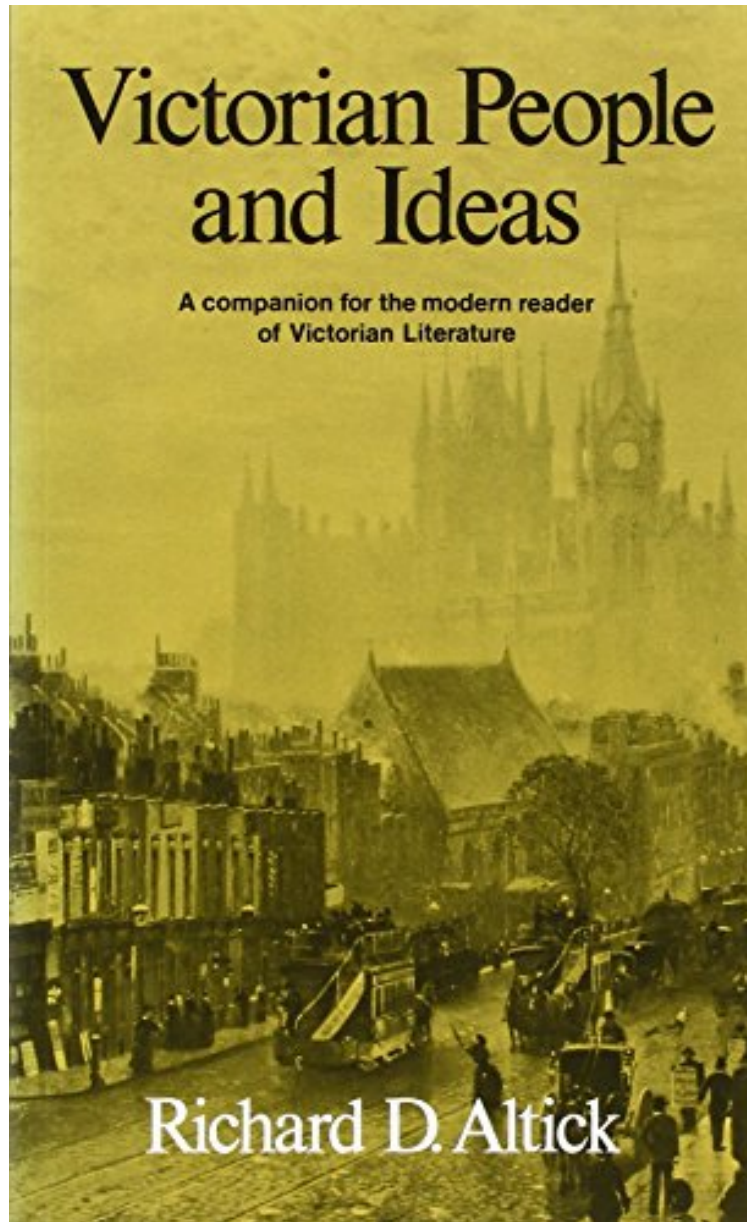


(Free) Victorian People and Ideas: A Companion for the Modern Reader of Victorian Literature

Victorian People and Ideas: A Companion for the Modern Reader of Victorian Literature

Richard D. Altick

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Richard D. Altick : Victorian People and Ideas: A Companion for the Modern Reader of Victorian Literature before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Victorian People and Ideas: A Companion for the Modern Reader of Victorian Literature:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Very Fine Summary of Social, Economic, Political and Religious Developments By James Ellsworth This is the book for 'arm chair' history lovers who want to get a general overview of the life and times of people in Victorian England. Richard D. Altick is a fine and readable writer with a gift for picking out the significant and the interesting in his subject. The book begins with an overview of 'The Longest Reign (1837-1901) and goes on to discuss the various parts/classes of Victorian society--the aristocracy, the gentry and middle class, the 'lower orders'; the progress of manufacturing from cottage to factories and the rise of slums to house workers; the role of and view of women in the home and in society; the growth of a reading public and the power of the press; urbanization; the age of steam railroads and various intellectual movements such as Utilitarianism. This last-mentioned chapter contains a fine summary of the seeds of America's current 'tea party' movement, with its succinct summary of Pre-Victorian economic and social philosophies that have been studied and have held sway in the minds of Conservatives ever after. The contesting voices of Morality and Economics are presented in a highly informative and interesting manner. Further major chapters cover the rise of a middle class Evangelical spirit; an exploration of Victorian Anglicanism, including the crisis religious people felt over Darwinism and alternatives to traditional faith such as rationalism, positivism and science-based natural theology; Democracy, Industry and Culture; the Nature of Art and Its Place in Society and, finally, an overview section assessing the anti-Victorian reaction and the rebirth of interest in the era since the 1960's. The book features lots of narrative, without being excessively burdened by dates, events and 'little' facts. The emphasis here is on understanding and readability. There are also a good number of interesting photographic plates showing art, popular illustrations, school classrooms, gentle readers, a library reading room full of patrons and so on. These pages add interest and convey a compact understanding of some of the points in the text. All in all, this is a highly readable and enjoyable text. If I forget the details, I can use a helpful index to look things up again!

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Essential reading for Victorian lit lovers By Elizabeth If you love Victorian literature, this book will shed a whole new light on your favorite novels. Richard Altick has composed a compelling view of the many changes that rocked nineteenth-century England. The Victorian era witnessed many changes in science, technology and religion. The railroad transformed England's green landscape. The opening of mills created jobs with oppressive conditions. The gap between the rich and the poor widened. The Victorian era was a time of rampant change. Religious sects clashed with other sects and with political movements. Writers and artists in the nineteenth century attempted to portray the many changes that transformed Regency England into what we call the Victorian era. I have been reading Victorian literature for some time, however, I still found this book incredibly insightful. Many of us have a Victorian fetish, but many would be surprised to know that many Victorians hated what industrialization did to their existence. Although the nineteenth century brought with it many modern inventions, poverty and disease made many long for the distant past. This is accurately portrayed by some of the poets and artists of the period, specifically the Pre-Raphaelites. An excellent book for Victorian era lovers.

31 of 32 people found the following review helpful. Superb reading! By Tracy Marks I am pleasantly surprised at what a marvelous read this book is! Altick provides a very thorough background on Victorian history, people, philosophy, economics, politics, religion, literature etc. which is not only highly informative but also fascinating. After carrying this book everywhere for a week and delighting at even having the opportunity to read two pages at a time, I found myself returning to .com to look for other books by the same author. Altick not only knows the Victorian experience (and its development and changes throughout the 19th century), but he knows how to present it in a manner which is highly illuminating. Another plus is how, perhaps without meaning to, he provides a backdrop for socio-political-economic developments of the 20th century, which not only affected Great Britain, but spread across the Atlantic to the U.S. As a result, I am not only becoming much more knowledgeable about Victorian times and able to understand the context of the Victorian novels I have been reading, but I have become more aware of the philosophies, value systems and practices which have shaped western society today. This is one of the best nonfiction books I have ever read.

Life in the Victorian period, focusing on the social, religious, scientific, and artistic movements that characterized the age. The reputation of the Victorian age in England has undergone many vicissitudes, but it is now higher than ever. In this important study, Richard D. Altick moves us toward an understanding of the social, intellectual, and theological crises that Carlyle and Dickens, Tennyson and Arnold were daily struggling to solve. And the issues were many: the revolution in class structure and class attitudes; the rise of utilitarianism and the evangelical spirit; the crisis in religion, including the Oxford movement and Darwinism; the democratization of culture; the place of art and the artist in an industrial, bourgeois society; the effects of industrialism, especially on the way people live. Altick brings to the discussion of these complicated questions the lively and sensitive intelligence that his many readers have come to expect. He includes contemporary illustrations and a full reference index.