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Assessment: Prompt
Undisciplining the Victorian Classroom

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Assessment: The British Literary Profile Project
Course: British Literature II (intermediate, undergraduate course)
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Context:
British literature does not merely include authors from England, but a wide array of voices that spoke from myriad British imperial socio-political landscapes. You already have a sense of this wide scope of British literature from our course readings by authors such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Charles Dickens, Toru Dutt, and Olive Shcreiner. As we continue reading authors from Britain and its colonial nations, I now invite you to contribute to the selected repository of authors—British literary profiles—with the British Literary Profile Project.

We will acknowledge and analyze the nuances of Britain's imperial history with this assignment, as a step toward undisciplining (see external link) and widening the scope of British literature in our classroom. Undisciplining British literature, in the context of our classroom, entails conceptualizing British literature beyond canonical authors and lengthy, canonical texts. As a result, we have read or will read shorter texts and excerpts by a diversity of authors, including both well-known and lesser-known writers from Britain and its colonies. As you begin working on your British Literary Profile Project, we will continue reading texts that represent this vast literary expanse—for example, on the week you are introduced to this assignment, we will read poems by British poet laureate Alfred, Lord Tennyson and Indian Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore.

You, as the author of your British Literary Profile Project, have the power and the cognitive responsibility to select a British/Anglophone author to add to this vast repository we are studying. This means that you can either select a lesser-known author to rediscover and critically analyze or critically reevaluate a well-known author and their works.

Prompt:
Conduct research and select a writer who lived between the eighteenth century and the present day (i.e. 1700-present) from Britain or a British colonial nation, and write a literary profile essay describing their life and works. Your literary profile essay should introduce the author of your choice and their literary output, and then critically discuss their contribution to the wide expanse of British literature.

Research

Remember that I will guide you through the research process step by step in class. Your research for this project should ideally begin simply, with an online search directed toward your own interests. For example, if you are interested in nineteenth-century women's poetry, begin with an online search for "nineteenth-century British/colonial women's poetry." Carefully peruse the sources your initial search yields and identify a few non-scholarly and scholarly sources. Navigate toward studying one scholarly source—this may be a journal article, an essay in a digital-humanities project, a scholarly book—and select an author of your choice to learn more about, and base your essay on. Next, utilize the scholarly databases available to you through the university library, such as *JSTOR*, to conduct further research on this author as you draft your original profile essay. Your original contribution will expand the scholarly knowledge-base of our class as a whole, and add valuable meaning to our collective, twenty-first century understanding of British literature. The research process is described in further detail in the "Process" section below.

Justification

Justify your choice in the introduction of your essay. Either provide evidence that the writer has not received proper acknowledgement or justify that, although well-known, the writer needs to be studied with a renewed and original focus on their works. For example, Charles Dickens, celebrated canonical British novelist, or Elizabeth Barrett Browning, celebrated canonical British poet, may not be particularly strong choices for your essay, unless you can write about them with a renewed critical focus that has been largely overlooked. You may draw inspiration from the authors we have read in class, such as Toru Dutt, Olive Schreiner, and Amy Levy. However, instead of writing about lesser-known authors already in our course syllabus, you should select a new writer to examine in your British Literary Profile Project.

Visual Elements

You may add complementary photographs/visual elements at the end of your essay. While these visual elements will make your essay appear more aesthetically attractive to readers, they are not a requirement, and will not be considered part of the required length of writing. Remember that your readers will learn about the author of your choice primarily from your writing.

Process:

First Week:

You will conduct preliminary research on the internet to select British/colonial authors based on the field of *your* interest. For example, if you are interested in women's poetry search for British/colonial women poets. In contrast, if you are interested in philosophical prose/prose fiction such as novels, look for writers specific to those genres.

Second Week:

Once you have shortlisted two or three writers, you will have the opportunity to share your findings in class, which will enable you to make the final choice for your essay. You will also discuss and finalize the scholarly sources that you will use for your writing.

Third Week:
You will workshop and peer-review the first draft of your essay with your peers in class. I will also individually conference with you in class to help you begin your revisions.

Fourth Week:
Following the peer-review and conference sessions, you will revise your writing and submit your final British Literary Profile Project essay.

Prompt Questions:

As you conduct research, ask yourself these questions:
- Is the writer of my choice a "British" literary profile based on nationality and/or the colonial expanse of the British empire?
- Does the writer help break a stereotype, i.e. challenge traditional notions of what constitutes "British"? If yes, how? If no, did they break any norm while being quintessentially "British" or is there a particular characteristic of their work that is yet to be explored?
- What is their contribution to literature? Is there a particular publication that defines their writing? How does their writing and/or your examination of it help us widen the scope of British literature?
- What is the significance of their work to twenty-first century scholars of British literature?

Formatting:
- **Document type –** MS Word. Shared Google Docs will not be accepted.
- **Length –** 2 full pages to 3 pages of writing and an MLA Works Cited page listing all the online and physical sources you used to gather the information required for writing your profile essay. Anything under 2 full pages of writing will be considered shorter than the required minimum length. If you exceed the limit, keep your writing under 4 full pages.
- **Font, Margins, and Spacing –** Times New Roman 12-point font, 1-inch margin on all sides, double-spacing. To ensure a uniform standard for all students, you are required to follow these font, margin, and spacing requirements.

Submission:
There will be a Turnitin portal on eCourses for the British Literary Profile Project. You will be able to access this portal as usual in the weekly Modules on eCourses. Upload your essay to the portal as an MS Word document by the due date.

Note on Originality:
As per our course policy, your writing must be original (written by you) and not copied from other sources. All sources used should be duly credited using the MLA formatting style. You are not allowed to submit papers that you or anyone else has submitted for any other course or any other previous or concurrent course. Papers with plagiarized/copied content will receive 0 points and be reported for disciplinary action for academic dishonesty.

Grade: 250 points (this is a major assignment worth 25% of the total course grade)
Your British Literary Profile Project will be graded on the following attributes.

Content
This refers to your choice of author and justification for this choice. Your essay should persuasively demonstrate that the author you have chosen to write about needs to be critically studied by scholars. Content also entails the substance and length of your essay. Your essay should offer adequate details, historical context, and exposition, and analysis of the author's life and work(s), and meet the minimum page requirement for the assessment

Organization
Paragraphs and sections should flow smoothly. Topic sentences and concluding sentences should be used adequately to give your essay a structure that is easy for your readers to follow.

Clarity
Carefully edit and proofread your writing to eliminate any typographical/syntax errors. Such minor errors often add up and cause difficulties in reading.

Grading Rubric:

Grade/Points	Comment
A (225-250)	**Content**: Thoughtful choice of British literary profile. Informative essay with excellent justification for choice. Your essay clearly conveys how it rediscovers a lesser-known author or critically reevaluates a well-known author and their works. Page length satisfied. **Organization**: Smooth transition of paragraphs and ideas. **Clarity**: Excellent.
B (200-224)	**Content**: Thoughtful choice of British literary profile. Informative essay with satisfactory justification for choice. Page length satisfied. **Organization**: Transition between paragraphs needs some improvement. **Clarity**: Good.
C (175-199)	**Content**: Better choice of British literary profile possible. Clearer justification needed for choice. Page length satisfied. **Organization**: Transition between paragraphs needs considerable improvement. **Clarity**: Acceptable, but needs editing and proofreading.

D (150-174)

Content: Choice of British literary profile not satisfactory. Does not fulfill several assignment requirements and/or minimum page length.
Organization: Lack of smooth transition between paragraphs.
Clarity: Needs thorough editing and proofreading.

F (0-149)

Content: Missing / largely unrelated to assignment requirements / considerably shorter than minimum page length / plagiarized.
Organization: NA
Clarity: NA