

The Northeast Victorian Studies Association presents

SILENCES



Cornell University
April 10 – 12, 2026

NVSA Officers

President: Simon Reader (CUNY)

Vice-President: Mary Mullen (Villanova University)

Treasurer: Joan Dagle (Rhode Island College)

Historian: Anne Humpherys (CUNY)

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Eileen Gillooly, Anne Humpherys, George Levine, Tricia Lootens, Lisa Rodensky, Tyson Stolte, and Martha Vicinus

Conference Site Organizer

Elisha Cohn (Cornell University)

Conference Committee

Committee Chair: Will Glovinsky

Ronjaunee Chatterjee, Elisha Cohn, Sierra Eckert, Anna Henchman, Dennis Hogan, Amy King, Tricia Lootens, Meredith Martin, John MacNeill Miller, Mary Mullen, Diana Newby, Patrick O'Malley, Simon Reader, Jesse Rosenthal, Jason Rudy, Oishani Sengupta, Jonah Siegel, Mark Taylor, Michael Tondre, Olivia Lingyi Xu.

Mentorship Program Director

Oishani Sengupta (University of Texas at El Paso)

Mentees

Agam Balooni, Julia Chin, Reymundo Escobedo, Ailin Jain, Iana Seerung, Jungmin Yoo

Mentors

Rachel Ablow, Tanya Agathocleous, Aviva Briefel, Nasser Mufti, John Plotz, Greg Vargo

Expanding the Field Essay Prize Winner

2026: Ryan Carroll (The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), “The Aesthetics of Imperial Despair in *Zorg: A Story of British Guiana*.”

Honorable mentions: Preeshita Biswas (Texas Christian University), “Hair, Blood, Love, Sex, Protest: Transimperial Decadent New Woman Poetics in Imperial Japan.” Jungmin Yoo (Johns Hopkins University) “What it Takes to Personalize Geopolitics: The China Question and the Crisis of Moral Self-Understanding in *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* and *Little Dorrit*.”

Expanding the Field Essay Prize Committee

Meghna Sapui (Chair), Zarena Aslami, Olivia Lingyi Xu, and Jacob Romanow

Sonya Rudikoff Award Committee

Mary Mullen (Chair), Rachel Buurma, Cornelia Pearsall, Jesse Cordes Selbin, Danny Wright

Special thanks for the support and co-sponsorship of:

Cornell University Department of Literatures in English
Cornell Society of the Humanities
Professor Elisha Cohn
Alice E. Murdock

Conference On-Site Volunteers

Maria Al-Raes, Andrea Zamora Chavez, Carolina Elices, Reymundo Escobedo, Sarah Mittelman

Master of Horse

Reymundo Escobedo

And thank you to all the friends of NVSA who give so generously throughout the year.

Friday, April 10

A.D. White House, (27 E. Ave, Ithaca, NY)

1:30 (and following) **Registration**

2:00 Welcome

2:15 – 4:00 Panel 1: Reading Remnants

Chair: Mary Mullen

David Agruss, “Victorian Britain’s Silent Oriental
Prehistory: Geology, Auto-Imperialism, Deep Time”

Kexin Song, “Deciphering the Silent Archive: Language as
Weak Theory in Victorian Natural History”

Sarah Weaver, “The Schoolmaster and the Railroad:
Silencing the Remnants of the Medieval in the Victorian
Countryside”

4:00 – 4:15 Coffee

4:15 – 6:00pm Panel 2: Tacit Relations

Chair: Olivia Lingyi Xu

Erik Gray, “Mute Gestures: Michael Field’s Open Secrets”

Amy Huseby, “Secondary Help: The Gendered Silences of
Ruskin’s Dead Birds”

Ellis Hanson, “Wilde Silencing”

6:00 – 7:00 Drinks Reception

7:30 Small Group Dinners (various restaurants)



Sign-up here.

(Cost not included in registration)



Alfred Le Petit, "La Liberté de la presse," *Le Grelot*, 1872

Saturday, April 11

Lecture Hall, Physical Sciences Building 120

9:00 – 10:00 Breakfast

Physical Sciences Building Atrium

10:00 – 12:00 Keynote Panel in Honor of Carole Silver

Chair: Simon Reader

Rachel Ablow (University at Buffalo)

Jason Camlot (Concordia University)

Priya Joshi (Temple University)

12:00 – 1:45 Lunch(box) Meeting

Clark Hall 701, 142 Sciences Drive



Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Silence*, 1870

2:00 – 3:45 Panel 3: Pin-Drop Poetics

Lecture Hall, Physical Sciences Building 120

Chair: Jonathan Dick

Justin Tackett, “Stethoscopic Poetics: ‘Silent’ Vessels in John Keats, Alfred Tennyson, and James Henry”

Mursal Sidiqi, “The Victorians’ Guide to Reading Persianate Poetry: Hafez, Anxious Translations, and the Anglo-Afghan Wars”

Herbert Tucker, “What Poets Made of Silence”

3:45 – 4:15 Coffee

4:15 – 5:45 Panel 4: Novel Attunements

Chair: Amy King

Meghna Sapui, “Reality in the Image of Silence: Caste and the Case of Indian Realism”

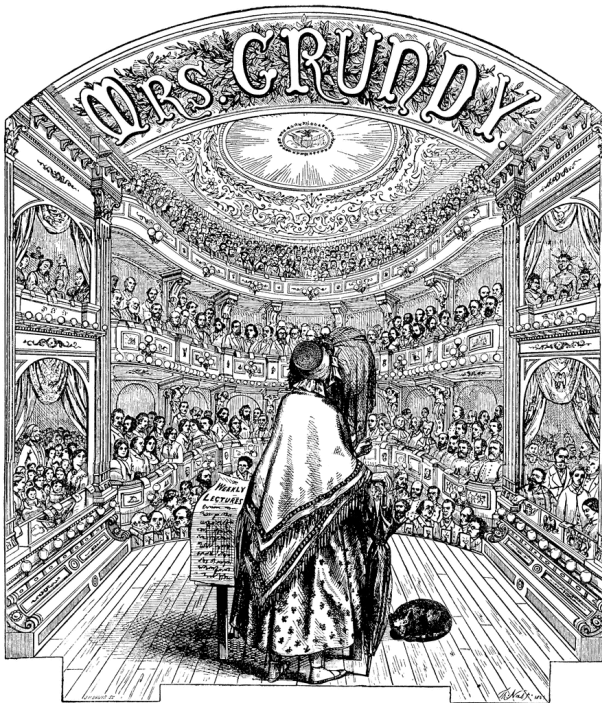
Maria Al-Raes, “Maggie Tulliver’s ‘Dreamy Silences’”

Elizabeth Weybright, “‘While my ear follows to silence the hum’: Victorian Acoustic Science and Charlotte Brontë’s Impossible Sounds”

7:00 – 10:00 Banquet and Awards

Shuttle from Hilton Garden Inn (6:30-7pm, two trips)

The Heights, 903 Hanshaw Rd, Ithaca, NY 14850



Sunday, April 6

Lecture Hall, Physical Sciences Building 120

9:00am – 10:00 Breakfast (Atrium)

10:00am – 11:30am Panel 5: Imperial Ellipses

Chair: Abigail Droge

Erin Cheslow, “Trucanini’s Multiple Selves: Surpassing the Colonial Silences of Text through Oral Storytelling”

Jungmin Yoo, “Fading into the Backstage of History: Rereading Kim through Transimperial Anxiety and the Rise of Japan”

Elizabeth Greeniaus, “Conrad’s Weird Ellipses”

11:30 – 12:00 Conference Wrap-Up

Diana Newby

Jonah Siegel



Léon Belly, *Ulysse et les Sirènes*, 1867

Winners of the NVSA Sonya Rudikoff Prize

The Sonya Rudikoff prize for the best first book in Victorian Studies was established by the Robert Gutman family in honor of Mr. Gutman's late wife. Sonya Rudikoff was an active member of the Northeast Victorian Studies Association and a recognized scholar. Her book, *Ancestral Houses: Virginia Woolf and the Aristocracy*, was published posthumously.

1999 Yopie Prins, *Victorian Sappho* (Princeton)

2000 Alison Winter, *Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain* (Chicago)

2001 Jonah Siegel, *Desire and Excess: the Nineteenth-Century Culture of Art* (Princeton)

Honorable Mention: Rick Rylance, *Victorian Psychology and British Culture 1850-1880* (Oxford)

2002 Nicholas Dames, *Amnesiac Selves: Nostalgia, Forgetting, and British Fiction, 1810-1870* (Oxford)

2003 Priya Joshi, *In Another Country: Colonialism, Culture, and the English Novel in India* (Columbia)

2004 Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton) and

Alex Woloch, *The One vs. The Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* (Princeton)

Honorable Mention: Andrew Warwick, *Masters of Theory: Cambridge and the Rise of Mathematical Physics* (Chicago)

2005 Suzy Anger, *Victorian Interpretation* (Cornell)

2006 Patrick O'Malley, *Catholicism, Sexual Deviance, and Victorian Gothic Culture* (Cambridge)

2007 Amanda Claybaugh, *The Novel of Purpose: Literature and Social Reform in the Anglo-American World* (Cornell)

2008 Chris Otter, *The Victorian Eye: A Political History of Light and Vision in Britain, 1800-1910* (Chicago) and

Cornelia Pearsall, *Tennyson's Rapture: Transformation in the Victorian Dramatic Monologue* (Oxford)

2009 Rachel Teukolsky, *The Literate Eye: Victorian Art Writing and Modernist Aesthetics* (Oxford)

2010 Sukanya Banerjee, *Becoming Imperial Citizens: Indians in the Late-Victorian Empire* (Duke)

2011 Sadiya Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago) and

Charles LaPorte, *Victorian Poets and the Changing Bible* (Virginia)

- 2012** David Kurnick, *Empty Houses: Theatrical Failure and the Novel* (Princeton) and Meredith Martin, *The Rise and Fall of Meter: Poetry and English National Culture, 1860-1930* (Princeton)
- 2013** Jennifer Esmail, *Reading Victorian Deafness: Signs and Sounds in Victorian Literature and Culture* (Ohio University) and Ross Forman, *China and the Victorian Imagination: Empires Entwined* (Cambridge)
- 2014** Allen MacDuffie, *Victorian Literature, Energy, and the Ecological Imagination* (Cambridge)
Honorable Mention: Kathleen Frederickson, *The Ploy of Instinct: Victorian Sciences of Nature and Sexuality in Liberal Governance* (Fordham)
- 2015** Annmarie Drury, *Translation as Transformation in Victorian Poetry* (Cambridge)
Honorable Mention: Jordan Bear, *Disillusioned: Victorian Photography and the Discerning Subject* (Pennsylvania State)
- 2016** Jesse Oak Taylor, *The Sky of Our Manufacture: The London Fog in British Fiction from Dickens to Woolf* (Virginia)
Honorable Mention: Elisha Cohn, *Still Life: Suspended Development in the Victorian Novel* (Oxford)
- 2017** Benjamin Morgan, *The Outward Mind: Materialist Aesthetics in Victorian Science and Literature* (Chicago)
Honorable Mention: Jonathan Farina, *Everyday Words and the Character of Prose in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge)
- 2018** Emily Steinlight, *Populating the Novel: Literary Form and the Politics of Surplus Life* (Cornell)
Honorable Mention: Nasser Mufti, *Civilizing War: Imperial Politics and the Poetics of National Rupture* (Northwestern University)
- 2019** Alicia Mireles Christoff, *Novel Relations: Victorian Fiction and British Psychoanalysis* (Princeton)
- 2020** Jessie Reeder, *The Forms of Informal Empire: Britain, Latin America, and Nineteenth-Century Literature* (Johns Hopkins University) Honorable mention: Shawna Ross, *Charlotte Bronte at the Anthropocene* (SUNY)
- 2021** Zachary Samalin, *The Masses are Revolting: Victorian Culture and the Political Aesthetics of Disgust* (Cornell) Honorable mention: Simon Reader, *Network: Victorian Literature and Nonlinear Style* (Stanford)
- 2022** S. Pearl Brilmyer, *The Science of Character: Human Objecthood and the Ends of Victorian Realism* (University of Chicago Press); Honorable mention: Ronjaanee Chatterjee, *Feminine Singularity: The Politics of Subjectivity in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (Stanford)
- 2023** Renée Fox, *The Necromantics: Reanimation: the Historical Imagination, and Victorian British and Irish Literature* (Ohio State University Press); Honorable Mention: Jayne Hildebrand, *Novel Environments: Science, Description, and Victorian Fiction* (Oxford University Press)
- 2024 To be announced at the banquet!**

NVSA: Our History

The Northeast Victorian Studies Association grew out of an interdisciplinary Five-College Victorian Studies Seminar (comprised of scholars from Amherst, Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, Smith, and the University of Massachusetts Amherst) initiated by Michael Wolff in 1970. In 1971, Wolff and Maurianne Adams hosted a conference on “England in the 1870s: A Decade of Conflict.” Other meetings, one on poverty, another on William Morris, followed.

At a 1975 conference on “The Victorian Family” hosted by Assumption College in Worcester, the organization of NVSA—with its primary task the sponsorship of annual conferences—was proposed. The next year, at the Ramapo College meeting on “Pasts and Futures,” the NVSA constitution was approved: Maurianne Adams became the first president and Robert Keane, the secretary-treasurer.

Highlights from succeeding conferences include a reconsideration of Walter E. Houghton’s landmark study, *The Victorian Frame of Mind* (1984), a spiritualist demonstration by a member of the London Psychical Research Society (1985), a descent into an actual coalmine at the “Victorian Others” conference at Scranton College (1988), a professional production of *Princess Toto* by W.S. Gilbert and Frederic Clay (1992), and a magic lantern show (2008). In 1991, at the University of Rochester meeting, we honored George Ford, a longtime supporter of NVSA, for a lifetime of contributions to Victorian studies.

1989 saw the establishment of the Coral Lansbury Award, honoring the memory of our third president, to help support the travel of a graduate student presenting a paper; in 1993 another such award, in memory of George Ford, was created. In 1999, the Rudikoff family established a prize for the year’s best first book on Victorian subject as a memorial to Sonya, a longtime member. Meanwhile, in 1995 Glenn Everett designed the organization’s first website. Starting 2018, NVSA spearheaded a new graduate mentorship program and initiated the Expanding the Field Essay Prize to promote inclusivity in the field of Victorian studies.

The organization has alternated conference sites between the northern and southern reaches of the “northeast,” as well as proximate Canadian locations. There is a reception on Friday evening and a Saturday night banquet. The Saturday business lunch is an important occasion, featuring a lively debate and vote on the choice of the next year’s conference topic. There have been innovations and evolutions in the conference format as well: in 1996, the Sunday afternoon tour became a Friday afternoon visit to a library collection, a museum, or some other local site. In 1999, the keynote talk evolved into a Saturday morning keynote panel, featuring several speakers and addressing such topics as “Future Directions for Victorian Studies” (1999), “Interdisciplinarity at the Breaking Point” (2000), “Periodization and the Nineteenth Century” (2001), and “Knowing the Past” (2002). Some panels include “Victorian Cosmopolitanism” with Antoinette Burton, James Buzard, and Bruce Robbins (2007); “Systems and Archives” with Paul Saint-Amour, Nicholas Daly, Bernard Lightman, and Catherine Robson (2011); and “Victorian Senses” with Janice Carlisle, William Cohen, and Jules Law (2014). Our 2015 conference at the University of Rhode Island included a 40th anniversary retrospective panel featuring long-term NVSA members.

In 2020, the NVSA conference on “Oppression and Uprisings” at Johns Hopkins University was cancelled because of the Covid-19 lockdown. That program was held online in 2021, with Hopkins hosting our next in-person conference, “Recovery,” in 2022. Since then NVSA has returned to the tradition of in-person meetings, and its exemplary format continues. The organization celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2025 with a conference at Boston University.

NVSA Conferences

- 1975 The Victorian Family (Assumption College)
- 1976 Pasts and Futures (Ramapo College)
- 1977 Crime and Punishment (Boston College)
- 1978 Victorians and the World Abroad (Hofstra University)
- 1979 Victorian Mythologies (Rhode Island College)
- 1980 Victorian War and Violence (University of Pennsylvania)
- 1981 Britain in the 1880s (University of Hartford)
- 1982 Victorians and Money (Drew University)
- 1983 Loss and Failure in the Victorian World (Boston College)
- 1984 Framing the Victorians (Hofstra University)
- 1985 The Victorians and the Supernatural (Rhode Island College and Brown University)
- 1986 Victorian Work and Workers (Yale Center for British Art)
- 1987 Victorian Food, Fun, and Games (Wheaton College)
- 1988 Victorian Others (Scranton College)
- 1989 Evolution and Revolution (Rhode Island College)
- 1990 Disguises, Dreams and Deceptions (Princeton University)
- 1991 Victorian Endings (University of Rochester)
- 1992 Victorian Space and Place (Rutgers University)
- 1993 Victorian Waters (Rhode Island College)
- 1994 Victorian Interiors (New York University)
- 1995 Victorian Beasts and Beauties (MIT)
- 1996 Victorian Spectacles (Villanova University)
- 1997 Victorian Anxieties (University of Hartford)
- 1998 Victorian Worlds: Anthropologies, Ethnicities, Geographies (Smith College)
- 1999 Victorian Memory (Yale Center for British Art)
- 2000 Victorian Breakdowns (The Graduate Center, CUNY)
- 2001 Victorian Nocturnes (Brown University)
- 2002 Victorian Origins and Excavations (Queen's University, Canada)
- 2003 Technologies and Media in the 19th Century (MIT)
- 2004 The Sacred and the Profane (Cornell University)
- 2005 Victorian Collaboration (American University)
- 2006 Victorian Fatigue (Drew University)
- 2007 Victorian Cosmopolitanism (Harvard University)

- 2008 Victorian Underworlds (University of Toronto)
2009 The Victorian Everyday (Wellesley College)
2010 Fighting Victorians (Princeton University)
2011 Victorian Systems and Archives (University of Maryland)
2012 Victorian Clichés and Orthodoxies (Columbia University)
2013 1874 (Boston University)
2014 Victorian Senses (Stony Brook University)
2015 Victorian Accidents (University of Rhode Island)
2016 Victorian Outliers (Rutgers University)
2017 The Question of Victorian Literature (Georgetown University)
2018 Unfinished Victorians (University of Pennsylvania)
2019 Latitudes (University of Massachusetts, Amherst)
2020/21 Oppression and Uprisings (Remote, due to pandemic)
2022 Recovery (Johns Hopkins University)
2023 Variants (Barnard College)
2024 Labor (College of the Holy Cross)
2025 The Twentieth Century (Boston University)



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Shibata Zeshin (1807-1891), *Painting of a Mouse* (n.d.)