Analysis of the term 'victorian'

How useful is the term ‘ Victorian’?

The era of Queen Victoria’s reign witnessed the passing of milestones in social, economic, and personal progress. It was the age of industrialisation, a time of travel, a battleground for the conflict between science and religion. Yet further to these great markers by which many of us recognise the nineteenth century, and indeed because of them, Victoria’s reign inspired change within the individual; a revaluation of what it meant to be a human being. The literary artists gave new form to the questions on the lips of the society around them: questions that were no longer so easily answered by Christianity. This essay will explore how the term ‘ Victorian’ does or doesn’t fit into the context from which it supposedly arises. I will look at trends such as the development of literary criticism, pioneering scientific discoveries, the exploration into psychic phenomenon, the increasing independence of women, the mapping of the world, – all of which contribute to what we know and understand as ‘ Victorian’, and have in some way shaped the work of authors such as Eliot, Conan Doyle, and H. G Wells. Using some close textual analysis I hope to identify the nature of the inspiration behind the literature of the time and whether or not such work transcends the limits of the term ‘ Victorian.’

Many great literary minds of the time – such as Arnold, Dickens, and Ruskin helped define the era in their critical attitudes towards it. (Davis 2002, p. 10). Criticism appears to have become a form of exploration in an attempt to turn what concerned and worried the artist into something that questioned and reassured. Arnold, in his Essays in Criticism (Arnold, 1865, p. V) explains how he perceives the difference between logical and artistic thought –

The truth is I have never been able to ht it off happily with the logicians, and it would be mere affectation in me to give myself the airs of doing so. They imagine truth something to be proved, I something to be seen; they something to be manufactured, I as something to be found.

It is this growing awareness of difference that was to become a defining feature of Victorian literature. Differences appeared in the very perception of things, which led to feelings of isolation, despair, alienation – all prominent themes in nineteenth century work. In Arnold's *A Summer Night* (Arnold 1913, p. 167) we see the poetic mind struggling to find meaning on a moonlit street where the windows, like hostile faces, are ' silent and white, unopening down':

And the calm moonlight seems to say — *Hast thou then still the old unquiet breast That neither deadens into rest Nor ever feels the fiery glow That whirls the spirit front itself away,* 30 *But fluctuates to and fro Never by passion quite possess'd And never quite benumb'd by the world's sway? —* And I, I know not if to pray Still to be what I am, or yield, and be Like all the other men I see.

Arnold recognises that the society around him is unfulfilled, that men are giving ' their lives to some unmeaning taskwork' and he questions whether he should be questioning at all. He is aware of a gap between the reality of working life and life outside of work; a difference that he strives to find explanation for. Arnold appears to be lost amidst the streets of his own mind – afraid of not being able to define who he is, what he is. These feelings in

part express what it meant to be a Victorian – struggling to place thoughts and feelings which appear to no longer fit into society.

The Victorian era contained much of what had past and much of what was still to come – it cannot be seen as an isolated time, nor as an isolated term. It contained aspects of the Romantic period – for instance in Arnold's poem, *The Buried Life,* we see vestiges of Wordsworth's legacy of *Ode to Immortality.* In both poems there is a sense of something lost – an old passion or instinct that has gone with the passing of time – yet Arnold, unlike Wordsworth, finds it more difficult to come to terms with this: ' A longing to inquire / Into the mystery of this heart that beats / So wild, so deep in us, to know / Whence our thoughts come and where they go.' (Arnold 1913, p. 170). The language is more passionately discontent than the resolute tone of Wordsworth's visionary acceptance: ' We will grieve not, rather find/Strength in what remains behind.' (Wordsworth 1928, p. 136). The styles are obviously connected, but the trouble with defining the era using literary terminology is that it is clearly neither a quirky extension of the Romantic's vision, nor is it a straightforward path to the modernists. The 1870's saw the maturation of authors such as Anthony Trollope who brought out his later novels, yet only twenty years later in 1896 these publications are sitting beside the considerably different form and subject matter of work such as H. G. Wellls' *The Time Machine* and *The Island of Dr. Moreau,* with literary experiments with the modern – such as Richard Jefferies' *The Story of My Heart* – occurring between in 1883.

A growing concern in nineteenth century life was the potential loss of the Romantic link between human nature and the natural world, and the gap

which sudden industrial progress highlighted between nature and mechanisation. As technology developed so did the notion of artificiality. It is worth noting J. S. Mill's essay on Nature (Mill 1874, p. 65) where he says that it is man's nature to be artificial, to remedy nature by artificial pruning and intervention. Further to this, a contemporary of Mill's – Richard Jennings – also drew a line between the ' province of human nature' and the ' external world.' (Lightman 1997, p. 80). In the countryside more efficient methods of farming were employed (see the contrast between Henchard's methods and Farfrae's ' ciphering and mensuration' in Hardy's *Mayor of Casterbridge* , (Hardy 1886, p. 122)), and new machines introduced which no longer required the labour force to run them, encouraging people to migrate to towns and cities. The urban reality was harsh – in 1851 roughly four million people were employed in trade and manufacture and mining, leaving only one and a half million in agriculture. (Davis 2002, p. 13). City life, as portrayed by Dickens, was a cruel, unhealthy and unwholesome existence for many (see *Bleak House* and *Little Dorritt).* However, much of his work was set in the period of his youth and childhood which was pre-Victorian. (Lawton (ed) 1995, p. xvi). Working conditions in cities were often cramped, unhygienic and poorly ventilated, and living conditions could be even worse. Mrs. Gaskell, living in Manchester, witnessed the appalling pressures that these conditions forced upon family life, and in *North and South* depicts the difficulties of urban living, offering that salvation for the working classes lay with themselves and their employers, working together. (see *North and South* 1855) However, city life was not all desolate – based in cities, the development of the detective novel brought the city back to human scale (Lehan, p. 84). Detectives pieced together and reconstructed past events

through clues – for example, the murder of Bartholomew Sholto in *The Sign of Four* by Conan Doyle:

As far as we can learn, no actual traces of violence were found upon Mr Sholto's person, but a valuable collection of Indian gems which the deceased gentleman had inherited from his father had been carried off. The discovery was first made by Mr Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson (…) Mr. Athelney Jones, the well-known member of the detective police force, happened to be at the Norwood police station (…) Mr Jones' well-known technical knowledge and his powers of minute observation have enabled him to prove conclusively that the miscreants could not have entered by the door or by the window but must have made their way across the roof of the building, and so through a trapdoor into a room which communicated with that in which the body was found. (p. 66)

The city provided an exciting backdrop to crime scenes – its labyrinthine streets similar to the mapping of the pathways of the human mind so that the two became inextricably linked. As Joseph McLaughlin says in *Writing the Urban Jungle,* ' the urban jungle is a space that calls forth a pleasurable acquiescence to something greater, more powerful, and, indeed, sublime (…) also an imaginative domain that calls forth heroic action: exploring, conquering, enlightening, purifying, taming, besting.' (McLaughlin 2000, p. 3).

Further to what McLaughlin suggests, the Victorians' perception of time and space in the city *and* the countryside was changing radically from the medieval perceptions that still existed in the Romantic period. People saw

the finished products in both manufacturing and farming no longer involving the long, drawn-out means to an end, instead the end result was being achieved faster and with more control. Here developed the root of modern industry which continues today in intensive farming and factory lines. Yet here too the beginnings of waste and excess. Richard Jefferies, a nineteenth century naturalist and mystic, known for his essays on nature, remarks on the abundance of food in the natural world in his essay *Meadow Thoughts:*

The surface of the earth offers to us far more than we can consume – the grains, the seeds, the fruits, the animals, the abounding products are beyond the power of all the human race to devour. They can, too, be multiplied a thousandfold. There is no natural lack. Whenever there is lack among us it is from artificial causes, which intelligence should remove. (Jefferies, 1994, p. 26).

Unfortunately there was plenty for those who could afford it but not enough to spare for the poorer lower classes. (Ritvo 1997, p. 194). Trends of over production and wastage which became a worry in Victorian times are reflected in the literary concerns of Jefferies' spiritual autobiography *The Story of My Heart,* and in his children's story, *Bevis,* where words, despite their abundance, are in danger of becoming an insufficient medium of expression and not filling the metaphysical space on the page. In describing a sunrise and the thoughts and feelings associated with watching it, Jefferies struggles to articulate the beauty before him:

The sun had not yet stood out from the orient, but his precedent light shone through the translucent blue. Yet it was not blue, nor is there any word, nor is a word possible to convey the feeling. (Jefferies 1881, p. 391)

We see too in James Thomson's *City of Dreadful Night* (Thomson 1892, p. 2) the desperateness of trying to articulate thoughts and feelings:

Because a cold rage seizes one at whiles To show the bitter old and wrinkled truth Stripped naked of all vesture that beguiles, False dreams, false hopes, false masks and modes of youth; Because it gives some sense of power and passion In helpless impotence to try to fashion Our woe in living words howe'er uncouth.

In both passages there is a sense of trying to convey so much more than the words will allow. And that is the essence of the problem of defining the era with a word which the era itself selected – ' Victorian' like the authors of its time struggles to convey the enormity and the condensed nature of its changing environment. Victorian literature is thus perhaps best studied between the lines of its texts rather than for what it offers at face value. Thomson's words ' to try to fashion our woe in living words' although appearing dismal could actually withhold a more positive message: it deals with the notion of perseverance – that by creating words, however difficult, the author is refusing to give in to despair by trying to transform it into creative energy.

There is a sense of crisis in the work of Thomson, just as there is to be found in Jefferies futuristic *After London* where the lone explorer Felix discovers the land after humanity has overreached itself to sociological disaster and has

lost the harmonious relationship between mankind and nature. London becomes no more than a crystallised ruin in a ground oozing with poison – ‘ unctuous and slimy, like a thick oil.’ (Jefferies 1885, p. 205). Through work like this we see that ‘ Victorian’ was an era of possibility – where visions of the future suddenly became tangible concerns and possible realities, and where contemporary conceptions of language and life might no longer hold up to the pressures of the time. In H. G. Wells’ *the Time Machine,* the time traveller discovers a land in the year 802, 701:

The air was free from gnats, the earth from weeds or fungi; everywhere were fruits and sweet and delightful flowers; brilliant butterflies flew hither and thither. The ideal of preventative medicine was attained. diseases had been stamped out. I saw no evidence of any contagious diseases during all my stay. And i shall have to tell you later that even the processes of putrefaction and decay had been profoundly affected by these changes. (Wells 1995, p. 28)

In this description of a futuristic age the Victorian imagination still retains the idea of a paradise – a place full of ‘ butterflies’ and ‘ flowers.‘ This Christian concept is a literary hangover from Milton’s Paradise Lost, and remains an important theme for the moderns such as D. H. Lawrence. (see *The Rainbow).* The Victorian age suffered from a dualistic split between a bright future on the one hand – promised by leaps in technology, education and economical success – and an increasingly alienated, confused society on the other. There were those writers like Huxley who believed that by human intervention within a political and economic framework humans could evolve out of their condition – seeing ‘ no limit to the extent to which intelligence

and will (…) may modify the conditions of existence’ (Huxley 1911, p. 149), and there were those like Hardy whose characters were destined to fail because they were not emotionally fitted into the cosmos out of which they evolved. (see *Tess* and *Jude the Obscure)* .

It was the nineteenth century spiritual crisis which precipitated the literary shift into the new genre of the realist novel. By the mid-nineteenth century, society had begun to grow away from the idea of atonement for sin within an omnipotent religion, where judgement would come solely in heaven, and towards the more humanistic idea of God as in-dwelling, so that salvation could be achieved on earth:

We have now come to regard the world not as a machine, but as an organism, a system in which, while the parts contribute to the growth of the whole, the whole also reacts upon the development of the parts; and whose primary purpose is its own perfection, something that is contained within and not outside itself, an internal end: while in their turn the myriad parts of this universal organism are also lesser organisms, ends in and for themselves, pursuing each its lonely ideal of individual completeness. (Gore (ed) 1890, p. 211)

A spiritual lack created a need to define, order and categorise a world that suddenly appeared chaotic. When Darwin published *On the Origin of Species* in 1859 he raised issues of public concern as to the truth of the bible and the essence of Christianity. However, it’s content and its methodology were seriously criticised (Appleman 2001, p. 200). It was a difficult work to accept as it caused the public to rethink and redefine their history – that they were

a product of evolution and not a tailor made being came as a shock. The future of thought and literature was suddenly changed as people tried to sew together the threads of the past. Natural Science became a national obsession – exotic flora and fauna from across the world were brought into London daily, to be displayed in the British Museum or Kew Gardens (Lightman, 1997 p. 1). In literature, we see the author begin to play the part of evolutionist: Eliot's *Middlemarch* although concerned with the evolving character of Dorothea Brooke follows the threads of sub-plots and the successes and failures of other characters which form a pattern of development. As Gillian Beer says:

There is not one ' primitive tissue', just as there is not one ' key to all mythologies' (…) emphasis upon plurality, rather than upon singleness, is crucial to the developing argument of *Middlemarch* . (Beer 2000, p. 143).

Gone is the tradition of the valiant hero or heroine singularly conquering their environment (a trend set by classics such as Homer's *The Odyssey)* and in its place a landscape upon which the author grafts and nurtures developing shoots of life. It is this sort of growth that is in danger of remaining unseen to the contemporary historian or critic as it can become shrouded by generalising concepts which are so often prescribed to the term ' Victorian' – concepts such as ' repression', ' old-fashioned' and ' prudish.' (http://www. victorianweb. org/vn/victor4. html). These sort of terms restrict the individual's perception of the era when it was a time when growth was encouraged rather than restricted. Authors used the metaphor of pruning and nurturing plant life to symbolise the development of the self – for example in *North and South* Gaskell discusses the problem of the working

individual who struggles to reach his or her potential when the manufacturers are ‘ unsparingly cutting away all off-shoots in the direction of literature or high mental cultivation, in hopes of throwing the whole strength and vigour of the plant into commerce.’ (Gaskell 1865, p. 69). For Gaskell, it is through the everyday interaction between people that such difficulties are given the chance to be overcome.

And this was the essence of the realist novel – set amidst a world which had witnessed such alteration – to transform the lostness felt by society into a seeing of the smaller things in life which could withhold qualities of greater spiritual value. As Philip Davis says, ‘ the realist novel was the holding ground, the meeting point, for the overlapping of common life.’ (Davis 2002, p. 144). And it was within this common life that a more calm acceptance of the new state could be achieved. Gillian Beer suggests that through her novel’s organisation Eliot creates order and understanding of the evolving process of novel-writing. In *Middlemarch,* the naming of Casaubon‘ s books – ‘ Waiting for Death’, ‘ Two Temptations’, ‘ Three Love Problems’ draws attention to the book’s organisation by emphasising categorisation:

But the process of reading leads into divergence and variability. Even while we are observing how closely human beings conform in the taxonomy of events we learn how differently they feel and think. For Dorothea and Casaubon waiting for death means something very different from what it means for Mary Garth and Featherstone. The *relations* are different. The distances between people are different. Lydgate, here at one with the project of the book, ‘ longed to demonstrate the more intimate relations of living structure’ (1: 15: 225). In this double emphasis on conformity and variability

George Eliot intensifies older literary organisations by means of recent scientific theory. In Darwinian theory, variability is the creative principle, but the type makes it possible for us to track common ancestry and common kinship. (Beer 2000, pp. 143-4)

Writing itself was becoming an almost divine representation, an inner order of a chaotic external world. The idea that humans had evolved from primates meant that the boundaries between what was one thing and what was another were no longer so clearly defined. There developed a fear of the animate and a fear of the inanimate, and efforts were sought to understand them. As Harriet Ritvo says in *The Platypus and the Mermaid:*

Depending on the beholder, an anomaly might be viewed as embodying a challenge to the established order, whether social, natural, or divine; the containment of that challenge; the incomprehensibility of the creation by human intelligence; or simply the endless and diverting variety of the world. And beholders who agreed on the content of the representation could still disagree strongly about its moral valence – whether it was good or bad, entrancing or disgusting. (Ritvo 1997, p. 148).

In a world where categorisation was important but not so easily achievable, the novel too became neither one thing nor another; realism became a melting pot for ideas, a sort of hybrid of styles. In Eliot's *The Lifted Veil* realism is used as a vehicle for the exploration of her ideas into psychology and psychic phenomena. Latimer's clairvoyance forces him to endure a painful insight into the minds of the people around him:

I began to be aware of a phase in my abnormal sensibility, to which, from the languid and slight nature of my intercourse with others since my illness, I had not been alive before. This was the obtrusion on my mind of the mental process going forward in first one person, and then another, with whom I happened to be in contact: the vagrant, frivolous ideas and emotions of some uninteresting acquaintance–Mrs Filmore, for example–would force themselves on my consciousness like an importunate, ill-played musical instrument, or the loud activity of an imprisoned insect. But this superadded consciousness, wearying and annoying enough when it urged on me the trivial experience of indifferent people, became an intense pain and grief when it seemed to be opening to me the souls of those who were in a close relation to me – when the rational talk, the graceful attentions, the wittily-turned phrases, and the kindly deeds, which used to make the web of their characters, were seen as if thrust asunder by a microscopic vision, that showed all the intermediate frivolities, all the suppressed egoism, all the struggling chaos of puerilities, meanness, vague capricious memories, and indolent make-shift thoughts, from which human words and deeds emerge like leaflets covering a fermenting heap.(Eliot 1859, pp. 13-14)

Latimer is no longer caught up in the ‘ web’ of people’s characters. Eliot plays with the idea that his consciousness has the ability to transcend the mundane – the ’rational talk’, the ’kindly deeds’ – in order to gain insight into an alternative and not so rosy vision of the mechanics of the human mind where thoughts are ‘ make-shift’ and ‘ chaotic.’ The nineteenth century saw the acceptance of the concept of otherworldly phenomena into the working classes. Robert Owen, a social reformer, who influenced the British Labor

movement (Oppenheim 1985, p. 40) encouraged many working class ‘ Owenites’ to ‘ follow him into the spiritualist fold, where they enthusiastically continued their ongoing search for the ‘ new moral world.’’ Interests such as spiritualism and psychology which had previously been more underground pursuits, were brought out into the open. The concept of telepathy, a term coined by Frederic Myers in 1882 (Luckhurst 2002, p. 1) even helped to ‘ theorize the uneasy cross-cultural encounters at the colonial frontier.’ (Luckhurst 2002, p. 3) These developments suggest that the Victorians felt imbued with the power of their age – they felt confident of their ability to communicate on different planes of consciousness. So it could be argued that ‘ Victorian’ was not simply a time devoted to the discovery of the self and the workings of the inner mind, but a time that also focused on the projection of ideas and thoughts outside of the self; ideas which themselves stand outside of the category ‘ Victorian.’

In 1869 the Spiritualist Newspaper began selling first as a fortnightly, then as a weekly publication. (Oppenheim 1985, p. 45). This draws the discussion to the point of representation – the social nature of Victorians seems to suggest that they enjoyed the focus being on themselves. Self-obsession is an aspect of the time which the term ‘ Victorian’ usefully represents: by specifically referring to the rule of the Queen the term draws attention to the importance of the individual. The era saw the development of many different styles of fashion and the use of photography. As part of the Freudian influence great importance was placed on childhood and it was during the nineteenth century that the first laws concerning child welfare were passed. (Mavor

quoted from Brown (ed) 2001, p. i) The focus on the central, the ego, was paramount. As Mavor says,

it was as if the camera had to be invented in order to document what would soon be lost, childhood itself; and childhood had to be invented in order for the camera to document childhood (a fantasy of innocence) as real. (Brown (ed) 2001, p. 27).

Perhaps because of society's awareness of change there seems to have been a necessity to record and keep track of the world around. Discovery took place on a much grander scale in the exploration of the world. The British Empire was global, yet as Patrick Brantlinger suggests in *Rule of Darkness,* (Brantlinger 1988, p. 4) imperialism was not generally reflected in the literature of the time. What we do see evidence of however is the mapping of new worlds and territories (see Robert Louis Stevenson' s *Treasure Island* and Richard Jefferies' *Bevis).* The development of the adventure story suggests that Victorians desired to explore what lay outside of what they knew and in this respect the term ' Victorian' – which people can think of as representing a society closed within in itself – is misleading. The rise of imperialism began to shape the ideological dimensions of subjects studied in school (Bristow 1991, p. 20) and so through literature the Victorian child was offered an exciting world of sophisticated representation and ideas with the knowledge that the world was theirs to explore. Does the term then encourage us to think of the society as a class of people set apart from the rest of the world?

In *The Island of Dr. Moreau* it is not just the future of science that is explored but the concept of a new territory and its effects on the mind. For example, when the protagonist first sees the beast-servant on board the ship he is immediately frightened:

I did not know then that a reddish luminosity, at least, is not uncommon in human eyes. The figure, with its eyes of fire, struck down through all my adult thoughts and feelings, and for a moment the forgotten horrors of childhood came back to my mind. Then the effect passed as it had come. An uncouth black figure of a man, a figure of no particular import, hung over the taffrail, against the starlight. (Wells 1997, p. 31).

The circumstances of being at sea is disorientating and causes the imagination to play tricks so that the man is first one thing – ‘ a figure with its eyes of fire’ and then suddenly becomes an ‘ uncouth black figure of a man.’ The effect is that the protagonist suddenly regresses to the ’forgotten horrors of childhood.’ This sudden fluctuation is important as it represents the fluidity of the era and how change and discovery on a global scale, although empowering, also caused instability within the individual. Therefore, when considering the age in the context of its name we can understand that the term was perhaps created out of both the desire to represent achievement but also out of a need to belong.

This desire to belong which manifested itself during an age ruled by one woman placed great importance on the role of the female in society. It was a time when women began to travel and write without the necessity of using a pseudonym (see Cheryl McEwan on Kingsley in West Africa, (2000, p. 73)). In

books such as Hardy's *Tess* the idea of the fallen woman is tested: Tess attempts to rediscover paradise at Talbothays but ultimately a life with her lover is denied. The nineteenth century began to be more explicit concerning issues of gender: for example, the relationship between Arthur Munby and Hannah Cullwick (see McClintock 1995, pp. 132-138) where Cullwick is photographed cross-dressed as a farm worker. A ' Victorian' man however appears to have had more stigma attached to him and in this context the term is commonly associated with heroism and English valour (Ridley/Dawson 1994, p. 110). There is less flexibility surrounding the notion of Victorian men -as if the term somehow threatened their masculinity. However, this did not seem to affect the male authors of the time. Lewis Carroll captured the public imagination through *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* which although following the story of a little girl, depicts many male characters. (see Carroll 2000).

In conclusion, the term ' Victorian' although useful to refer to a specific time period in history, does however encourage us to make sweeping generalisations without investigating how diverse the era was. In terms of the subject matter of Victorian Literature there is no clear cut distinction between early, middle and late Victorian – for example, Bulwer-Lytton (see *Zanoni* and *A Strange Story)* attempts at the beginning of the century what Richard Jefferies does at the end – the difference is in style and form. Within that time frame there was condensed an incredible diversity of styles, tastes and attitudes, yet the term suffers from being associated with prejudices and assumptions about Victorians. However, it is worth bearing in mind that prejudices were indeed a part of Victorian society. When the Victorians

explored the rest of the world they made generalisations and assumptions based on what they found (eg: *The Island of Dr. Moreau*) – where experience and the nature of what is discovered defines behaviour. As a critic in 1858 wrote – ‘ we are living in an age of transition’ (quoted from Houghton 1957, p. 1); therefore when considering the Victorian age we should remember that values and trends were evolving – it was not a static time governed by repression or old fashioned values.

From the research carried out for this essay it appears that through the gaining of knowledge, Victorians also realised how little they knew and how much more there was to discover. As Arnold says in *The Buried Life:* How fair a lot to fill / Is left to each man still. (Arnold 1913, p. 168). In this context the term ‘ Victorian’ can be dualistically representative: discoveries of the time, although revolutionary, were often rudimentary in nature, and it was humbling for the individual to consider how much further knowledge and discovery had yet to go. On the other hand, the term suffers too from being inadequate: a single word is too smaller term for the vast wealth and diversity of discovery, and it could be argued that the era is better realised if seen as a second revolution. Like the Victorian authors themselves we are left with no suitable words to convey the entirety of an era – as John Lawton says in his introduction to *The Time Machine* (1995, p. xxvi) ‘ the term ‘ Victorian’ is used too loosely to encompass a sequence of eras, the diverse reign of a woman who lent her name to objects as diverse as a railway terminus and a plum….’

When studying Victorian Literature it is worth bearing in mind the fluidity of the time and the changeability which arose out of living on the cusp between

the passing away of old values and the unknown territory of the new. Realism recognised the gaps which were forming in society – such as the distancing of the self from religion – and offered to paper the cracks through its vision of bringing people together on a mundane level. It’s territory stretched to include the darkest recesses of the mind to the smallest of everyday events, celebrating the grey area between extremes as we now know as ‘ Victorian.’

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