

**CALL FOR PAPERS**  
**NAVSA 2025: AFTERMATHS**

November 13–16, 2025 | Omni Shoreham Hotel | Washington, DC

<http://navsa.georgetown.edu>

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Proposals Due March 17, 2025



*James McAllister, “The Reid family outside their slab hut home, Whangamomona” (c. 1898–1899).  
National Library of New Zealand*

NAVSA welcomes scholars to Washington, D.C., in November 2025 to consider the topic of Aftermaths. An aftermath is a “period or state of affairs following a significant event,” particularly a destructive one. But the *OED* tells us “aftermath” also has another meaning, this one from agriculture: “A second crop or new growth of grass ... after the first has been mown or harvested.” NAVSA 2025 proposes to examine aftermaths in both of these seemingly opposed senses—as the residue of past disturbance and the possibility of new growth.

The legacies of Victorian globalization range from a climatological emergency originating with carbon burned in Manchester factories to the racialized divisions of labor that persist in today’s cleavage between “Global North” and “Global South” —as well as the cultural, institutional, and aesthetic forms in which those material facts have been expressed and contested.

Gender and family dynamics first naturalized in the Victorian period continue to shape intimate relations in the present. The legacies of enslavement, imperialism, and ecological damage still organize the world today. Institutional forms, social arrangements, and actual physical infrastructure, at scales large and small, endure from the nineteenth-century past unevenly into our contemporary. But even this idea, the contemporary, turns out to name a question rather than an answer: with what or whom, actually, are we together in time?

Our diverse inheritances from the Victorian era have generated competing logics of responsibility and repair. Key terms of those debates –questions about individual responsibility and historical duration, moral languages of improvement, progress, and duty– have themselves, in many cases, come down to us from the Victorian period and its robust tradition of public debate. And the Victorian period was itself—often quite self-consciously—an aftermath, a belated follow-up to social dynamics first set into motion during the Regency period, the early eighteenth century, and before. The Queen for whom the period is named was just 18 when she acceded to the throne, but matured, grew old, and died in the period—itsself an uncanny overlay of historical and biophysical schemes of periodization.

NAVSA 25 will examine the unfinished and ongoing qualities of the Victorian period, as well as the many ways in which the period itself reflected on questions of endurance, delay, and related figures for being out of time. Our goal will be to emphasize a global nineteenth century that was already an aftermath, and in whose compounded aftermaths we still live.

We welcome proposals from faculty, independent scholars, and graduate students for individual papers, roundtable submissions, and pre-arranged panels that examine the unevenly enduring aspects of nineteenth-century life, but also the loop effects and ripples of historical resonance expressed in Victorian culture itself. We therefore invite consideration of social and political legacies, philosophical aftereffects, and cultural inheritances, while calling for attention to formal effects of duration, delay, and persistence in Victorian thought and art itself.

Papers can address any aspect of the culture, literature, art, philosophy, or history of or about the period. Themes might include: nineteenth-century fossil capitalism and extractive practices; race and the legacies of imperialism, enslavement, freedom, and abolition; histories of labor and work; prehistories of artificial intelligence and information capitalism; infrastructure, sustainability, and the endurance of built environments; the continuing reach of nineteenth-century categories of gender, sexuality, and the family; formal and aesthetic effects of delay, persistence, and incompleteness; and improvisation, elaboration, and creativity

in the context of inherited systems. But we welcome contributions that seek to understand any aspect of Victorian aftermaths, such as:

- The historical novel
- Victorian neo-medievalisms
- Pre-Raphaelite art
- Gothic histories & haunting
- Marx's temporalities/Marxist temporalities
- Progress as narrative/historical mode
- Photographic & proto-cinematic time
- Narrative suspense & resolution
- "Foreshadowing" or "backshadowing"?
- 1848 & revolutionary time
- Reform, as political, historiographical & aesthetic principle
- The Great Famine & its remembrances
- Enslavement, abolition, & their legacies
- Imperialism & uneven development
- History writing & the forms of the historical
- Serialization & temporalities of print
- Victorianism, Romanticism, belatedness
- Decadence & the forms of crisis
- Poetic time & effects like enjambment, meter, caesura, stanzaic interval
- Evolutionary time
- Victorian historical exhibits
- Victorian ruins
- Rubbish, waste, recycling
- Victorian institutions & institutionalization
- Obsolescence, technological & otherwise
- Periodization & duration
- Histories of Victorian studies
- What's left of the Victorian

## PROPOSAL DETAILS

**Papers:** 18-20 minute papers. Abstract no longer than 300 words, plus brief biographical note of no more than 125 words.

**Prearranged panels:** 3-4 papers, 200-word abstract for the panel, plus 250-word abstract for each paper, plus brief biographical note of no more than 125 words for each participant (1,700 word maximum, total). We encourage proposals for panels and roundtables to include at least one graduate student, independent scholar, or contingent/non-tenure-track faculty member.

**Roundtable position papers** of 8-10 minutes each (5-6 per roundtable) on topics and keywords. Abstract no longer than 250 words, plus brief biographical note of no more than 125 words. Roundtable position papers should address one of the following thematic threads:

Environment & Ecology  
Enslavement & Abolition  
Gender & Intimacies

Labor & Work  
Empire & Colonization  
Media & Technology

**Digital presentations:** 15 minute talks delivered during the virtual pre-session of NAVSA 2025. This pre-session will be an open event, with free registration, for those unable to make the conference in person. Held prior to the in-person conference, it will set the terms for the discussion in DC.

**HOW TO SUBMIT:** The submission portal will open in early 2025 for submissions due in March. Please check the website, [navsa.georgetown.edu](https://navsa.georgetown.edu), to find a link to the live submission portal.

About NAVSA: Established in 2002, the North American Victorian Studies Association is the largest scholarly organization dedicated to the interdisciplinary study of the British nineteenth century, with just under a thousand members from the US, Canada, and the UK, a robust organizational structure, and a tradition of some two decades of past annual conferences. <https://navsa.org/>

