

# HARD TIMES

*The 2023 Conference of the Victorians Institute*



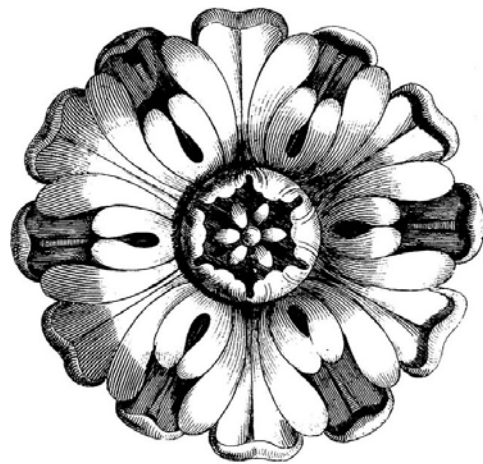
Victorians  
Institute

October 2023

On Cover: Detail of *Hard Times* (1885)  
Hubert von Herkomer, oil on canvas  
City Art Gallery of Manchester

# HARD TIMES

*The 2023 Conference of the Victorians Institute*



Victorians  
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# Schedule

## Friday, October 6

3:00-5:00p	Registration
5:00-6:30p	Informal receptions

## Saturday, October 7

8:00a	Registration and refreshments
9:00-10:15a	Session 1
10:30-11:45a	Session 2
12:00-1:30p	Lunch on your own
1:00-4:00p	Coffee, tea, refreshments
1:30-2:45p	Session 3
3:00-4:15p	Session 4
5:00-6:00p	Keynote
6:00-7:00p	Reception

## Sunday, October 8

8:00a	Registration and refreshments
9:00-10:15a	Session 5
10:30-11:45a	Session 6
12:00-1:30p	Conference box lunch and business meeting
1:00-4:00p	Coffee, tea, refreshments
1:30-2:45p	Session 7
3:00-3:30p	Concluding Presentation



# Welcome!

Please find your way to Caldwell Lounge for registration.

3:00-5:00p

Registration

5:00-6:30p

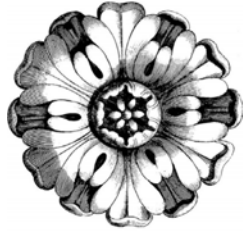
Informal receptions

## Saturday, October 7

8:00a

Registration, coffee and snacks are in  
Caldwell Lounge.





# Session 1

9:00-10:15 am

## Panel 1

## Spectacle

Moderator:

Emily Beckwith

Tompkins G112

Alexandra Kadis

Japanese Acrobats as Athletes on the Victorian Stage  
1867-1870

Frank Emmett

“The View from the Bridge”: Looking down on the poor of  
Manchester: the statistical and the salacious in  
social-reform narratives of the 1830’s and 1840’s

## Panel 2

## Religious Influences

Moderator:

Tim Carens

Tompkins G113

Benji Salt

“I kissed the rod”: Pleasure and Pain or Pleasurable Pain  
in the Late Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins

Ash Faulkner

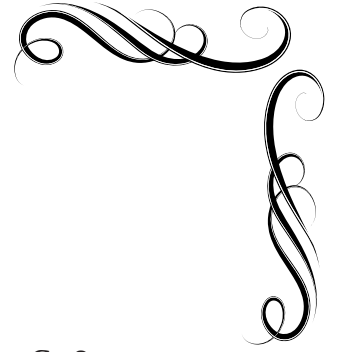
When Poverty is a Vow: The Monks of Dickens and Carlyle

Claudia Zaunz

The Power of the Christian Individual: New Testament  
Teachings in *Little Dorrit*







## Panel 3

## Death and Loss

Moderator:

Jordan Frederick

Tompkins G118

Cheryl Price

Death Doula in the Classroom: Victorian Literature  
and Death Studies

Kathrin Levitan

Letter-Writing and Hard Times: Health, Sickness, and  
Death in the Era of Postal Reform

Sharon Joffe

Hard Times, the Clairmont Family and Resilience





## Session 2

10:30-11:45 am

### Panel 1

### Pedagogy #I: New Connections

Moderator:

LeeAnne Richardson

Tompkins G112

Emily Wicktor

“Strange things are afoot at the Circle K”: Teaching George Bernard Shaw’s *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* in an Unexpected Age of Comstockery

Keaghan Turner

Reading the Riverbank: Object Lessons in Victorian Mudlarking

Kathryn Burt

Embracing Hard Times: Teaching Victorian Literature Through Social Movements

### Panel 2

### Gothic

Moderator:

Cameron Dodworth

Tompkins G113

Mackie Black

Hard Times for Englishness from Edward Cullen to Count Dracula and Heathcliff

Kevin Artiga

Vampires as Algorithms: Computing Bodies in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*

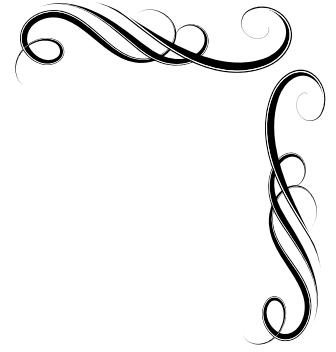
Sana Chebil

The Urban Gothic in Charles Dickens’s *Oliver Twist* and *Hard Times*

Dorian Steele

Divorcing the Marriage Plot: From *Jane Eyre* to *Crimson Peak*





### Panel 3

### Gaskell

Moderator:

Frank Emmett

Tompkins G115

Jessica Starbird

“Coaches isn’t good enough now-a-day”: Railways and Modernity in Elizabeth Gaskell’s “A Dark Night’s Work”

Dan Abitz

Feminist Utopianism in the Social(ist) Romances of Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot

### Panel 4

### Young Women in Hard Times

Moderator:

Cheryl Price

Tompkins G118

Emily Sferra

“Unwomaned if she be”: Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s Frustration with Femininity

Sarah Bliss

The Interdependency of Gender and Empire in Wilkie Collins’ *The Moonstone*

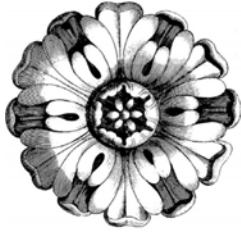
Elizabeth Steere

Beyond East Lynne: Ellen Wood and the Modern Melodrama



**Lunch on your own**

12:00-1:30 pm



# Session 3

1:30-2:45 pm

## Panel 1

## Past and Present

Moderator:

Emily Harbin

Tompkins G112

Melissa Jenkins

Ghost Boys and Water Babies

Michael Lewis

Felix Holt, the Radical for these Times

Joshua Ward

Troubling Dickensian Trajectories: Unsettling *Great Expectations*, Navigating *Hard Times* in Alex Pheby’s “Cities of the West”

## Panel 2

## History and Time

Moderator:

TBA

Tompkins G113

Katherine Stein

Hard Times for Chimney Sweeps in Kingsley’s *The Water-Babies*

Timothy Hayes

Hard Truths: Reflective Nostalgia in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*

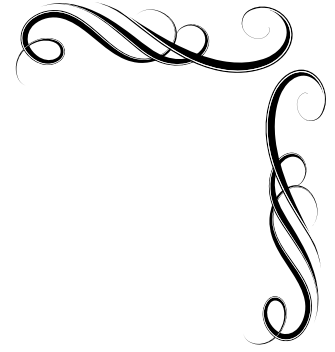
David Coombs

Crises of Belief and the Victorian Historical Novel

Claudia Martin

Hard Times for Lady Audley, or How a “Stupid, Bewildering Clock” Embodies the Difficult Transition from Natural to Mechanical Time





## Panel 3

## Social Reform

Moderator:

Taten Shirley

Tompkins G115

Juliette Guido

Portraits of Alcoholism and Domestic Violence in Anne Bronte's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*

Tim Carens

The Angler, the Poacher, and Social Reform

Molly Lewis

Art and Advocacy: F. W. Robertson and William Anderson O'Connor on Poetry and the Working Classes

## Panel 4

## Ecological Crises and the Anthropocene

Moderator:

Keaghan Turner

Tompkins G118

Gretchen Braun

Precurity and Anthropogenic Change at the *Fin de Siècle*

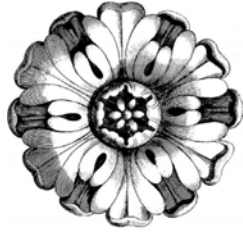
Mariam Khan

The Ecogothic: Haunting Nature in Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* and Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone*

Ryan Carroll

Nails, Coal, and Corpses: The Political Ecology of Salvage on the Thames





# Session 4

3:00-4:15 pm

## Panel 1

## Empowered Femininity

Moderator:

Sharon Joffe

Tompkins G112

Albert Pionke

A Soft Power in Hard Times; Or, How Blank Verse Might Outmeasure “all / The goats whose beards are sprouting down toward hell”

LeeAnne Richardson

“I recognized / The power of retribution in myself”:  
Stephania (1892) and Michael Field’s *Hard Times*

Taten Shirley

Optimism through Grief: Increased Female Representation as a Solution in Charlotte Brontë’s *Shirley*

## Panel 2

## Victorian Education

Moderator:

Casey Cothran

Tompkins G113

Molly Granatino

A Hard Time in the Classroom: Realist Representation of Learning Disorders in the Victorian Novel

Mckenzie Bergan

Hard Times in the Schoolroom: Gothic Rhetoric in Victorian Student Communities

Kari Daly

Acts of Disobedience: Mapping *Alton Locke* onto the Narratives of Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs





### Panel 3

## Ecological Empathy and Harmony

Moderator:

Emily Beckwith

Tompkins G115

Caroline Liebel

George Eliot's Ecological Empathy

John Lamb

Hard[y]scapes

Sharon Weltman

Thinking Ecologically with Ruskin and Dickens: Or, How Women Will Save the World

### Panel 4

## Care

Moderator:

Tim Carens

Tompkins G118

Kate Turner

"Dependent on Each Other in Every Possible Way": The Labor Union and/as a Community of Care in Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*

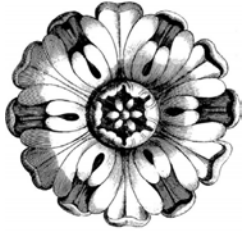
Sarah Walton

Jolly to the Last': The Politics of Care in *Martin Chuzzlewit*

Deborah Deneholz Morse

"Hard Times for Nonhuman Animals: Anna Sewell's *Black Beauty* (1877)"





# Keynote Address

Dr. Talia Schaffer

## “Care and Character: Personhood in *Hard Times*”

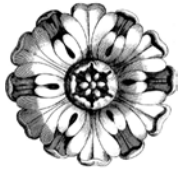
5:00-6:00 pm  
Caldwell G107



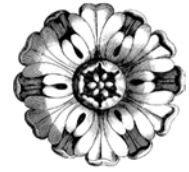
Talia Schaffer is a Distinguished Professor of English at Queens College CUNY and the Graduate Center CUNY. She is the author of *Communities of Care: The Social Ethics of Victorian Fiction* (2021), which has recently received honorary mention from NAVSA for the best book of 2021; *Romance’s Rival: Familiar Marriage in Victorian Fiction* (2016), which won the NAVSA prize for the best book of the year; *Novel Craft: Victorian Domestic Handicraft and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (2011); and *The Forgotten Female Aesthetes; Literary Culture in Late-Victorian England* (2001). Her co-edited volumes include *The Routledge Companion to Victorian Literature* (2020), with Dennis Denisoff; a special issue of *Victorian Review*, “*Extending Families*,” with Kelly Hager (2013); and *Women and British Aestheticism* with Kathy A. Psomiades (1999). She has also edited *Literature and Culture at the Fin de Siecle* (2006) and Lucas Malet’s 1901 novel, *The History of Sir Richard Calmady* (2003). Schaffer has published more than 50 articles on topics including Victorian familial and marital norms, disability studies, ethical readings, women writers, material culture, popular fiction, and aestheticism.







In Memoriam  
**Dr. Maria Bachman**  
(1963-2022)



The Victorians Institute Board and conference organizers dedicate the 2023 conference in honor of Dr. Maria Bachman.

Dr. Maria Bachman was a treasured long-time member of the Victorians Institute. She made a lasting impact on the Institute, serving as past President (2010-2012), Board member, and co-editor of the *Victorians Institute Journal*. After earning a Bachelor's degree from George Washington University and a Master's from George Mason University, she graduated with a PhD from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. A prodigious scholar, she co-edited *Fear, Loathing, and Victorian Xenophobia* (2013), *Reality's Dark Light: The Sensational Wilkie Collins* (2003), and *The Socio-Literary Imaginary in 19th and 20th Century Britain* (2020) as well as producing critical editions of Wilkie Collins's "The Dead Hand" and Charles Dickens's "The Bride's Chamber" (2009), and Collins's *The Woman in White* (2006) and *Blind Love* (2004). Her curious mind was matched by her empathetic nature; her students and colleagues at Coastal Carolina and Middle Tennessee State University, as well as many members of this organization, were the recipients of her kindness and support.



Our current editor of *Victorians Institute Journal*, Albert Pionke, shared this memory of Maria:

"I attended my first VI meeting in 2003. That I returned, again and again, was due to the warm welcome I received, not least from Maria. She encouraged a wide swath of younger scholars to present, to become involved with conference planning, to volunteer for leadership positions, and otherwise to join the intellectual and convivial life of Victorian scholarship. And she led by example, presenting papers that were consistently smart, hosting a conference for which she conjured up a new standard of swag, attending VI business lunches enlivened by her good humor and political savvy, editing *VIJ* with tact and professionalism, and always adding more to any room she was in than she took from it. I was fortunate enough to find in her an ideal co-editor, first for our collection *The Socio-Literary Imaginary in 19th and 20th Century Britain* and afterwards for *VIJ* itself. She was also my friend, whom I do and shall miss. And for those of you who never heard her after-dinner story of the Bulgarian masseur, all I can say is, you missed a doozy!"

Donations in Maria's memory can be made to the Maria K. Bachman Humanities Collections Endowment at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville's Foundation Libraries. The endowment supports the maintenance and acquisition of humanities collections at the library.  
<https://www.lib.utk.edu>





# Session 5

9:00-10:15 am

## Panel 1

## Utopia / Dystopia

Moderator:

Emily Harbin

Tompkins GI13

Carly Nations

“You are right. It cannot be done in that way”: Apocalypse and Utopia in Anna Kingsford’s *Dreams and Dream Stories*

Rose O’Malley

The End Times: What Victorian Evolutionary Anxiety Reveals about Current AI Panic

Wendy Wood

Growth in the Midst of Tragedy: Assured Progress in H. G. Wells’ *The War of the Worlds*

## Panel 2

## Pedagogy #2: Challenges

Moderator:

Katherine Stein

Tompkins GI12

Janet Myers

Hard Work for Hard Times: A Student & Mentor Perspective on Undergraduate Research

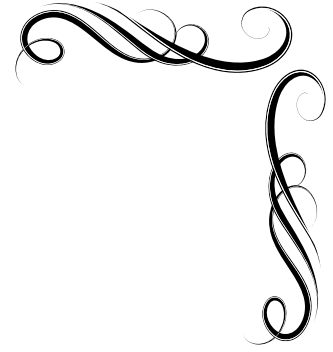
Anna Gibson

“An unnecessary infliction of pain upon the reader?": Teaching Hard Texts in *Hard Times*

Melissa Schaub

Canary in the Coal Mine: *Great Expectations* (2023) and the Relevance of Victorian Literature





## Panel 3      Revolutionary Forces

Moderator:      Molly Lewis

Tompkins G115

Jessica DeMarco-Jacobson

The Risorgimento of Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market"

Allison Scheideggeer

"Saviour of Society": Thee Brownings' Ongoing Debate  
about Napoleon III's Role in the Italian Risorgimento

Tom Bragg

Jacques and Jacks: A French Rebellion in Victorian  
Historical Romance

James Diedrick

Henry George, Olive Schreiner and Mary Gladstone's turn  
to Socialism

## Panel 4      Dicken's *Hard Times*

Moderator:      Cameron Dodworth

Tompkins G118

Sarah Knowles

The Spontaneous Overflow of an Unlikely Hero:  
Confronting the Condition of England Question in *Hard  
Times* by Charles Dicken

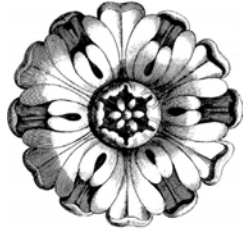
Brittani Allen

Linguistically Less Than: Dialect and Socioeconomic Status  
in *Hard Times*

David Bradshaw

Reciprocal Trusting in Dickens's *Hard Times*





# *Session 6*

10:30-11:45 am

## **Panel 1**

## **Fallen Women**

**Moderator:**

**Gretchen Braun**

**Tompkins GI13**

Ruth Dean

Transforming the Hard Time of Victorian Womanhood

Katie Agile

A Serpent in the House: Subversive Women in Victorian Literature and Art

Rebecah Williams

Hard Times for Women without Wings: An Examination of Stevenson's Perpetuation of "The Angel in the House" in "The Waif Woman"

## **Panel 2**

## **Queerness**

**Moderator:**

**Emily Beckwith**

**Tompkins GI12**

Jordan Frederick

Convalescence, Care, and Queerness in Bram Stoker's Dracula

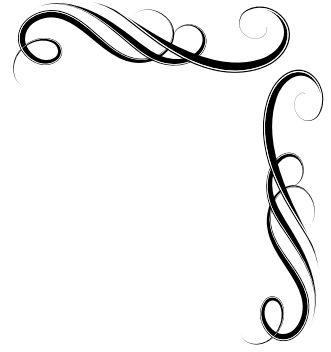
Anick Rolland

Izzard Does Dickens: Great Expectations' Queer Afterlife

Casey Cothran

Addressing Hard Times for Transgender Students: Making a Space in the 19th Century Classroom to Discuss Gender Transformation





### Panel 3

### Diverse Lenses

Moderator:

Lindsey Chappell

Tompkins G118

Ed Nordling

Francis Galton's Speculative Photography and the Racial Imagination

Richard Menke

Hard Lessons: Natsume Sōseki in Turn-of-the-Century London

### Panel 4

### Creativity

Moderator:

Melissa Jenkins

Tompkins G115

Katharine Blanchard

The Importance of Creativity and Love During Hard Times as Shown in Dickens's *Hard Times* and *Great Expectations*

Kimberly Stern

A Certain Rule: J. D. Harding and the Grammar of Art



## Conference lunch and business meeting

Caldwell Lounge

12:00-1:30 pm

Included with your registration, box lunch will be provided for all attendees. We will also conduct Victorians Institute's annual business meeting.



# Session 7

1:30-2:45 pm

## Panel 1

## Decadence, Punishment, Suffering

Moderator:

LeeAnne Richardson

Tompkins GI12

Chris Foss

“The secret of life is suffering”: Oscar Wilde’s  
De Profundis as Hard Times Survival Guide

Shyam Pateel

Metabolizing Misery: Utilities of Suffering in Oscar Wilde’s  
Prison Writings

## Panel 2

## New Women

Moderator:

Emily Beckwith

Tompkins GI13

Isabel Doss

Anatomy, Aesthetics, and New Woman Resistance in Sarah  
Grand’s *The Beth Book*

Emily Harbin

From New Women to Platform Women: Shifting Portrayals  
of Female Orators in the Late Victorian Era

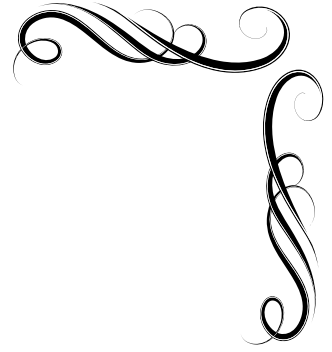
Lindsey Chappell

Athletic Autonomy

Lindsey Scott

Hard Realities and Happy Endings: Reimagining the Fairy  
Tale Genre in Grant Allen’s *The Type-Writer Girl*





## Panel 3      Editor's Panel

John Lamb  
Albert Pionke

**Tompkins G118**

Two editors--John Lamb at Victorian Poetry and Albert Pionke at Victorians Institute Journal: A Journal of Victorian and Edwardian Literature, Art, and Culture--shall strive to light the way for first-time and veteran authors alike. In addition to rendering transparent the processes whereby and timetables within which a submission becomes a publication at their respective journals, they will discuss what they look for in prospective articles, offer advice about how to transform adjacent forms of writing, e.g. seminar papers and dissertation chapters, into possible articles, and gladly respond to questions.

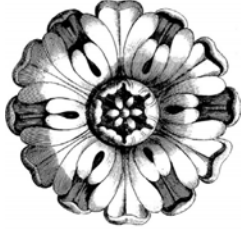


**Concluding presentation**  
Caldwell Lounge  
3:00-3:30 pm

Cameron Dodworth

Making Good Times out of Hard Times with Victorian Food:

A Presentation and Cooking Demonstration...and a Festive Farewell!



# Acknowledgments

Paul Fyfe, NC State University (host)  
Cameron Dodworth, Methodist University (host)  
Cheryl Blake Price, University of North Alabama  
Tim Carens, College of Charleston  
Bonnie Shishko, Queens University of Charlotte  
Emily Sferra, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill  
Emily Beckwith, University of Georgia  
Emily Harbin, Converse College  
Cheryl Quinn, Queens University of Charlotte (program design)

Additional support for the 2023 Victorians Institute conference has been generously provided by the NC State University Department of English, the Provost's Office of Methodist University, the Department of English and Comparative Literature at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, and the Duke University English Department.

The Victorians Institute sponsors yearly meetings of its members, academics, and students interested in British Victorian literature, culture, and history. Rooted in the southeastern United States, the Victorians Institute welcomes participation from students and scholars internationally at its conferences and in its journal. The VI also helps to sponsor a peer-reviewed academic publication, the *Victorians Institute Journal*, which is published annually and features articles, reviews, and newly edited texts of interest to scholars in nineteenth-century cultural studies.

Find out more about the VI at:  
<https://victoriansinstitute.org>



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