handbooks, and most importantly, in sermons in the churches. Since religion had a great influence on the people, they could not easily be separated from their faith, and scientists had to take this for granted. Even though they provided evidence that the Bible was not the source of universal truth, they found it hard to elaborate their ideas. People thought that a break with the church constituted a violation of everything that had been known and practiced so far. So many people did not dare to turn their back on religion, and decided to keep their faith with God. Some, however, had an open mind about Darwin and his colleagues, and this caused a division of Victorian society, which is often discussed in literature, as many poets felt compelled to spread their opinion about the ongoing "warfare of science and theology"¹⁵¹.

Quite a few poets, such as Matthew Arnold, or Alexander Anderson seem to have acknowledged, to some extent, the accuracy of the new scientific theories, and used their poems to reflect on this issue. Other writers, Alfred

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Altholz, 62.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Altholz, 62.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Mitchell, 262-264.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Altholz, 59.

Tennyson and Gerard Manley Hopkins, for example, set themselves to make people aware of the importance of the faith in God.

5.2. Poems influenced by the new scientific theories

5.2.1. Matthew Arnold - "Dover Beach"

"Dover Beach", presumably Matthew Arnold's most popular poem¹⁵², was probably written in 1851, and '[...] subsequently revised for the volume of *New Poems* in 1867' (Baum, 85). The date, or rather the period of composition, as well as the year of publication are insofar significant as they give information about the works that must have influenced Matthew Arnold in the course of his writing process - "Dover Beach" was published only a few years after the revolutionary works of Charles Lyell and Charles Darwin had reshaped traditional ideas about the history of the earth, and the history of mankind.

The poem "Dover Beach" serves the purpose of conveying Arnold's attitudes towards science and religion fairly well - it shows that, although Arnold seems to have acknowledged or accepted the validity of the new scientific theories constructed by Darwin, Huxley or Lyell, he laments over the impacts of science, industrialization, and the consequent crisis of faith. Already in the first stanza, the influence of science on the poem, and the poet's attitude towards this subject matter becomes apparent, when observing Arnold's account of the process of how the cliffs are shaped.

The sea is calm tonight.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair

¹⁵² Cf. Collini, 39.

Upon the straits;- on the French coast the light
 Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
 Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
 Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
 Only, from the long line of spray
 Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,
 Listen! You hear the grating roar
 Of pebbles which waves draw back, and fling,
 At their return, up the high strand,
 Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
 With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
 The eternal note of sadness in.
 (Arnold, Dover Beach, 1-14)

The lines 'Of pebbles which waves draw back, and fling, / At their return, up the high strand, / Begin, and cease, and then again begin,' (Arnold, 10-12) definitely make reference to Charles Lyell's book *The Principles of Geology*, at this time the most revolutionary theory about the history of the earth. According to Lyell, the earth's surface, and hence, the forms of the continents are subject to constant changes brought about by erosion, the influences of wind and water. Lyell makes the suggestion that the history of earth must be [...] understood in terms of causes observable in present-day geological formations;' (Guy, 205) and that [...] 'these causes were the same both in kind and degree as the causes which had acted in the past [...] (Guy, 205).

In compliance with Lyell's theory, Matthew Arnold presents the cliffs of Dover as a product of such a long-standing process of erosion, as it is said that the pebbles are repeatedly flung and drawn back by the sea, so that, in the course of this process, the chalk cliffs can assume their shape. Therefore, the cliffs of Dover can serve as an example of sustaining Lyell's theory, and this fact evokes a very uncomfortable feeling in Arnold. - ' [...] pebbles which waves draw back, and fling [...] / Begin, and cease, and then begin, / With tremulous cadence slow, and bring / The eternal note of sadness in' (Arnold, 10 - 14)¹⁵³. The prevailing circumstance that Charles Lyell's theory is no longer a theory, but scientific fact shatters Arnold deeply, as, in this way, the

¹⁵³ Cf. Bush, 76.

accuracy of the Bible, and all its teachings are questioned. This is particularly true for the theology of creation¹⁵⁴. Thus, it comes as no surprise that Arnold proceeds with reflecting on religious faith, or rather the crisis of faith which started in the early sixties of the nineteenth century.

Sophocles long ago
 Heard it on the Aegean, and I it brought
 Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
 Of human misery; we
 Find also in the sound a thought,
 Hearing it by the distant northern sea.
 (Arnold, Dover Beach, 15 – 20)

In this particular stanza Arnold uses the image of 'ebb and flow' in order to connect two thoughts. Firstly, this image is used in order to refer back to the long-lasting process of the shaping of the cliffs, as the high and low tide could refer to the water erosion. Secondly, the image of 'ebb and flow' may be used to point to the subsequent stanza, which is concerned with the meditation about faith in God, or rather the crisis of faith. Matthew Arnold speaks of the '[...] ebb and flow / Of human misery; [...]' (Arnold, 17 – 18) and he could refer to the '[f]aith, which was once like a full tide,' and '[...] has now ebbed' (Baum, 90).

The Sea of Faith
 Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore,
 Lay like the folds of bright girdle furl'd.
 But now I only hear
 Its melancholy, long withdrawing roar,
 Retreating, to the breath
 Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
 And naked shingles of the world.
 (Arnold, Dover Beach, 21-28)

In the third stanza of the poem "Dover Beach", Arnold again uses the sea as a metaphor, but not in order to project upon scientific theories as in the first stanza, but as a metaphor for religious faith. 'The Sea of Faith' (Arnold, 21)

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Smith, 345.

must be seen as a ' [...] symbol for a time when religion could still be experienced without doubts brought about by progress and science [...] ' (Touche, n.p.). Arnold describes that 'the sea of faith' was once, and by 'once' Arnold definitely refers to previous centuries, full and 'round the earth's shore' (Arnold, 22), and the earth was dressed or 'coated with faith' - 'Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd' (Arnold, 23)¹⁵⁵. In the course of the nineteenth century, when many Victorians were renouncing their faith as a result of the spread of the new scientific theories on the history of earth and mankind, the 'sea of faith' was continually emptied. The world seems to have been stripped¹⁵⁶, it is no longer dressed, but it is naked. Strictly speaking, the world has been '[...] emptied of religious meaning' (Bush, 40).

According to Matthew Arnold, the world has not only been deprived of faith in God and the Bible, but also other essential values such as joy, love, light, certitude, and peace, are lost¹⁵⁷.

Ah, love, let us be true
 To one another! for the world, which seems
 To lie before us like a land of dreams,
 So various, so beautiful, so new,
 Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
 Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
 And we are here as on a darkling plain
 Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
 Where ignorant armies clash by night.
 (Arnold, Dover Beach, 29-37)

The poet makes the assertion that when people renounce their faith in God, there can be 'neither joy, nor love, no light, / Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain' (Arnold, 33 – 34). It is obvious that Matthew Arnold tries to paint a rather dark picture of the industrialized nineteenth century, as mankind is said to live on a 'darkling plain'¹⁵⁸. In order to reinforce his

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Touche, n.p.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Touche, n.p.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Touche, n.p.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Culler, quoted in Bush, 41.

argument, a new image - the image of a night battle - is used in the last three lines of the poem - 'And we are here as on a darkling plain / Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight, / Where ignorant armies clash by night' (Arnold, 35 - 37). Aiming at '[...] intensify[ing] the dark picture of human misery [...]' (Baum, 91) Arnold refers to the image of the Thucydidean night battle 'where each fights for himself, and friend and foe stand together' (Newman, quoted in Shaw, 68). It was so dark at the night of the battle that soldiers were not able to see if they killed their enemy combatants, or the soldiers of their own armies¹⁵⁹. The message of this image is perfectly clear, Arnold makes an allusion to the blind contest of industrial times by claiming that people do not see that they harm themselves by accelerating modern progress, trusting scientific theories and renouncing their faith.

5.2.2. Poems influenced by Darwin's "On the Origin of Species"

Charles Lyell's *The Principles of Geology* is not the only nineteenth-century theory that seems to have wielded enormous influence on Victorian poets and their works. Charles Darwin's books such as *On the Origin of Species* as well as *On the Descent of Man* proved to be even more revolutionary, as they had an immediate impact on the social, economic, and even on the political level. However, the significant and profound effects on various aspects of life were largely due to the fact that Darwin's works were often misinterpreted and misused. Darwin's theories were extended to new fields, – one new ideology was Social Darwinism – and these were used in order to explain existing inequalities, poverty or other social phenomena. As a result, unusual political and economic policies were adopted in compliance with these interpretations¹⁶⁰. As literature always reflects reality, and enters into contemporary discussions, it is not surprising that Darwin's theories can be detected in various Victorian poems.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Shaw, 68.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Guy, 209.

One poet whose literature was definitely influenced by Darwin's works is Alexander Anderson. Allusions to both of Darwin's major works, namely to the book *On the Origin of Species*, published in 1859, and to *On the Descent of Man*, published by Darwin in 1871 are made in many of his poems. Besides Darwin's theories, the concept of Social Darwinism which emerged in the later nineteenth century seems to have had a considerable impact on the poetry of Alexander Anderson.

One poem in particular, namely "A Song of Progress", published in the book *Songs of the Rail* in 1878, can serve as an example of illustrating the scope of these various theories in Anderson's poetry. Especially when it comes to the figure of speech used in this piece of literature, Darwin's influence becomes apparent.

Lo! at last the toiling city, where the foremost ranks of life
Rush and strive in ceaseless struggle, ebbing but to come again;
And my heart leaps up within me, palpitating for the strife,
In the maelstrom of swart traffic, in the toil and shock of men.
(Anderson, A Song of Progress, 17-20)

As it can be read out from the lines above, the language Anderson adopted in the poem obviously indicates the significant and important role Darwin's works played in the intellectual world of the later nineteenth century, and it shows that Darwin must have exerted an enormous influence on Anderson, as the poet uses phrases such as 'ceaseless struggle' and 'ranks of life' over and over again. It is obvious that the word 'struggle' relates to Darwin's book *On the Origin of Species*, which is concerned with describing the concept of 'struggle of survival', as Darwin calls it.

By employing the phrase 'foremost ranks of life', and claiming that these would struggle for their existence, Anderson makes reference to Darwin's

theory of natural selection, as well as to Social Darwinism, a concept closely related, and developed from this theory. According to Charles Darwin, mankind is forced to continually adapt itself to the environment which is subject to constant changes¹⁶¹. However, as not all humans are able, or, to put it in Darwin's words, not 'fit enough', to adjust themselves to the transformed conditions, only 'those who are best adapted to their environment [...] will survive' (Guy, 208). Social Darwinism, as the term already says, is related to Darwin's theses, especially to the theory of natural selection. The concept of Social Darwinism is based on the assumption that natural selection acts within any group, or society. There is competition within any social group, and only those who are best adapted to the environment's conditions will be able to rise up against the rest. Social evolution, or social advancement, would be the reward obtained by 'the fittest'. Considering the definitions already mentioned, it becomes obvious that the phrases '[...] the foremost ranks of life / Rush and strive in ceaseless struggle [...]' (Anderson, *A Song of Progress*, 17 – 18) relate to the theories mentioned above.

So, the influence of Darwin's ideas is certainly reflected in the language Anderson employed. However, the words are used in another way, their meanings are entirely different from the meanings Darwin conveyed. It can be assumed that the phrase 'foremost ranks of life' does not refer to the class system, or social background, as Alexander Anderson was a modernist man, and a member of the working class. It is more likely that the poet refers to people who were open-minded to modern progress and scientific theories¹⁶². Besides the phrase 'foremost ranks of life', the words 'ceaseless struggle' are not unambiguous. There is little chance that Anderson speaks about 'struggle' in the same way as Darwin thinks about it. The poet probably refers to the struggle science had to take up against its many critics. This interpretation is more plausible in connection with the phrase 'foremost ranks of life', and the fact that Alexander Anderson places these open-minded people in a 'toiling city', as he considered the city as the perfect environment for modern and sophisticated people.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Guy, 208.

¹⁶² Cf. Evans, 321.

It seems that Alexander Anderson distances himself from certain aspects of Darwin's work. Especially the scientist's theory that man must have developed from apes is strongly rejected by Anderson.

Shame on all the later devils whisper, crying in our ear---
 "We are apes of broader forehead, with the miracle of speech;"----
 Rather nineteenth century men, that have a thought Who sent us
 here:
 Higher faiths are ours, my fellows, low enough for us to reach.
 (Anderson, *A Song of Progress*, 25-28)

Alexander Anderson does not regard humans as descendants of apes, but declares that he and his contemporaries are just nineteenth century men. In fact, Anderson is sure that humans and animals can never be related, as he says that it is more than the speech that sets us apart from apes. Unlike Alexander Anderson, Frederick William Orde Ward believes in Darwin's theory *On the Descent of Man*.

Leaving wounds that bleed and gape,
 Until man return to ape;
 Drifting whither none can tell,
 Not to heaven---if not to hell,
 On the rocks no crimes escape.
 (Ward, *Progress?*, 32 - 36)

By uttering the threat that man are risking regressing to apes again 'Until man return to ape / Drifting whither none can tell' (Ward, 33), Ward unveils his settled belief in Darwin's theories. It seems that Ward has been profoundly convinced that the scientific theory must be accurate and true, otherwise he would not have threatened that man will regress to what they once were, ape-like creatures.

5.3. Poems demanding recollection to faith in God and the Bible

5.3.1. Gerard Manley Hopkins "God's Grandeur"

One of Gerard Manley Hopkins's most famous poems "God's Grandeur" is probably one of the best examples of a poem reflecting on the issues of science and religion, or rather the causal relationship between the emergence of scientific theories, modern progress and the crisis of faith. Gerard Manley Hopkins took the view that the triumph of scholarship and industrialization is directly proportional to the decline of humans' faith. This is not surprising since Hopkins was taught to consider genuine modesty and godliness as important virtues, and to scorn materialism¹⁶³. In fact, the poet strongly rejected '[...] modern materialism and the way that industry had befouled the land [...]' (Evans, 273), and devoted himself to opening people's eyes about the limitations of progress, and prevailing upon people to confess their faith.

Already in the first stanza of the poem "God's Grandeur" Gerard Manley Hopkins poses the question why people refuse to believe in God's presence, and '[...] fail to heed ("reck") His divine authority ("his rod")' (Santos, n.p.), when they are constantly confronted with evidence of God's existence and presence, as '[t]he world is charged with the grandeur of God,' (Hopkins, 1).

The world is charged with the grandeur of God,
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.
(Hopkins, 1 – 8)

¹⁶³ Cf. Evans, 269.

Confuting the argument that the world is loaded with proofs of God's presence¹⁶⁴, Hopkins presents God's existence as '[...] an electric current, becoming momentarily visible in flashes like the retracted glinting of light produced by metal foil, when rumpled or quickly moved' (Santos, n.p.). Although the divine is visible, humans do not care to look at it, as they are too busy toiling in order to accelerate modern progress which causes nature to be constantly destroyed - 'And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil; / And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil / Is bare now; nor can foot feel, being shod' (Hopkins, 6 – 8). Gerard Manley Hopkins places special emphasis on describing the damage afflicted to nature, because it is another way of referring to the crisis of faith. By describing the violation of nature, which is God's creation, the poet alludes to human's further alienation from the divine. According to Hopkins, humans have already grown apart from their Creator, and are already estranged. '[...] [B]eing shod', they cannot even feel the soil any more. 'The shoes people wear sever the physical connection between [the] feet and the earth they walk on, symbolizing an ever-increasing spiritual alienation from nature' (Santos, n.p.).

Despite the fact that humans are estranged from God and religion, Hopkins makes the assertion that God's existence will always be reflected by nature – for '[...] nature is never spent' (Hopkins, 9). Its freshness and beauty prove the Lord's power, and bear witness to his omnipresence.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
 There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
 And though the last things off the black West went
 Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs---
 Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
 World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.
 (Hopkins, 9 – 14)

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Santos, n.p.

According to Gerard Manley Hopkins, God is not only omnipresent, but he is also protecting the world - 'Because the Holy Ghost over the bent / World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings' (Hopkins, 13 – 14). Hopkins's bird image, or rather the wing imagery, is adequate in this context¹⁶⁵, as 'The wing imagery possess [sic!] a variety of positive connotations. Wings are associated in the Bible with God's healing, [...], with His protection, [...], with the strength that He imparts to man [...], and with His conquest' (Burriss, n.p.). It is clearly the poet's intention to make people see the advantages of the belief in God, and he thinks that it is his task to point to them, as he thinks that people are already estranged from the Lord and cannot see them themselves. So, what Hopkins tries to convey is that when people decide to keep their faith in God they will be healed and protected.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Burriss, n.p.

6. CONCLUSION

As the analysis has shown, the poems under consideration reflect contemporary discussions about the position of women in society, the Industrial Revolution, and the struggle between science and religion. Thus, the works admit the interpretation that Victorian poetry is profoundly shaped by the historical context. It can be argued that Richard Altick was absolutely right claiming that

[a]n accurate understanding of an era's literature depends to a greater or less[sic!] extent on a grasp of its historical context, [...] [especially], when one deals with literature so intimately connected with contemporary life as was that of the Victorians' (Altick, preface).

Nineteenth-century literature generally tends to be very communicative regarding its historical context. However, not all poems analysed are straightforward in reflecting Victorian society's ideas and assumptions, as some writers have contrived ways and means to obscure their messages and opinions, for example, by choosing another setting or time for their poems. Alfred Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott" and Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess – Ferrara" must be named as examples of such poems. Both works are not set in Victorian Britain, but in Medieval England and 16th century Italy, respectively. Correspondingly, these poems happen to be much more difficult to interpret, but, as evidenced by my analysis, the attentive reader and everybody having acquired intimate knowledge about the historical context, and the lifestyle and ideas of Victorian society, can detect various allusions to nineteenth-century ideas, such as the theory of the 'Geschlechtscharakter', or the Victorian image of the 'Angel in the House'. While some poets decided to encode their messages, others, such as Elizabeth Barrett-Browning, do not hesitate to make clear declarations. As it has been proven, her masterpiece "Aurora Leigh" not only reflects the public discourse about the women's liberation movement, but also makes an essential contribution towards propagating women's emancipation.

Victorian poetry does not only reflect on social theories, but it is demonstrably also communicative regarding economic issues, such as the boom in trade, and the technical or industrial progress. As the analysis has indicated, especially the poems of the later nineteenth-century project contemporaries' attitudes towards modern progress. Alexander Anderson and his works "A Song of Progress" and "The Spirit of the Times" must be mentioned in this context, as the poet devoted himself to give voice to those Victorians who were highly enthusiastic about modern progress. Also writers such as Frederick William Orde Ward and Robert Leighton used their poems to speak on behalf of their fellow men, but unlike Anderson, they spoke on behalf of those people who regarded modern progress a burden, or evil curse. In this way, various different opinions of the public dialogue about the Industrial Revolution and its effects, are reflected.

Besides questioning the position of women in society and the importance of modern progress, Victorians were also debating on the effects scientific theories had on the crisis of faith. It has been proven that writers used literature for reflecting on this "warfare between science and religion", as many poets either tried to prevail upon contemporaries to believe in scientific theories, or to confess their faith. As the analysis has shown, Matthew Arnold was one of those who wanted to make people aware of what they risk losing when they turn their back on religion, although his poem "Dover Beach" seems to be influenced by Lyell's theory on the history of the earth. Apart from Arnold, Alexander Anderson's "A Song of Progress" and Frederick William Orde Ward's "Progress?" are examples of poems strongly affected by the new scientific theories, primarily by Darwin's works. In contrast to these poems, Gerard Manley Hopkins's "God's Grandeur" tries to make people aware of the existence of God, and the importance of the faith in God. He strongly demands a recollection of religion, and an alienation from belief in science.

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9. APPENDIX

Die vorliegende Diplomarbeit mit dem Thema "Important Victorian Ideas And Their Reflections in Victorian Poetry", zu Deutsch „Wichtige Ideen des Viktorianischen Zeitalters und dessen Reflektionen in der Viktorianischen Gedichtschreibung“ beschäftigt sich der literarischen Diskussion der Themen Stellung der Frau, Wirtschaftswachstum und technischer Fortschritt, und dem Konflikt Glaube an Gott oder Glaube an wissenschaftlichen Theorien. Ausgewählte Werke der wohl bekanntesten Dichter dieser Epoche wie Alfred Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, Robert Browning, Elizabeth Barrett-Browning, Alexander Anderson, Frederick William Orde Ward, Robert Leighton und Gerald Manley Hopkins sollen zeigen, dass die Lebenswelt des 19. Jahrhunderts sehr stark in der Literatur reflektiert wird.

Mit großer Wahrscheinlichkeit werden die meisten Gedichte der bereits genannten Autoren, sowie die Charaktere und Geschichte, die in den Werken vermittelt werden, dem heutigen Leser befremdlich oder eigentümlich erscheinen. Um die Gedichte des viktorianischen Zeitalters besser verständlich zu machen, beschäftigt sich das zweite Kapitel dieser Diplomarbeit mit der Lebenswelt des 19. Jahrhunderts. Insbesondere wird auf die vorherrschende Gesellschaftsstruktur, die Lebensbedingungen der Zeitgenossen, und deren Wert- und Moralvorstellungen näher eingegangen.

Hauptthemen der Diplomarbeit sind die Stellung der Frau in der viktorianischen Gesellschaft, sowie das typische Rollenbild, das sich im Laufe des 19. Jahrhunderts entwickelt hat. Die ausgewählten Gedichte sollen zeigen dass die Diskussion dieser Themen nicht nur das öffentliche Leben, sondern auch die Literatur wesentlich beeinflussen haben. In Tennysons Gedicht „The Lady of Shalott“, beispielsweise, wird das Leben einer mittelalterlichen Dame, die in einer Burg festgehalten wird, und vollkommen von der Außenwelt abgeschottet wird, beschrieben. Man kann annehmen, dass der Dichter mit dieser Beschreibung auf die Stellung der Frauen in der

damaligen Gesellschaft – Frauen waren vom öffentlichen Leben ebenfalls ausgeschlossen - hinweist. Neben Alfred Tennyson, wurde auch Robert Brownings Literatur von den Rollenbildern der damaligen Zeit bestimmt. Sein Gedicht „My Last Duchess – Ferrara“ erzählt die Geschichte einer jungen Frau, die von ihrem eigenen Ehemann ermordet wurde, weil ihm ihr Benehmen missfiel. Es kann argumentiert werden, dass Brownings Schilderung auf die Stellung der Frauen innerhalb der Familie, vor allem auf ihre untergeordnete Rolle, anspielt. Im Gegensatz zur Unterdrückung der Frau, ist auch Emanzipation immer wieder Thema der viktorianischen Literatur. Besonders die Gedichte von Elizabeth Barrett-Browning „To George Sand – A Desire“ und „Aurora Leigh“ sind repräsentativ für jene Gedichte, die Gleichberechtigung von Mann und Frau propagieren.

Ein weiteres Kapitel der Arbeit beschäftigt sich mit dem Thema Industrielle Revolution und technischer Fortschritt, sowie die Reflexion der Themen in den Gedichten des viktorianischen Zeitalters. Ein besonders positives Bild des industriellen Fortschritts wird in Alexander Andersons Gedichten „A Song of Progress“ und „The Spirit of the Times“ vermittelt. Aufgrund des sozialen Hintergrunds des Dichters – Anderson selbst war bei der Eisenbahn als Arbeiter angestellt – sind seine Gedichte geprägt von Beschreibungen der Arbeitsbedingungen, Loblieder auf die Industrielle Revolution und auf technischer Errungenschaften der Epoche. Industrieller Fortschritt wird aber nicht von allen Zeitgenossen als Segen empfunden, viele haben durchaus die negativen Nebeneffekte der Industriellen Revolution erkannt, und es sich zur Aufgabe genommen auf ebendiese aufmerksam zu machen. Ein eher düsteres Bild des viktorianischen Zeitalters und den Auswirkungen des industriellen Fortschritts wird in den Gedichten „Progress?“ von Frederick William Orde Ward, und „Modern Progress“ von Robert Leighton präsentiert.

Thema der Diplomarbeit ist auch die literarische Diskussion des Konfliktes zwischen Religion oder Wissenschaft. Im Laufe des 19. Jahrhundert, als sich allmählich die Wissenschaft durchsetzt, die anhand von Theorien die

Geschichte der Erde und der Menschwerdung erklärt, wird Religion, vor allem der Glaube an Gott und an die Lehre der Bibel, immer mehr in den Hintergrund gedrängt. Zahlreiche Gedichte spiegeln diese Entwicklung wider. Viele Dichter wollen entweder dazu auffordern am Glauben festzuhalten, andere sind bereit die Richtigkeit der wissenschaftlichen Theorien zu akzeptieren. Matthew Arnolds „Dover Beach“, zum Beispiel, obwohl nachweislich beeinflusst von Lyell's Werk *The Principles of Geology*, versucht darauf aufmerksam zu machen wie düster die Welt ohne Glauben wäre. Neben Lyells Theories über die Geschichte der Erde, werden auch Darwin's Werke *On the Origin of Species* und *On the Descent of Man* ausführlich in verschiedenen Gedichten, wie zum Beispiel Alexander Andersons „A Song of Progress“ und Frederick William Orde Wards „Progress?“, diskutiert. Ein Gedicht, dass die Rückbesinnung auf Gott fordert, und auf Gottes Omnipräsenz aufmerksam macht, ist „God's Grandeur“ von Gerald Manley Hopkins.

Lebenslauf

persönliche Daten

Name: Julia Prikoszovits
Wohnort: Siegendorf, im Burgenland
Staatszugehörigkeit: Österreich
Familienstand: ledig
Religionsbekenntnis: röm.-kath.
E-Mail: Julia.priko@gmx.at

Schulbildung

1991-1995 Volksschule Siegendorf
1995-1999 Gymnasium der Diözese Eisenstadt
1999-2004 HAK Eisenstadt
Juni 2004 Matura
Oktober 2004 Beginn des Lehramtstudiums
April 2009 Studienabschluss