

CFP: NVSA 2022
Recovery
Johns Hopkins University*
April 8-10, 2022

The Northeast Victorian Studies Association

Featuring a keynote panel

and a plenary “Field Work” panel

The Northeast Victorian Studies Association seeks proposals on its theme of “Recovery” for its annual conference. At a moment when recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is much talked of in the US, our call for papers asks how Victorian creators and creations— and those engaged with them— recovered, reconstructed, repaired, restored, revised, revived, or relapsed, and represented and theorized these processes.

We welcome papers on specific cases of societal and individual recovery, and on the intersections of those categories. What practices of recovery are found in Victorian creations “in the wake” of slavery, to use Christina Sharpe’s term? What practices of recovery do we find in the “aftermath”—to use Olivia Moy’s term— of Victorian literature and culture itself, from specific novels to imperialist projects? How did Victorians and their creations imagine, aid, or obstruct recovery from epidemics, economic depressions, ecological disasters, or accidents? How did they engage post-bellum recoveries, or lack thereof, after Waterloo, Crimea, the 1857 Rebellion, the US Civil War, and other conflicts?

“I was slow in recovering and, during the time, I had ample space for reflection, and the past unrolled itself before me. I resolved, over the wreck and ruin of my past life, to build a better and brighter future.”

~Frances E. W. Harper, *Iola Leroy*

We are interested in discussions of recovery as a critical, imaginative, and practical process among Victorian-era people, Neo-Victorian works, and scholars whose work touches Victorian and Neo-Victorian subjects. How did recovery fuel Victorian projects in philology, archaeology, and historiography?



A patient lies on a chaise-longue, while a nurse brings her some refreshment. Wood engraving by J.C. Griffiths after G.G. Kilburne.

How has art-making, including writing, functioned as a mode of recovery in an investigative sense, or a therapeutic one? How does recovery inform the medical humanities and narrative medicine? What are the periodizations, or rhythms, of recovery and its associated processes of repair, revision, relapse? How has recovery functioned as a mode of evasion, as a covering up?

We invite reflections on recovery in the context of research, pedagogy, and academic institutions, and in terms of Victorian Studies itself. What role does recovery as a motivation for research play in the field today? What have been the effects of the prominent history of feminist recovery projects in Victorian Studies? How might recovery methods intersect with approaches from Indigenous studies? with transimperial studies frameworks? What varied models of recovery might be useful for the field today? for the humanities or academia more broadly? How have teachers’ and students’ experiences of the intersecting public health pandemics of COVID and racism informed a sense of what is worth recovering, repairing, revising, or leaving behind?

*Because of the ongoing pandemic and due care being taken by universities, the site is only tentatively Johns Hopkins University, with another site in Baltimore, Maryland as a back-up. In the unlikely and terrible event that we have another shutdown, the conference will run as scheduled, but in a remote format.

Potential topics might include, but are in no way limited to, the following:

Pandemics, health, and the medical humanities

Medical innovations and practices (germ theory, genetics, etc)
Victorian quackery
Convalescence
Confinement, pregnancy, childbirth
Trauma
Therapy
Spas, resorts, taking the waters, airing, rest cures
Asylums
Vaccination and anti-vaccination
Psychoanalysis
Addiction and sobriety

"My house was full of sufferers—officers, their wives and children. Very often they were borne in from the ships in the harbour—sometimes in a dying state, sometimes after long and distressing struggles with the grim foe—to recover."

~Mary Seacole, *The Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands*

Economics

Bubbles, booms, and depressions ("Hungry 40s")
Bailouts
Slums and "urban renewal"

Postbellum recovery

Revolutions
Waterloo, Crimea, 1857 Rebellion
US Civil War and Reconstruction
"Shell shock" and PTSD

Natural and mechanical disasters

Earthquakes
Railway accidents
Climate change
Work-place injury
Famine

Living "in the wake"

Slavery
Reparations
Racial oppressions
Responses to Victorian theories of race
Reckoning with racism in the archive, canon, syllabus

Writing as recovery

Confessions, apologia
Journals, letters, autobiography
Historical fiction
Counterfactual and alternative histories
Recuperating defunct literary forms and genres
Grief, mourning, elegy

Victorian-era recovery projects

Archaeology
Philology
Egyptology
Classics
Historiography
Folklore
Collection and restitution of collected objects
Conjecture
Religious revival
Folk revival
Primitivism
Medievalism
Lost worlds
Recovery of vernacular aesthetic traditions
under— or after— imperialism
Recovery of sacred traditions under— or after
— imperialism

Scholarly and Victorianist recovery projects

Reparative reading (Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick)
Recovering "lost," "forgotten," "silenced" voices
Scholarly editions of non-canonical texts
Neo-Victorian literature
Feminist recovery and the history of Victorian
Studies
Archival recovery

Failures of recovery

Disability and chronic pain
Afterlives of slavery
Empire and forgetting
Trauma
Recovery as a weapon of cruel optimism ("Get over it")

"He recovered, rallied, relapsed again, having undergone such a process of blood-letting and calomel as showed the strength of his original constitution."

~W.M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*

"Recovery? But have I recovered? I walk, and eat and drink and talk; I can even sleep. I live the life of other living creatures. But I am wasted by a strange and deadly disease. I can never lay hold of my own inspiration. My head is filled with music which is certainly by me, since I have never heard it before, but which still is not my own, which I despise and abhor: little, tripping flourishes and languishing phrases, and long-drawn, echoing cadences."
~Vernon Lee, "The Wicked Voice"

Proposals (no more than 500 words) by **Oct. 15, 2021** (email submissions only, in Word format), submitted to: Mimi Winick, Chair, NVSA Program Committee: mwinick@hds.harvard.edu

Please note: all submissions to NVSA are evaluated anonymously. Successful proposals will stay within the 500-word limit and make a compelling case for the talk and its relation to the conference topic. Please do not send complete papers, and do not include your name on the proposal.

Please include your name, institution, email address, and proposal title in a cover letter.

Papers should take 15 minutes (20 minutes maximum) so as to provide ample time for discussion – a priority at NVSA events.

The Coral Lansbury Travel Grant (\$100.00) and **George Ford Travel Grant** (\$100.00), given in memory of key founding members of NVSA, are awarded annually to a graduate student, adjunct instructor, or independent scholar in need of travel support to deliver a paper at our conference. *Apply by indicating in your cover letter that you wish to be considered.* Please indicate from where you will be traveling, your projected expenses, and the extent of your funding from other sources.

NVSA relies upon donations to support its Mentorship Program, Graduate Student Essay Prize, keynote panels, and other endeavors.

Please Donate:

<https://nvsa.org/giving-to-nvsa/>

To join NVSA, or to renew your membership for 2021-2022, please visit our website at nvsa.org and click on "Membership."

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Graduate Student Essay Prize

The Northeast Victorian Studies Association (NVSA) is pleased to announce a new annual prize for essays that expand the geographic, ethnic, racial, and methodological diversity of scholarship in the field. The award will recognize work that foregrounds nineteenth-century texts, contexts, perspectives, and insights by or about British colonial subjects residing outside the metropole or by or about immigrants and their descendants residing within it. We also welcome submissions that speak more broadly to the centrality of race, ethnicity, and imperialism in the shaping of global Victorian literature and culture. Essays should be 20-30 pages long and authors must be graduate students at the time of submission.

Winners will receive registration to the annual NVSA conference and a \$250 check, and the prize committee will offer help, if wanted, in placing the essay with a journal. The prize is neither contingent on publication nor the promise of future publication. Submit essays by **February 15, 2022** to Sophia Hsu at Sophia.Hsu@lehman.cuny.edu

Diversity Mentorship Program

The Northeast Victorian Studies Association offers a Diversity Mentorship Program for 2021-2022 that seeks to enrich the field of Victorian studies by paving the way for a more inclusive professoriate that is representative of the populations we teach and serve. The program is especially geared towards graduate students of color, first-generation college students, students with disabilities, and trans/non-binary scholars whose work engages with critical race theory, postcolonial and transatlantic scholarship, disabilities studies, or related topics. Each cohort of mentors and mentees will provide a mutual support network while offering a platform to discuss professionalization issues and working towards equality in the field. More information and application available at: <https://nvsa.org/mentorship/>. Applications for 2021-2022 are due **October 15, 2021** to Daniel Wright at Daniel.Wright@utoronto.ca